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We're history's actors...and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do

"The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really works anymore," he continued. We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality - judiciously, as you will - we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

What did the aide to President Bush have in mind when he said these words to a journalist in 2004? He is clearly saying that empire is acting to shape events. Reviewing anything after the event changes nothing - it's academic. Reading between the lines, it's like the script is written, the show has begun - only this drama is so finely woven into our perceived reality that we don't discern the part of it that is prewritten, staged, spun or fabricated. We're just left to watch each episodic consequence of imperial policy as it cascades down to us.

So don't be surprised if the 'new realities' empire is creating will exploit the public's appetite for action movies, heroes and villains, spies and assassins, grand CGI cinema illusions, explosions, choreographed 'reality tv' and computer games. It makes sense for empire to mirror popular culture to get noticed. Consider the worldwide popularity of WWF wrestling. Note that Fox News is now the most watched and (get this) the most trusted news channel in the US.*1 So, assuming many major events are similarly substantially scripted, what is in the script?

Let's take a scenario. A new President is appointed. He is the cuddly mascot for an aggressive ideology. His administration desperately wants to increase military spending.*2 Only military power, it is argued, will ensure compliance from other governments. Investors expect their investments to be paid back with interest. *3 The threat of overwhelming military power is the best insurance against non-payment. And yet, one oil rich state isn't playing ball. Others could follow. What's the solution? Imperial power must be asserted.*4 An example must be made. But when we deliver the killer punch we need to be seen as the good guys, OK. So, what's the storyline?

Script: Let's make no mistake: The modernization of the Department of Defense is a matter of some urgency. In fact, it could be said that it's a matter of life and death, ultimately, every American's.*5

Objection: But we just pulled down the Berlin Wall. Communism is



dead. Give peace a chance.

Script: See these hijacked passenger planes exploding, these collapsing skyscrapers, hysterical on-lookers, crowds running for the exits, anthrax in the mail. Now it really IS a matter of life and death. Congress MUST pass the Patriot Act urgently. Look, 9/11 changed everything. We need to deploy our military to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Objection: Why?

Script: To capture Bin Laden, crush Al Qaeda and free the Iraqi people from tyranny.

Objection: Hang on a minute. Saddam Hussein has nothing to do with Al Qaeda. In what sense would invading Iraq be an act of legitimate self defence? Would the UN support it?

Script: Look - the UN is irrelevant. Saddam Hussein's has WMDs. They are pointing at you, They are 45 minutes away. Cue 'Eye of the Tiger' Rocky III theme music . Cut to explosions across the Baghdad night sky, excited journalists riding tanks, elated Iraqis, the toppling of a statue of the dictator, the President saluting the brave, mission accomplished.

Objection: If we're done why aren't the troops coming home?

Script: US presidential elections 2008. An African American is elected promising 'Change you can believe in'.*6 Cue a cacophony of headlines declaring credit crunch, banking collapse, bank runs.

Objection: What! You mean I could lose my savings?

Script: Yes, congress must agree this \$700bn rescue package for the banks URGENTLY.

And so the script continues.. each crisis ramped up to fever pitch to maximise the pressure on politicians to vote for something they might not have otherwise agreed to (more spending on defence, extended detention without charge, loan guarantees for private banks, further deregulation, austerity measures, mergers and privatisations).

Perhaps, as the Bush aide implied, we are powerless to reign in empire. Peaceful mass protest failed to prevent massive violence against Iraq. Official inquiries serve only to confirm the official storyline. The notion that journalists or anyone else can change the plot sounds increasingly idealistic. Too many vested interests are now at play delivering the next exciting twist. Too much commercial and private profit is riding on the plot delivering as planned.

There's no fortunes to be made puncturing the facade. Hecklers are routinely threatened, discredited, marginalised, sacked, or silenced.*7 139 journalists have been killed in Iraq - more than during the Vietnam war. With Net Neutrality under pressure and Google completely controlling on-line search, it is looking questionable that citizen journalism can fill the void.

Representative democracy is not going to change the script. It's unlikely that the President or the Prime Minister have any hand in writing it. They deliver the lines, they persuade, charm, sign off on the policy and bring MPs into line. Actors like Reagan and lawyers like Blair and Obama are well suited to the task.*8

No, to know the script start with the richest 1%. They ALREADY own almost 40% of the world's global assets. These *are* 'history's actors' - empire builders and their descendants, with interests in banking, oil,

drugs, film, media, guns and criminality. Historically rich men have used their wealth to dictate terms to governments. *9 Why would this be any different today? Governments are totally at the mercy of financial markets in which the wealthiest 1% have the decisive say.*10 Today's corporate CEOs are mere delivery boys by comparison to those that really wield the fortunes.

