

The Wolves of Psycho Street: America's Economic Enslavement by the Psychopathic Corporate Elite – Part I

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Is it only me or is there something fundamentally flawed with the people who are running our government? This includes the thousands of policymakers, opinion leaders, oligarchs, autocrats and technocrats, the hundreds of thousands of bureaucrats and their loyal underlings, including millions within the corporatocracy who facilitate the maintenance of power. Does it bother you that the Wall Street banks and major corporations, many of our academic and religious institutions as well as our medical, military and intelligence gathering complexes, have their needs met at the expense of everyone else?

They control our government. We don't. Instead, we fear our government. They tell us, "Trust us. We know what to do and how to fix all of our crises." Okay, we trust you. They say we are for peace, democracy and freedom but everywhere we look, they are colonizing and militarizing foreign countries with over 960 military bases with a budget of 1.6 trillion going to numerous corporations to keep American imperialism afloat. At the same time, there have been massive home foreclosures, repossessions, for-profit prisons stuffed to the brim with inmates for minor crimes, and the now reappearance of debtor prisons in 27 states. We are graduating students who are functionally illiterate.

They say trust us, unemployment has decreased to 6.7 percent. And we say that the real number is 24 percent due to the millions who no longer receive compensation and have stopped looking for work.

They say lower taxes. We say why don't you pay what you owe instead of getting accountants to fudge the numbers in order to pay no taxes? They say that the economy is booming and the

stock market is reaching record numbers. We say is that because you are loaning to small businesses? Is that because you are helping new companies to jumpstart manufacturing again in the US, or is it because you can go to the fed to be bailed out at zero interest?

They say trust us, we need more law and order. And yet, private banks and corporations have been fined tens of billions of dollars for engaging in criminal activity repeatedly and never go to jail. On the other hand the average person gets caught jaywalking and can be thrown into the slammer.

They say they are uncertain whether or not global warming is real. And we say we have had 120,000 extreme weather events globally in the past year and the scientific consensus around the world is that global warming is very real and a global threat to humanity's future.

They say they believe in protecting our rights for our freedom of speech, but then our government monitors anyone who is critical of Washington policy and major corporations. They say we need Obamacare. We say there is nothing in Obamacare to prevent disease nor any provisions to enhance a person's survival if they have a disease. The US is the sickest developed nation in the world and the pharmaceutical giants and insurance companies are perfectly happy to keep it that way.

They say we should not have rules that limit globalization nor hinder free market casino capitalism. And we say look at NAFTA, the outsourcing of jobs overseas, which collapsed American industry, and the ghettoization of America's cities like Detroit, Compton and Camden. They say we should not give welfare to the lazy and nothing should be socialized. We say major corporations reap 200-300 billion a year in corporate welfare. When they succeed, citizens don't share in the profits. When they fail, we are forced to pay for their ineptitude.

They encourage us to watch television and shop because it is good for people and the economy. And we say our life is more substantial than a reality show. And why is there no honest effort by

the media to know what it means to be a person suffering today. They say, we are doing everything for your benefit; however, when whistleblowers come forward they are immediately demonized and prosecuted.

We are bothered by this and much more, because behind all the corruption, lies and deception there is no viable solution to the nation's increasing economic disparity and the rise in unemployment, poverty and depression.

Our education policy makers welcome us to their institutions. They convince us they will help our children master the art of critical thinking so they will be more empowered to live authentic, constructive and meaningful lives. Yet to the contrary, their expertise has been limited solely to teaching children how to take exams and behave as programmed robots. Many of our educational leaders refuse to join protests over the takeover of schools by immoral business privatizers, which goes to show academia is nothing more than a handmaiden of the corporate industrial complex.

Our leaders tell us that they want the nation to be energy independent and this can be done safely and efficiently while also addressing the increasing challenges of climate change and global warming. And we trust them. But to the contrary their cards have been stacked to abet the fossil fuel moguls and hydrofrackers who without remorse contaminate and destroy the environment while depleting precious water resources upon which communities depend. And then, even in the aftermath of Fukushima, we are told believe that nuclear power is a clean, safe and green alternative.

