

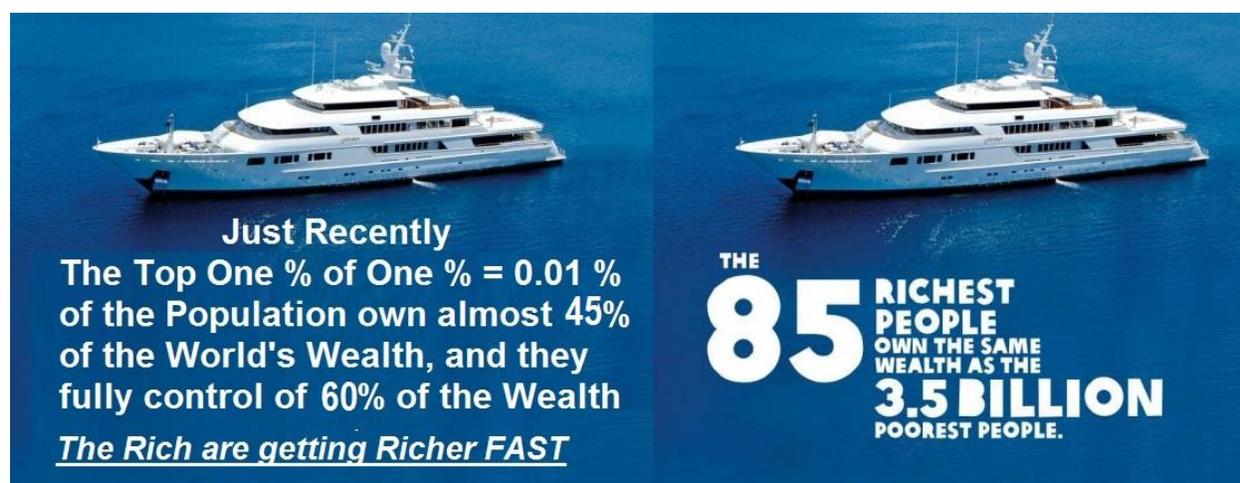
# An Open Letter To The Guys Who Run The World

By **Monty J. Renov**

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'Hi! This is directed to the hundred, or couple hundred, people who actually run things. I don't pretend to know who you are, whether you're some sinister Council of Illuminati or just a bunch of boring guys in impeccable suits. But you guys know who you are. I just need to pass on an important message to you, which I'll get to in a bit.

**First off, congratulations.** I'm told the top 80 of you now hold a full 51% of the world's wealth. Pretty sweet! And I want to reassure you, I'm not speaking from a place of resentment here. I'm not here to scold you, or pass moral judgment on you and your class. Seriously, I'm not. In fact, I'm trying to be the best friend you'll ever have.



I'm no one special, by the way. Just another of the proles out here in Sector Twelve. Many of my friends, by the way, are convinced that you have no regard for us at all down here in the 99% - that we might as well all be cockroaches as far as you're concerned. I have no idea whether that's true or not (you may, however, want to talk to some of your friends who have been doing their best to reinforce this view), but I certainly hope it's not - that at least a few of you might be afflicted with the curse of "empathy" or "human feeling." I'm not here to debate that. And anyway, it's irrelevant. I'm not going to appeal to your theoretical sense of empathy. I'm going to appeal to your self-interest.

But I said I had an important message to pass on to you. Sorry, almost forgot. Here it is:

You really need to help us save the world. Not only that, it is in your best interests to do so!

See, I don't know if you're aware of this, in whatever rarefied bubble you spend your days in. But those massive corporations that you guys control, those giant moneymaking machines you have set into motion? They are poisoning the earth, air, and water, accelerating climate change, killing off the animals

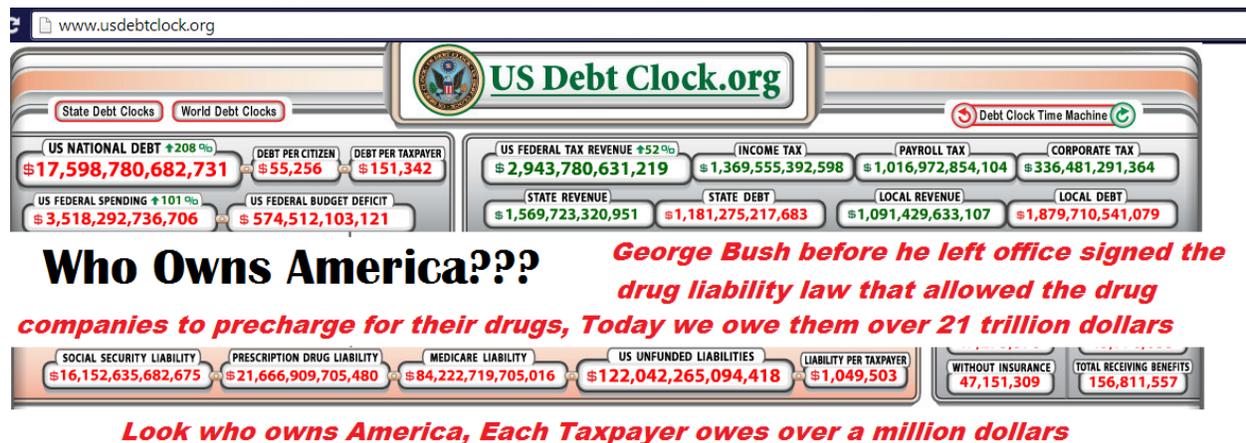
and plants, and generally helping us all drown in our own collective waste.

