## REALITY QUEST

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## WELFARE

Before the year 1990, I had heard of the "welfare system", but never took much thought in depending on the government for the needs of my family who I felt responsible to take care of. I remember that my dad and mom had to use food stamps a couple of times while I was growing up, but that was the extent of my knowledge of the government programs set up to help the poor and needy.

Jackie and I lived on a five acre parcel of land near a beautiful river in Montana. I worked for \$4.25 per hour for a local farmer, and with this wage, I was able to support Jackie, Brittany, Joshua, Brandon, Caleb, and the little one growing in Jackie's womb who eventually popped out as Sariah. I didn't concern myself much about medical bills, because I was all ready experienced at delivering our children at home and I knew that any life threatening illness would be treated by the local hospital no matter what income one had. We lived just fine on the following budget:

 House payment
 \$302.00

 Utilities
 \$75.00

 Food & Misc.
 \$300.00

 Total
 \$677.00

I would work enough to earn about \$200 per week which usually gave us a monthly income of about \$800. I didn't report any taxes, because I knew the government would always owe me anyway, due to the amount of dependants I had and my low income.

I would have probably lived this simple and inexpensive lifestyle for the rest of my life, if the government had left me alone to pursue the happiness that I enjoyed with my little family on our beautiful land in Montana. The mess started when Paula and Carl Ladenburg tried to take Brittany and Joshua away from us without any legal or prior notice. (This issue is dealt with in another issue of *Reality Quest*) I naively assumed that the government would protect my legal rights as the custodial parent of Brittany and Joshua, and I subsequently cooperated with the investigation into the attempted kidnapping of Brittany and Joshua by the Ladenburgs not knowing that the Ladenburgs had "hired" justice to take my children away. It was quite a blow to me to learn how corrupt the legal system can be in the United States when one does not have enough money to *buy* an attorney.

Anyway, after this incident and the ensuing experiences I went through dealing with the government, I made the following resolution: If the government was going to tell me how to raise my children, where they should go to school, what they should eat and not eat, where they should live, and in some cases what they should wear, then they can pay for it!

My last three children Riley, Ryan, and Rachel cost the government about \$3,000 each. I could have delivered them at home for free, but had I done something wrong, I would have been assigned to a prison cell with the guilty. "Why take the chance," I thought. "If they (the government) want my children to be born in a hospital, then they can pay for it."

We were planning on planting many gardens of organic food in Montana to eat, milk a cow, and raise chickens for meat and eggs. The government would have stopped our food production citing us for insufficient land to do so and not complying with the set codes which they have set for living conditions. If I couldn't grow my own food, then let the government pay for it.

There are government regulations restricting the number of people that can inhabit a certain amount of square feet in any one dwelling. If I had to live where the government said, then let them pay for that too.

In other words, if society has set living standards for me, and they have passed laws which would punish me for not living up to *their* standards, then they will have to pay for me to live by *their* standards. I enjoy making \$4.25 per hour. Why should I have to work three jobs and pay half of my wages to the government, as taxes, when I can earn minimum wage and take advantage of the governmental programs?

Now I have the benefits of free medical care for my family and about \$350 per month in food stamps. Along with my monthly income of \$800, I get my food taken care of, and if I am forced to move into a bigger house, (due to the compliance of the governmental set square footage rules), then I will go on public housing which will assure me a low rent or house payment. Along with this, my children can attend school free of cost. It is wonderful to be poor.

Anyone with common sense would wonder why the government didn't just leave me alone to live the simple life I was pursuing and save a lot of taxes which pay for these welfare programs which I am benefiting from. The answer is simple: If the government didn't have people like me to take care of, they would have nothing to do and couldn't justify charging high taxes; but this is not the only reason.

Every one of the so called "middle class" and "upper class" groups who constantly complain about the "welfare class", better keep their mouths shut and their pocket books open. This is why:

Jim Jones owns an appliance store where he sells appliances and electronic devices such as: televisions, V.C.R.s, ect.... Mr. Jones is constantly complaining about the amount of taxes he must pay in order to take care of the "lazy welfare recipients who prey off me and my wallet."

Bryan Pobre works in the appliance store where he makes \$6.00 per hour delivering the appliances. After taxes, Bryan barely makes enough to pay the rent on his \$400 per month, two-bedroom apartment he rents from Mr. Jones who has owned the apartment complex where the Pobres live for some thirty years. Mr. Jones sets the rent he charges according to "the market", and since the real estate market has skyrocketed in the last three years, he now rents out the same apartment he used to rent three years ago for \$200, to the Pobres for \$400 per month.

The Pobres do not take food stamps or any government assistance, because Bryan is afraid his boss, who Bryan has continually heard in the past belittle those who "suck off the government", will find out and fire him. The Pobres can not afford to buy a new refrigerator, or a color television to replace the black and white one which uses tin foil for an antenna.

