

Previews of Coming Distractions

Written by Alex Baer

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We've seen the movies before, enough to drive us to distraction: the slow takeover of power by lunatics, the sleeping citizenry unaware their country has been stolen and lost, the bad guys who refuse to be shamed and who will stop at nothing until they own absolutely everything...

Somehow, even though the movies are always the same -- exploits sexed up with explosions, topped-off with exploited sex bombs, and exploding F-bombs -- they always manage to make the Previews of Coming Attractions look novel enough.

How'd they do that -- sleight of hand? Mass hypnosis from politicians? Calm mesmerizing via pollsters? Corporate marketing magic? Or, are we just being baffled with more of the same, steaming bat guano, slung at us, hot and fast, right past us, before we know what happened, out at home plate, called on sliders?

Well, in a word: Yes.

It's a line of Noir dialog right from the screen: *"Big Money can afford to do anything it wants, especially with a species having such a limited attention span, easily distracted by shiny new things, parked here and there in our unconscious desires by slick advertising. In a system of money, such as ours, never be surprised when Big Money wins..."*

We're used to the quick-edit pacing and the throaty, deep growl of the Lord High Voice-over Announcer, pretty used to how this slick trick goes: We paid our way in here, now we get to stay a while, asking for some slick voodoo and utter hoodoo to be worked on us, asking to be allowed to remain in the dark -- just like always.

So, on with the show -- a timely one, this time out: A tax deadline film, an art-house affair, enough to tax our collective patience:

The Senate today is voting on the "Buffett Rule," in which millionaires are asked to chip in at least 30 percent to the community pot. You remember this one, the idea named after billionaire

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Warren Buffett, who had the audacity and sagacity to say he thought he should pay more in taxes than his secretary did.

This will provide us all a good scream, watching elected millionaires and billionaires dive for cover of any kind they can find, even under Congressional furniture. Brace yourself for a new round of sniveling, double-dealing rhetorical speaking and hypocritical hyperbole -- especially from senators whose constituents are not home-state voters, but customers like the idle wealthy, think tanks, and corporate types.

Most regular people still fortunate to have jobs now pay about 20 to 30 percent of their pay in taxes to keep the county running. It will be an especially amusing show to see how Willard Mitt Romney explains away his 13.9 percent tax rate on 21 million dollars he *accumulated* in 2010.

The soundtrack for this movie is screaming bloody murder, at being bled by leeches, that the tax rate is not fair, and is unfairly murderous for fat cats -- but the howler is the top tax rates have almost never been lower, not since the 1930s.

The top tax rate ever in the U.S. was 94 percent during Word War II. There have been plateaus here and there, but the top rates have been steadily plunging for 50 and more years. The top tax rate is now 35 percent - although Republicans want to pull it down to 25 or less.

This, during a time when many top corporations suffering along with billions in profits cannot be bothered to pay even one cent in taxes -- even manage to get refunds...

This, during a time when the fat cats decided to have a couple cozy, trillion-dollar wars of conscienceless, wholesale killing and retail-oil convenience, built across countless bridges of pre-fab, wholly fabricated lies...

This, during a time when the population is much larger than it was during the World War II years -- an era when much of the country's aging infrastructure was built...

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This, during a time when millionaires and billionaires are being minted faster than ever...

This, during a time when the banks have been bailed out over and over, from one manufactured, bubble-and-bust cycle to the next, and left to flourish, not perish -- allowed to speculatively force and enforce one fraudulent farce after another...

This, during a time when millions of Americans have been shoved and discarded, long-term, out and away from the workforce, having simple dreams of all kinds foreclosed on. If working, millions more are just one paycheck away from total disaster, all while *child* -- and now *parent* -- poverty soars...

This, during a time when the top One Percent are closing in on owning more than all the rest, because, for them the economy's still revved up and roaring...

Buckle up, and hang onto your popcorn, your stomach, your heart, and your mind -- it promises to be one hell of a show.

<http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxfacts/displayafact.cfm?Docid=213>