Colossal wealth bends a lot of ears. It buys a lot of lobbyists, media and political influence. It funds influential think tanks, educational establishments, charities and campaigns. It even funds wars. It persuades Presidents to cut taxes most for the rich. It greases the hands of the corrupt to seal the multi-billion dollar deal. It finds monopoly of supply to be in its best interest and so studiously ignores the competitive free trade principles it forces others to follow. It gets things done. It even has a controlling influence within the state's secret apparatus. *11

Complex games are played out to deliver the script in a way that allows its spokesperson to claim the moral high ground. In this world of 'new realities' the philanthropic ambitions of the 1% are loudly trumpeted whilst the victims of their 'all for profit' strategies are quietly airbrushed away. Coercion is everywhere and the penalty for unveiling state secrets is harsh.

So what *can* we know for sure. We can know that empire is a powerfully seductive storyteller. We can know that it's right to be [sceptical](#) of empire's stated motives. We can know that governments act in the interests of acquisitive private sector companies from whom they get tax receipts.*12 We can know that the wealthiest people, if not already within government, are able to send out very strong messages to government through the markets. We can know that a change of government may just result in continuity where foreign policy is concerned.

Finally, we can know that, alongside the 'reality-based community' is another community. They call themselves 'history's actors', they have a script, and what they are rehearsing next is not the Truman Show.

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Notes:

*1 This is in spite of clear evidence that managers at Fox are prepared to put commercial profit before public health.

*2 Bolton, Cheney, Perle, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz are all signatories to the principles of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). In its strategic thinking this group famously admitted that the journey to ensuring US invincibility - 'Creating Tomorrow's Dominant Force' - would be 'a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event

– like a new Pearl Harbor'. Many have made a link between these attitudes and the response to 9/11.

*3 President Bush made no bones about whose interests he represented, hence his statement at a dinner fundraiser of the rich and wealthy... "This is an impressive crowd - the haves and the have-mores. Some people call you the elites; I call you my base."



*4 What happened when Saddam declared that he would sell his oil in Euros? What was the [response](#) to Iran's stated plan to open an oil bourse where oil will sell in Euros?

*5 These were the actual words of Donald Rumsfeld during a Department of Defense speech in which he attacked the Pentagon's bureaucracy saying, 'according to some estimates, we cannot track \$2.3 trillion in transactions.' The speech was made the day before 9/11.

*6 The truly outspoken get the message when they hear someone they respect has become victim of a heart attack, a fatal fall, a car crash, suspected suicide or a bullet in the head.

*7 In fact, Obama shows a strong preference for 'continuity' in many of his appointments. Robert Gates will continue as secretary of defence. Lawrence Summers, champion of deregulated derivatives, will run the National Economic Council.

*8 New Labour came to power promising a more ethical foreign policy, then proceeded to render millions of Iraqis homeless. In 2009, Amnesty International listed 60 new powers curtailing human rights. The UK Parliament has made these law since 1997.

*9 In the US there were numerous Rockefeller associates appointed to the Kennedy Administration. In the UK Nathan Rothschild came from a family so wealthy that it once bailed out the Bank of England. Lloyd George, in 1909, called him the most powerful man in Britain.

*10 We are currently being told that government deficits must be brought under control. Slashing of services and sale of remaining public assets (libraries etc) is the prescription - ie. bog standard IMF Structural Adjustment conditions. Yet the financial advisers who urge this course of action are the same ones that urged a public bailout of the banks just months ago. To support lending to the banks, governments have themselves become dangerously overindebted. This makes them vulnerable. They need a continuous stream of buyers for their bonds. Loss of confidence in their ability to find buyers for these bonds would paralyse the government's finances.

eg. Bank shares and bonds driven down to force Irish government to accept bailout and cuts package rather than defaulting in 2010.

*11 After Nelson Rockefeller was appointed special assistant to the President on Cold War affairs, he represented President Eisenhower on the National Security Council's Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). The OCB was responsible for authorising all CIA covert operations.

*12 Oil and gas provide 30% of all UK corporation tax receipts.