Now, that may seem - at the moment - like it's not your problem. I'm here to tell you, it IS. Because we only have one of these planets. There might be millions of others out there, but they aren't where we can reach them any time soon. For all practical purposes, this is it. And it's not just us cockroaches who are going to be caught in the destruction - it's you guys, too.

Right now, you have successfully built elaborate bubbles of privilege which might have convinced you that, whatever happens to the rest of us, YOU and your friends and loved ones are gonna be fine. Maybe you have your post-apocalyptic bunker all set to go, or a spacecraft or an undersea city, like the villains from "Moonraker" and "The Spy Who Loved Me," respectively. (Bear with me, I grew up in the Roger Moore era.) Some of you are even excited about the prospect, envisioning that the post-apocalypse will be like your idealized, rule-and-regulation-free version of the Wild West.

I'm here to tell you, it just isn't going to work.

Item One: For one thing, you may not make it to your escape pod/bunker/generation ship at all. Before things break down entirely, there will inevitably be a season of mobs with pitchforks and torches visiting you guys. I'm not going to be part of that mob, understand - I'm a total pacifist and an unreconstructed hippie, I would never hurt anybody - but there are plenty of other people who don't have my inhibitions in that area. Some of them might even work for you already! As Robert Heinlein (hardly what you'd call a bleeding heart liberal or an anti-capitalist) reminds us, think how often people like you end up betrayed by their closest friends and most loyal servants. And that's under normal societal conditions! If society really comes apart? All bets are off.

