LEGEND

1 = original essay by Jon Perr

2 = neo replied

3 = Jon replied

4 = neo now asking (in red)

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1. Jon wrote

*As a new analysis from Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi showed, the combined federal efforts to rescue the American economy from its greatest collapse since 1929 "dramatically reduced the severity and length of the meltdown that began in 2008; its effects on jobs, unemployment, and budget deficits; and its lasting impact on today's economy." The impact of the measures taken in 2008 and 2009, including the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), the $800 billion Obama stimulus program, Obama's auto bailout and the Federal Reserve's "quantitative easing," is simply staggering. Without those policy responses--almost all of which were opposed by Congressional Republicans*

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2. neo replied

Here is my first area of confusion. We both know that the modern Republican party works for the rich ... and ONLY for the rich.

(That claim is easily defendable by looking at every bill they propose and every bill they oppose. They don't even make an attempt to hide who they work for; nor do they even bother to occasionally try to help the masses; and if they do anything that hurts the rich - it is only because they have to, and they do everything in their power to minimize the damage to the rich).

So, why were the majority of Republicans against the bailouts?

Was it because they wanted more for the corporations than was being offered?

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3. Jon replied

If we’re reviewing all of the steps the federal government took to rescue/stimulate the economy between the fall of 2008 and mid-2009, it’s important to separate the Congressional responses during the Bush and Obama administrations.

When the [House first voted on the $700 billion TARP program in late September 2008](http://money.cnn.com/2008/09/29/news/economy/bailout/), 2/3 of Democrats and 1/3 of Republicans voted for it. Most (John Boehner, Nancy Pelosi, Barney Frank) simply believed the financial sector—and the U.S. economy—would collapse without it.

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4. neo now asking

This marks the second time that unrestrained capitalism (monopolies, etc.) has driven America, and the world, into economic ruin. Yet since the Great Recession, has anything changed? Or do we see even fewer power players at the top of every industry?

Dodd-Frank has been gutted; voter suppression has been restored; and "Citizens United" has effectively reduced our Democracy to a joke. The rich are growing richer by the second, while the rest of us struggle to keep our heads above water.

Without the Bailout from taxpayers, the world of the Robber Barons would have been severely damaged. The champagne would have slowed to a trickle. No doubt that would have made it very painful for everyone else as well; but either we can just keep on repeating this wash-rinse cycle, or we can suck it up and reshuffle the deck. That's how Roosevelt fixed it - and his results were far better than the situation that we still find ourselves in today.

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3. Jon replied

But the measure initially failed to pass because conservative Republicans feared (a) the price tag; (b) government involvement in the banking sector; and (c) rewarding “moral hazard,” whereby private individuals and companies pay no price for their own risk-taking and bad investment decisions. For most GOP opponents, blind obedience to “free markets” trumped economic disaster..

But when Wall Street tanked after the bill’s rejection, both the [House and Senate passed TARP just days later](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/04/business/economy/04bailout.html). The House vote was 263 to 171, with 91 Republicans joining 172 Democrats in favor.

When Democrat Barack Obama became President, the Republicans’ political calculus changed. Even before he took the oath of office, GOP strategists like Bill Kristol were calling for Congressional Republicans to block EVERYTHING Obama proposed, whether what became the $787 billion stimulus in February 2009 or the Affordable Care Act (March 2010.) As you may recall, on the very night of Obama’s inauguration, a dinner of GOP leaders and strategists agreed that they should undermine his presidency by opposing every White House initiative. For more background, see:

“How the Obama economy overcame Republican sabotage”

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2016/01/24/1472698/-How-the-Obama-economy-overcame-Republican-sabotage>

It’s not just that [Mitch McConnell](http://www.perrspectives.com/blog/archives/003132.htm) explained his objective was to make Barack Obama “a one-term President.” McConnell boasted that “we worked very hard to keep our fingerprints off of these proposals” so Obama would get the blame if they failed.

“Six Years Too Late, Media Call Congressional Republicans ‘Traitors’”

<http://www.perrspectives.com/blog/archives/003205.htm>

That’s why the $800 billion stimulus got only 3 GOP votes, even though over 40 percent of its cost went to tax cuts.

That’s part of the reason why they opposed Obama’s auto bailout. Some, for “free market” reasons, believed that GM and Chrysler should be allowed to fail. Others, like Mitt Romney, wrongly believed that private capital could be found to salvage down-sized versions of the companies. (As I think we discussed previously, this was simply not the case. By late 2008 and early 2009, the government was the only possible investor left.)