Jack Osborne also makes \$6.00 per hour, but he, his wife, and their three children are on public housing and receive food stamps. Because of the assistance they receive from the government, they were able to buy a new stove from Jone's Appliance Store as well as a brand new video camera to take a video of their vacation to Disney Land which they have saved for by putting \$25 per month in the bank for the past year; because the government paid for the medical bills they acquired when Mrs. Osborne had her baby.

The Pobres can not afford to save for a vacation, because they have to send \$50.00 per month to their dentist who extracted the aching wisdom teeth of Mrs. Pobre last year.

It is obvious who is benefiting the bigoted Mr. Jones the most. Jack Osborne bought merchandise from Mr. Jones' store thus improving Jones' profit. Bryan Pobre has no extra money to put into the economy over and above what he must to survive.

When the government claims to have spent, let's say, \$100 on welfare benefits, it has been shown through independent studies that only about \$25 gets to the recipient who has applied for the assistance. The other \$75 goes to the people who work for the government making sure the 15 cent check (the amount it costs to print the check) gets to the person who qualifies for it.

All of the \$25 given to the recipient goes back into the economy. There is no welfare recipient in the world who saves their welfare check. Therefore, by issuing \$100 in welfare benefits, the government is simply reinvesting it into the economy so that the rich can continue to get rich buy "sucking off the poor". (This I state in the sense that Mr. Jones is charging high rent and high prices for his appliances and paying low wages to his employees to increase his own profits. Therefore, he is "sucking off the poor" by charging the high prices to the poor for his own gain.) So I pose the question: Who is sucking off who?

There is no doubt in my mind that many welfare recipients cheat the system by not reporting income made "under the table", or staying on assistance longer than might be needed or authorized under the guidelines of the government. Should someone like Mr. Jones care? Here's another example:

John got his girlfriend, Joni, pregnant. They are both young and very insecure financially. Joni decides to go on welfare. Even though John lives with Joni, she tells her social worker that he does not; that he has abandoned her because she is pregnant. The State will sue John for child support based on the

average wage that he has earned in he past. This doesn't bother John much, because he makes low wages and will only have to pay \$100 per month in child support while Joni receives \$380 in cash, \$175 in food stamps, and free health care.

With the extra cash and benefits from the government, John and Joni are able to go to the movies and eat out once in awhile. They are able to buy new clothes and furniture for Joni's government subsidized apartment.

The State finds out about the "fraud" perpetuated against them by Joni and John, (owing to the fact that John has lived with Joni all the time), and prosecute them for welfare fraud. The State appoints them an attorney, which costs the State \$3000 by the time the case is over. John is found guilty of welfare fraud and is sentenced to 1 year in prison where the government pays another \$30,000 to keep him there and he also receives free health care, something he didn't receive before. Joni stays on welfare, because the government will not allow a tiny baby to starve to death.

Now what do we got? Had the government let them alone, John and Joni would have received about \$4,250 per year in welfare money, minus the \$1,200 that John would have continued to pay them in monthly child support payments, making the total cash entitlements, \$3,050. They would have received \$2,100 in food stamps, and limited health care, which would make the total money paid out by the government about \$5,150, plus heath care.

Because the government pursued John and Joni, (because the "Mr. Joneses" of the world complain and are the ones who vote and the ones who pay the salaries of the government officials), they paid \$3,000 to the defense lawyer defending John, \$30,000, plus health care benefits to house John in a state prison for a year, and Joni receives \$6,350 in welfare benefits, plus health care, when she would have only received the \$5,150 had the stupid government not locked up John who was paying them \$1,200 per year in child support.

This is only the beginning of the government expenses. While in prison, John learned how to rob banks, sell drugs, and make bombs. When John was released after he had served his time, he had no money, no job, no home, and a child and its mother who he couldn't live with, because he didn't want to get caught committing welfare fraud. Therefore, he robs a bank, kills a security guard, and now receives free room and board, free health care, and costs the government \$30,000 per year for the rest of his life.

In spite of all the problems the government has caused itself by prosecuting John, they have denied the movie theater and restaurant owners, where John and Joni used to frequent when they had the money, the income from John and Joni's business. Likewise, the furniture company and the appliance stores where they would have spent their extra money. These businesses had to lay off employees who in turn, went on welfare and started the "welfare cycle" once again.

They know the problems which arise out of not taking care of those who apply to them for assistance. In former times in history, the rich, who controlled the government, said, "Let them eat cake!" The modern government seems to be much smarter in what they do and say to the fastest growing class of people in the world, i.e., the "lower class", because they don't want to loose their heads like their predecessors did.