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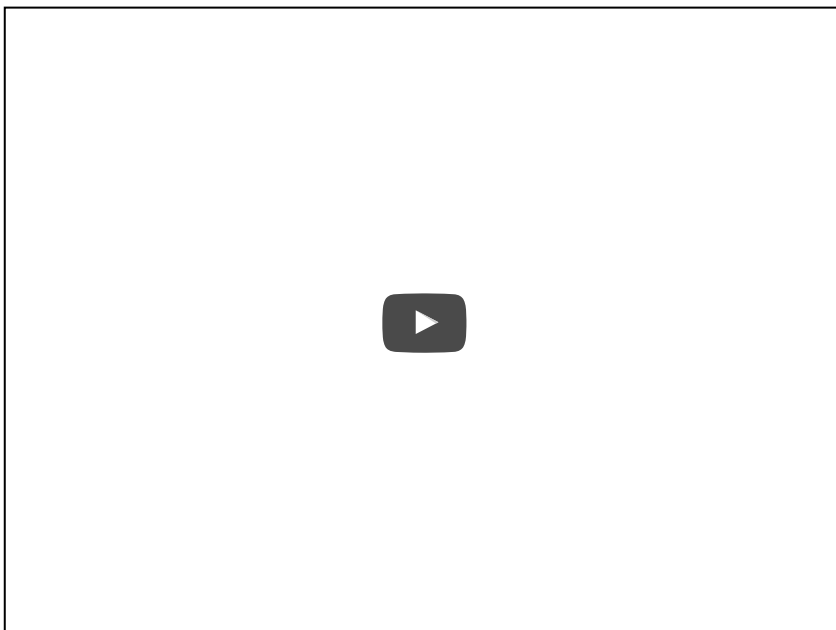
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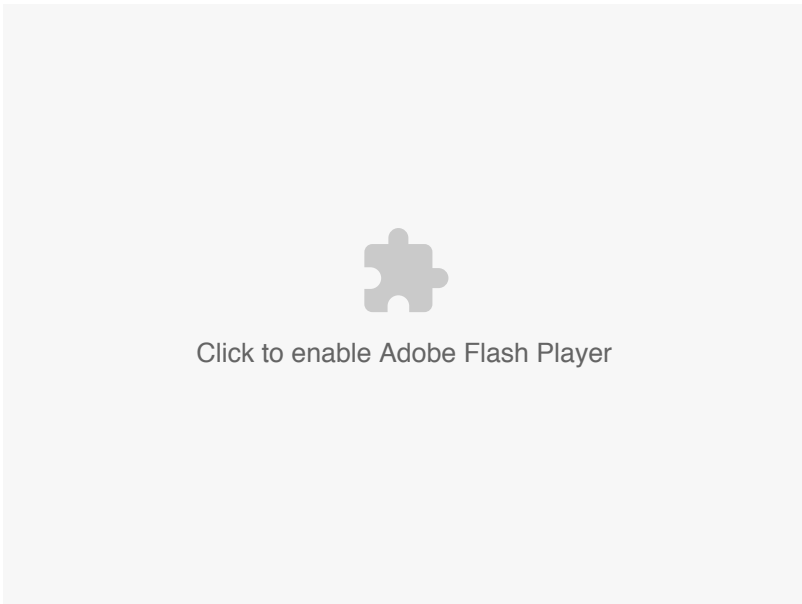


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Psywar Trailer from S DN on Vimeo.

Psywar (metanoia-films.org)

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Figure 2a: Wealth distribution by type of asset, 2007: investment assets

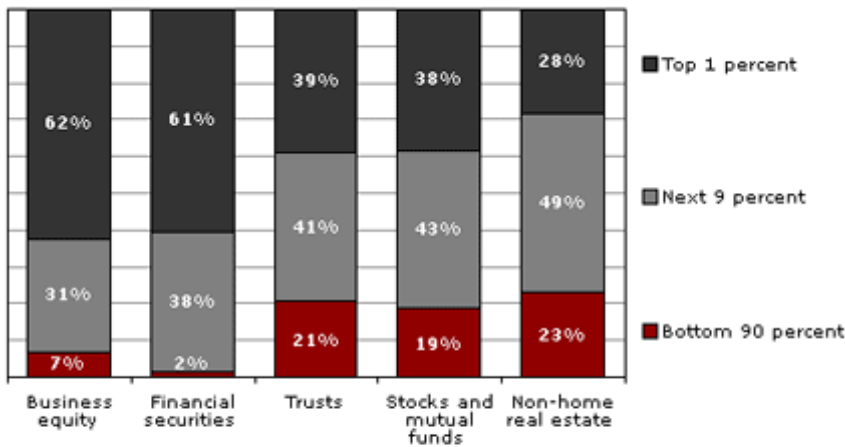
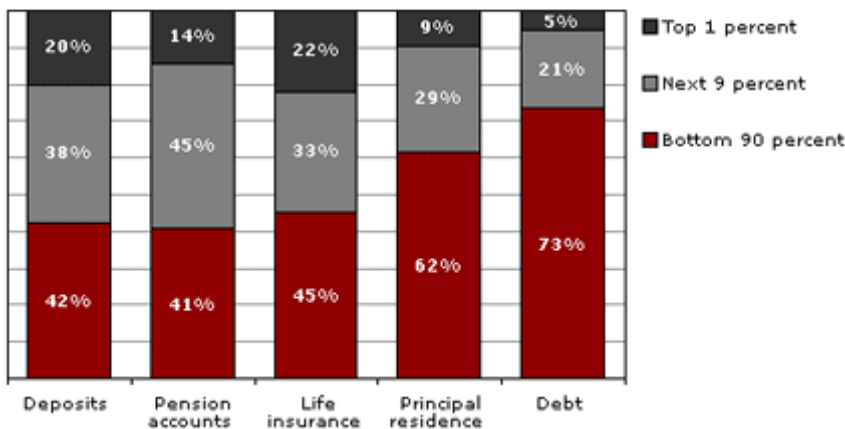


Figure 2b: Wealth distribution by type of asset, 2007: other assets



Graph: Look what percentage of business/financial assets are in the hands of the wealthiest 1% in the US. And note that the bottom 90% are the one's saddled with all the debt and with all their wealth tied up in the roof over their heads. For this and other revelations read

the recently updated 'Wealth, Income, and Power' by William Domhoff.

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