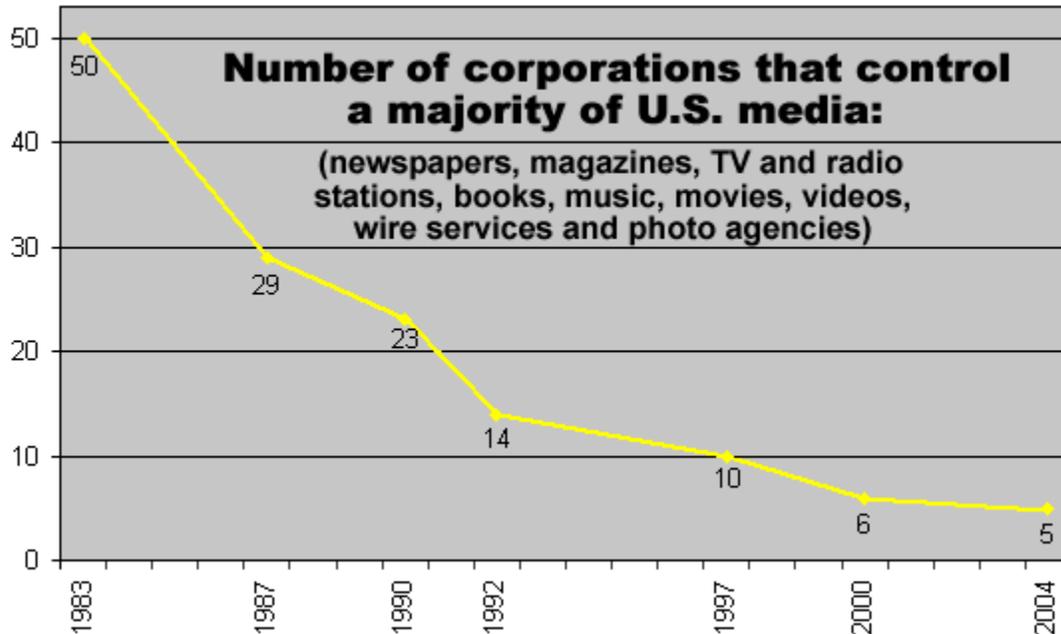


Item Two: Even assuming you make it to your bunker, you have to live out the rest of your life there, and apart from anything else, it's going to be BORING as hell. And LONELY. You guys may consider yourselves Randian lone wolves, but think about it. No more Paris or Tokyo or Dubai or private South Seas islands to run off to. No more outside world to explore. We here in the 99% may be inconvenient and intrusive, especially at the height of tourist season - but we're also the ones who make the wine, train the racehorses, dig for the truffles, and write all the TV shows. Even if you think you've socked in enough of every possible commodity to satisfy your needs forever, one day you're gonna suddenly crave, say, a Reese's peanut butter cup, and realize you forgot to pack any, and that there are no more of them anywhere in the post-apocalyptic landscape. And then you'll get to brood about Reese's peanut butter cups dangling tantalizingly out of your reach for the rest of your life. You guys like instant gratification. That's gonna drive you crazy.

Item Three: I realize this is contrary to the whole Ayn Rand lone wolf worldview, but the ugly truth is, your lifestyle depends on a veritable army of service personnel. How many support staff do you intend to bring with you to Galt's Gulch? Because you'll need quite a few - and beyond a certain point, they have a

disturbing tendency to morph into another of those emphatic groups with the pitchforks and torches. (Op. cit. Heinlein, above.) It's one thing now, when you can rely on the security state that is the U.S. of A. to protect your interests and keep the zombie hordes away from the gate... but what happens when your personal army of security guards get tired of seeing you sitting there hogging all the good stuff? Who's going to guard you from them?

Item Four: But let's say you're NOT going it 100% alone, but are all in it together, a proud little band of like-minded trillionaires creating a brave new world together. That's gonna be even worse. Think about it. You really want to spend the rest of the apocalypse in the company of the hundred richest people you know? You might barely be able to get through a dinner party with half of them. To use just one frightful example: what if one of them is Donald Trump? Wrap your head around THAT one.



Not to mention that they, like you, will all be bored out of their skulls after five minutes. These are high-powered people, used to playing with the lives of billions. (Hi from Sector Twelve!) You think they're gonna be satisfied with a stack of DVDs and a deck of cards? Not likely. My prediction is, you'll all find yourselves acting out a live-action version of "Game of Thrones" within a month. And while Westeros is an exciting place to watch on HBO, I don't think you're going to enjoy living there. (Yeah, yeah, I'm sure YOU in your wonderfulness will immediately rise to the top of the pecking order. And then you'll stay there for... as long as you can. May the odds be ever in your favor.)

Item Five: I know I said I wasn't going to bring this up, but there's the whole "watching the rest of humanity die horribly" thing. This whole scenario depends on you being completely and utterly willing to let billions of people, the bulk of the human race, die off in various gruesome ways without your lifting a finger to prevent any of it.

Are you?

Take a good long look in that gilded mirror, and truly ask yourself: ARE you?

Again, I freely admit: I have no idea how you guys live, or what any of you are like as individuals. But the unreconstructed hippie in me really, really WANTS to believe that you're still human beings, with hearts and souls. You really want seven or eight billion people haunting you? (And I promise you, I will be one of them. I have no compunctions about haunting.)

Because, the thing is? There's another option.