In Reality Quest, Volume One, Issue X, I wrote an allegory entitled, The Muddy River. In this allegory I postulated that the cause of the muddy river is coming from our own houses; and that there were some who knew how to eliminate the mud and clean up the river, but those who lived in the houses causing the mud, (who are also the same who are futilely trying to clean up the muddy water), would not allow them to do so. The people who are causing the mud are the Jim Joneses of the world and not the Bryan Pobres, the Jack Osbornes, or the Johns and Jonis.

Most business owners are in the business to make themselves rich and not their employees. They pay low wages and charge high prices for their goods in order to increase the profits to themselves. Their employees are forced to live in a lower economic class than their boss, unless they, too, start their own business where they have low paid employees. The majority of people work as employees to the rich and to middle class entrepreneurs. This majority can never reach the pinnacle of success as their employers, because if we were all business owners, who would there be to take the roles of the underpaid employees?

The basic needs of human existence are food, clothing and shelter. Less than 10% of the jobs in the United States have to do with producing these necessities. The other 90% have to do with improving the materialistic lifestyle of the individual. I do not condemn a person's desire to improve their lifestyle, however, I do not condone a person improving their lifestyle at the expense of others: this is precisely what

the rich do. An example of this is when the rich come into an area and begin to pay high prices for real estate. When this happens, all the prices in the area increase, including the rent of the poor who need a place to live just as much as a "well to do" person.

Now, the poor are not blameless. Most of them covet the rich and would become rich if afforded the opportunity to do so. This also contributes to "the mud". Instead of spending their money on the necessities of life, most poor find themselves trying to have the things that the more "well to do" have, thus actually lowering their standard of living. When Jackie and I lived our simple life in Montana, we enjoyed a high standard of living, (to us), because we did not covet what others had, thus being satisfied with the necessities of life, we were very happy. Our children were very happy too. The last time I visited my sweet Brittany and Joshua, (before they were adopted away from me), I couldn't believe the change which had come over them after having lived with the Ladenburgs for two years. Brittany's appetite for the "in style" clothes was insatiable. Joshua, who would have been satisfied with a canvas, inexpensive tennis shoe, wanted me to buy him the most expensive leather pair in the store. I knew then that the Ladenburgs were going to have quite a time trying to satisfy the wants of their children and that there would be quite a bit of "mud" coming from the Ladenburg's drain. But what could I do? A judge that had never met me in his life had decided that it would be better that Brittany and Joshua be Ladenburgs instead of Nemelkas. Time will tell if this corrupt judge was right.

I do not put the total blame on Carl and Paula Ladenburg. They are only doing what they have been taught to do by their parents, government, and society itself. However, what they have been taught is not working. Crime is increasing faster than at any other time in the history of the human race. Poverty is running even faster. *The Muddy River* is getting muddier, but there is hope.

Human beings have a great ability to learn from their mistakes. No matter what the religious fanatics claim, the human creature is in a much better situation than at any other time in its existence. Yes, we will still make many mistakes. But someday we are going to wake up, find the source of the mud, and eliminate it so that our waters run much cleaner.

Here is a brief overview of a plan which I have thought about: (I will give a more detailed explanation in another issue of *Reality Quest.*)

We have to eliminate cash from our economic apparatus. Cash creates greed. We have to pass a law which makes all men and women equal, like we are suppose to have in the first place, in the sense that no matter what the job, a person is paid the same wage for the same time spent performing the job. A doctor can not perform a successful operation using dirty operating instruments in a filthy operating room. The orderly who cleans the tools and prepares the operating room is just as important to the performance of the operation as the doctor. "Then what about all the schooling the doctor went through?" one might ask. Schooling should be free, and the student should be compensated the same wage as any other profession for the time spent studying and learning his or her profession. "The Majority" needs good doctors and should be willing to contribute to the education of good men and woman who will serve them well.

These 20 hours are donated time to the whole of society and receive no compensation. (It would work out to 4 hours per day). For this work, everyone would be given a set amount of food credits, let's say, housing credits, utilities credits, and clothing & misc. credits. The amount of these credits would be the amount necessary to live a "standard lifestyle" which would be determined by the wants and needs of the whole. If a person wished to live a "higher standard of living", they would simply have to work more hours, as many as they want, to meet their needs and desires. However, since everyone is paid the same wage for the same time spent working, everyone would have the same opportunity to live a "high standard of living", if they are willing to put in the time and effort to do so. If the simple, unstressed life is what one wants, then working four hours, five days per week, is all that would be necessary to assure that one's needs are met.

Space does not allow me herein to proceed with the explanation of my plan. I studied communism and capitalism and came up with what I call, "Capunism". I believe that if the reader were to study all of my plan and its ramifications, he or she would be apt to conclude that it might be a possible solution. However, nothing I or anyone else proposes will work, unless human beings start caring more about each other than their own self-centered (family-centered) self.

Marilanda