We constantly hear from our politicians that the US is the greatest democracy in the world and they are fully devoted to keep it as a "shining light on a hill." But then, as we have learned from Edward Snowden and other courageous whistleblowers, none of the politicians trust the American people. Otherwise there would be no incentive or reason to conduct massive covert

spying and surveillance on every aspect of our lives. As well as militarize the police to assure that demonstrators are dealt with the needs of Big Business and Big Government

They tell us we have medical freedom of choice. But if we don't want to treat our children who suffer from cancer with their toxic chemotherapy drugs and radiation, they take the children away. And where is the choice in declining a vaccine when state governments mandate vaccination in our school systems?

After they tell us we have a Bill of Rights and our Constitutional rights are protected, they then turn around and take away habeas corpus which allows them to search and seize anything they want. In addition, they can harass and arrest those who they fear.

The media repeatedly claims it is fair and balanced, yet all of their guests and so-called experts are corporate propagandists whether from think tanks, foundations or academia.

They tell us we are the wealthiest and most financially stable country in the world. The nation has a \$15 trillion GDP. However, against that there are exponential amounts of debt including \$17 trillion to the federal debt, \$6 trillion for state debt, \$25 trillion for corporate debt, \$10-15 trillion for personal debt, about a trillion each for credit card and student loan debt as well as unfunded liabilities at over \$128 trillion. So our real total debt is over \$193 trillion. In effect, the US is worse off than Greece or Spain. In fact, the US is virtually bankrupt as the most indebted nation on the planet

We were repeatedly being told that an Obama presidency would be the most open, transparent administration in presidential history. However, everything in this White House has been the exact opposite, with more documents being classified secret than any other administration. Increasingly the administration has stripped away government from the people and handed it over to a corporate oligarchy.

Is the problem, therefore, we the people? Are we at fault for having been seduced by those in power to sell us blank bill of goods, drugs, products and policies that are more harmful than beneficial? Are we at fault for having deceived ourselves to believe that their illusion is the truth? Or is the elite, the best and brightest in Wall Street, Washington and the top stories of the multinational corporate networks, the real obstacle to a promising future for all? Are the oligarchic elite, including corporate Democrats and corporate Republicans in all branches of government, not in fact a special breed of psychopath with no moral compass, striving solely to maintain their power, control and wealth? In this article we explore this phenomena with two leading experts on the psychopathic nature of our CEOs, business leaders and politicians who rule America from their residences on Psycho Street.

Several decades ago, finding an individual with strong psychopathic characteristics serving in an executive function at a major Wall Street bank or multinational corporation would have been almost unheard of. During the Great Generation following the Second World War, most people's entire careers were often with a single company or firm. They climbed through the ranks based upon seniority and time spent at the firm. Because corporations and banks were more stable then, it was therefore incumbent that business leaders be psychological stable as well.

Today that has all changed. Given the dramatic deviations within high finance and large corporations, the business culture and ethics have degenerated and given way to a landscape of classical psychological derangement. The advent of radical deregulation, the rise of our present free market and the neoliberal capitalist paradigm has made way for a new dominant economic system that is fundamentally amoral, as Jerry Mander has elaborated upon in *The Capitalism Papers: Fatal Flaws of an Obsolete System*. Within an amoral system we would expect to find chairmen, CEOs and executives who are also amoral and callous about the financial decisions and policies they make and that consequently have a profound deleterious impact on the lives of others.