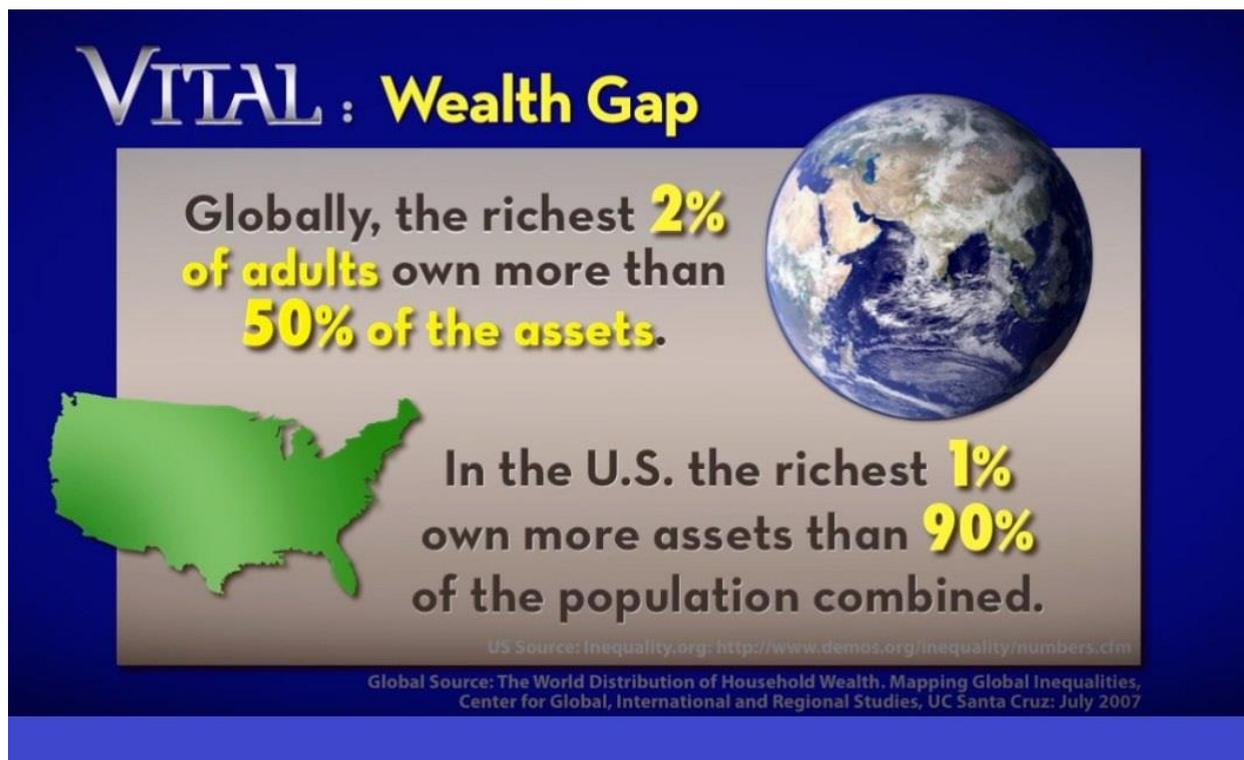
You can HELP.

Join with the rest of humanity. Help us save the world.

You guys are literally sitting on half of the world's collective wealth, and much more than half of the world's political power structures. You can accomplish things with the stroke of a pen we proles can only fantasize about.

There are scientists and engineers out there full of ideas about how to clean up the mess. Ideas about how to protect our land masses from rising oceans and the other ravages of climate change. Ideas about how to move beyond poisonous fossil fuels and reinvent the energy industry. Ideas about new ways of agriculture, of food, of making fresh water, of reimagining a thousand fields. You and your class are the people who can make those ideas into reality, by spending some fraction of your accumulated capital.

And guess what? The people who fund those ideas, and make stuff happen? They are going to make TONS OF MONEY. (Do I have your attention now?)



In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt, a wealthy and well-connected man, "betrayed his class" by daring to propose a downward redistribution of resources to benefit the masses, rather than just the 1% of his day. Many of those one-percenters still haven't forgiven him to this day - but guess what? Even after the New Deal, there were still rich people! You guys get all upset by the prospect of "wealth redistribution," but trust me, they aren't gonna take ALL of it. (That would be the job of those pitchfork mobs. They will be more than happy to take all of it.)

And yet by the time FDR died in office, almost all of those fat cats were richer than ever. The nationwide public works, the rural electrification, the restructuring of agriculture in the Dust Bowl - these weren't just "welfare" projects for the proles, they generated tons of revenue and created opportunities for innovation.

You would be getting in on the ground floor. Does that not appeal to you?

Incidentally, by "betraying his class," FDR also became the most beloved man in America. They wouldn't stop electing him. People hung up his picture over the mantel like he was the Pope. He betrayed the 400, but he took up his lot with the hundred million. Instead of continuing to pollute and destroy the only planet we have, and being known to posterity as one of the "evil selfish bastards destroying the planet out of unconscionable greed," wouldn't you rather be known as one of the guys who saved the planet?

Because the thing is, it only takes a few of you. I know the Kochs and Cheneys are still invested in the fossil fuels/weaponry paradigm, and they're the ones who get all the press. But that's the past - the stuff I'm talking about is the future, and there's so much opportunity out there for those willing to be a little more farsighted. Cheney and the Kochs are in the buggy-whip business, and you have a chance to get in on the ground floor of the automobile era. Again - does "getting in on the ground floor" not appeal to you guys at all? Bill Gates is out there doing it with disease control; but isn't anyone interested in the financial possibilities of seawalls? Air cleaning turbines? Seawater reclamation?

I'm here to tell you, you don't HAVE to be hated, and you don't have to fear us cockroaches. We are all on this planet together, and helping us will, in fact, benefit you as well. You guys, with your power and your resources, can make the future happen - and you can get richer AND become worldwide heroes doing it.

Please. Join us! Help us save the world!

**Monty J. Renov**



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There are 1500 newspapers, 1100 magazines, 9000 radio stations, 1500 TV stations, 2400 publishers, owned by only 3 corporations.