

On Profiting Due to the Misfortune of Others

By Rick Rossi Sr.

I ran into my ex-wife the other day. She was driving this huge new car. A stylish one and expensive. Nice car. I knew she had remarried a surgeon. My ex-wife works for a hedge fund and I think she is doing well and of course the surgeon husband makes huge amounts of money. Now, I am in favor of capitalism, bridled of course, more like the Western European social democracies, encapsulated within the philosophy of socialism, but seeing her driving in that huge car got me thinking. Here in the United States, healthcare is part of the unbridled capitalist philosophy. The doctor is making huge amounts of money off of people who must use his service, or another surgeon, who probably makes equal gobs of money, people who need healthcare...that is, through some misfortune must have help. And I started wondering if that really is okay.

But the problem starts with, if I believe my own previous writing, that there are no real ethical rules really to guide our behavior. We have only those rules that a society deems important at the time and indeed such rules vary from culture to culture greatly and over time just as much. No rules. No right and wrong. Why then do I feel such revulsion at the profiting due to another's misfortune? I'll chalk it up just to me. My feelings. The person I am. And if I ruled a country, one sure thing would be that people couldn't profit from another's misfortune. Listen, let's say thousands of years ago I am a great hunter. I share my bounty with others of the tribe and they do as well because hunting isn't always successful. In fact, the success of the whole tribe is dependent on cooperation and sharing. We know that each member is important to the Team.

One day, I am out hunting and am gored by an animal. Luckily, two of my brother hunters can carry me back to camp. Once there, the tribal shaman, a very skilled and knowledgeable doctor, usually an okay guy, decides that he won't treat me unless I agree to give him half of everything I hunt for the next year. And I have no choice because I will either die or be lame and hence no good to the tribe anymore. So, that means great bounty for the shaman but the tribe will suffer terribly. Do you actually think the other members of the tribe would stand for this behavior? Wouldn't they look on it as selfish and greedy behavior that is absolutely detrimental to the tribe as a whole? Of course they would. They would never let the shaman get away with it.

So, I would ask, why do we let such behavior be accepted today? Are we not one tribe of this Planet Earth? Do not we all contribute to the well being of the Team? Is Selfishness and Greed really acceptable behavior, either on a small or global scale?

There are so many people now due to overpopulation that it is hard to see how interconnected we are but if there is one thing this plane of existence makes clear is the interdependence of all things. You will see it if you pull your head up above the singular indoctrination you have been subjected to all your life and see that through the Fraternity of all men means we might survive as a species. Oh, you can take a shot with your own little group of people if you want, the intellectuals or the workers or the wealthy or maybe this country or that and see if your selfishness, greed and arrogance can make you king of the hill. But more likely than not you will lose. The strong don't always survive without the Team, in fact they have a much better chance if they cooperate. And certainly for our Earth now, all four corners of this globe must forego selfishness, greed and arrogance in favor of cooperation and teamwork, beginning with your neighbor all the way to your neighboring country. It is the only way we survive. One of the first

steps is surely to not profit from the misfortune of others. At least in an obscene way. Ask yourself does this person have to use the services of my profession or do they want to do so? If the answer is they must then it is a hardship and misfortune on them. Will you gouge your brother or sister so you can have that new flashy car?