Several studies investigating the psychopathic nature of our private industrial and financial systems and the executives leading these institutions have shed light on the underlying causes of our national economic woes during the past five presidential administrations. Percentage estimates of high level corporate executives who can be clinically diagnosed as psychopathic vary. Psychopathology for the general population is approximately one percent. However, among the wealthy and power elites, estimates range between four percent (Dr. Robert Hare, an expert in criminal psychology at the University of British Columbia) to ten percent (Sherri DeCoveny, a former investment banker now researching psychological disturbances in the finance community). Welsh journalist Jon Ronson, author of the bestseller *The Psychopath Test*, claims the percentage is even higher. Psychologist Clive Boddy at the Nottingham University has devoted his research to studying corporate psychopaths. In his book *Corporate Psychopaths As Organizational Destroyers*, Boddy argues that it was the psychopathic behavior of the financial elite that brought about the economic collapse in 2008. His research also indicates that those with the most psychopathic tendencies are promoted fastest through the corporate ranks. And it is well known that the risks for crime and illegal activity is far greater among psychopaths than the general population.

Investigations into many companies, such as Enron, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, AIG, JP Morgan, Freddie and Fannie, MF Global, HSBC Bank and others have uncovered widespread, systemic crime. In a survey of 500 senior executives in the US and UK, 26 percent observed firsthand wrongdoing in the workplace, and one in four believed it was necessary for professionals in the financial sector to engage in unethical and illegal conduct in order to be successful. Sixteen percent stated they would commit insider trading if they were certain they could get away with it, and 30 percent said that the pressures to maximize on compensation plans were an incentive to break the law. These statistics provide evidence to just how deeply ingrained psychopathic qualities have become institutionalized in our financial industry. They validate the former Goldman Sachs employee, Greg Smith, who has written and spoken publicly about the disturbing psychological characteristics among his colleagues. And wasn't it Goldman Sachs' Chairman Lloyd Blankfein who rhetorically asked an interviewer with the *London Times*,

“Is it possible to have too much ambition? Is it possible to be too successful?” Blankfein has publicly stated he doesn’t believe there are or should be caps on either personal ambition or compensation and reward for personal ambition.

So when a study conducted by Vanderbilt University finds that psychopaths frequently have an abnormality in their neurochemical dopamine levels, which contributes to a narcissistic drive for personal reward at any cost and to engage willingly in risky behavior that benefits themselves while injuring others, we can better understand why unlawful conduct is commonplace among high powered traders, fund managers and their executive bosses

Dr. Christopher Bayer is a psychoanalyst who has earned the title of the Wall Street Psychologist after thirty years counseling and treating financial executives, CEOs, venture capitalists, hedge fund execs, traders, Wall Street lawyers and their families in Manhattan. He is intimately aware of the self-destructive and devastating psychological damage being caused by those deeply immersed in high finance culture, and is blunt about the epidemic of psychopathic personalities running throughout America’s corporations and firms. During a conversation with Dr. Bayer, he noted that psychopaths lack the capacity to experience empathy. “They don’t experience guilt. They don’t experience anxiety. They are driven, hyper vigilant and on Wall Street most of it is about power and control.” He estimates that among his Wall Street clients, this is the norm. “It’s about seduction. Show me the money. It’s the opiate of western culture and this is what I glean from my patients.”

“The people I work with basically say to me, ‘Let them catch us if they can. We have enough money to legally draw out for ten or twenty years anything the government does to us.’ It’s a war of attrition, and the Bernie Madoff caper is a good example.”

“The 2008 subprime crisis, based on the people I work with, was totally predictable. John Paulson made 15 billion dollars because of that crisis. Totally predictable and it’s all self-serving. The issue of sustainability, righteousness and virtue is not considered.”

The Vice President of the National Association of Chiefs of Police, Jim Corey, collected data on personality traits common to specific professions, primarily looking at superficial charm, an exaggerated sense of self-worth, glibness and lying, lack of remorse, and manipulation of others. These are common traits of psychopathic killers, but Corey also found them common among many politicians. The problem that arises is whether or not the entire system within which private corporate industries and our federal government function and progress is now programmed to be psychopathic. Has corporate culture now de-evolved to such a degree where psychopathology has been legalized and above the law?