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2. neo replied

And why did most Democrats support it? Did they believe that enabling the greatest transfer of wealth in world history from the masses to the rich was the best alternative? And if so, why?

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3. Jon replied

Most Democrats hated the TARP package because Wall Street firms were being saved while hundreds of thousands of Americans were losing their homes or seeing them go “underwater.”

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4. neo now asking

That is exactly why my problem is not with the decision to bail out the economy ... my problem is with, WHOM the money was given to.

Am I wrong in assuming that you understand my position?

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3. Jon replied

But most voted for it anyway because they believed they had little alternative in the fall of 2008.

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4. neo now asking

Is it more likely that they saw little alternative - or that the alternatives they saw would infuriate the Big Boys to whom they owed their allegiance?

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3. Jon replied

Credit markets were simply frozen and the ability of people and businesses to borrow was coming to a complete halt. Without injections of capital from Uncle Sam, many banks would have failed.

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4. neo now asking

If the injections of capital from Uncle Sam came in the form of low-interest loans to individuals, small businesses, and local governments, wouldn't we have been able to get a much better deal than we could get from the Big Banks? In other words, why not save the victims ... instead of the suspects?

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3. Jon replied

The fear was that without action, the economic contraction would be much worse, even on the scale of the Great Depression.

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4. neo now asking

The New Deal provided safety nets that did not exist before The Great Depression. Despite constant Republican efforts to remove them and restore the Oligarchy, many still remain (Social Security, Unemployment, Medicare, etc.). Why make the people go through a Great Recession? Why not make the Plutocrats (who certainly earned it) go through a recession, instead of rewarding them so they can relive the Roaring 20's?

(and let's face it: a recession for them means they might have to either sell one of their vacation homes or forego reupholstering the jet).

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3. Jon replied

For more background, see PBS Frontline “Inside the Meltdown”:

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/meltdown/

For most Democrats, this wasn’t about “enabling the greatest transfer of wealth in human history” but avoiding national economic suicide.

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4. neo now asking

But they did enable it.

If someone stripped you down naked and took everything you owned, and then continued to look you over to see what else they may have missed, don't you think that any action you might take, would be better described as trying to prevent a homicide ... rather than calling it a suicide?

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3. Jon replied

That said, there were other ways the federal government could have gone about it. As Paul Krugman suggested, the government could have nationalized the banks, much as Sweden had done in the early 1990’s. Uncle Sam would take ownership stakes in the banks, shutting down some, putting new people in place and profiting as the rest recovered. But the Bush administration and the GOP would have had none of that.

That said, President Obama did not extract concessions from or punish the big banks when he first took office, that is, when his popularity and leverage were at the greatest.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/inside-obamas-presidency/

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1. Jon wrote

*The peak-to-trough decline in real gross domestic product (GDP), which was barely over 4%, would have been close to a stunning 14%; The economy would have contracted for more than three years, more than twice as long as it did; More than 17 million jobs would have been lost, about twice the actual number. Unemployment would have peaked at just under 16%, rather than the actual 10%; The budget deficit would have grown to more than 20 percent of GDP, about double its actual peak of 10 percent, topping off at $2.8 trillion in fiscal 2011.*

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2. neo replied

Regarding the auto bailout

Demand for cars had dropped drastically. Why couldn't the smaller companies have taken up the slack?

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3. Jon replied

In late 2008 and early 2009, there were no smaller American producers to have picked up the slack.

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4. neo now asking

Are you sure about that?

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_automobile_manufacturers_of_the_United_States>

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3. Jon replied

Just as important, all of the U.S. auto makers use an extensive network of parts suppliers for the components to build their cars. If GM and Chrysler had gone out of business, the parts suppliers would have been decimated, too. That’s why Ford supported the government bailouts of GM and Chrysler even though it didn’t government money to survive at the time. Ford knew its suppliers would have failed without GM and Chrysler.

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4. neo now asking

If those other car manufacturers (in the list above) had taken up the slack, wouldn't they have had to use the parts suppliers that had been used by GM and Chrysler? Why not loan the money to them instead?

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2. neo replied

Why couldn't skilled GM workers be hired by these smaller companies who would have needed immediate, skilled help?

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3. Jon replied

In early 2009, no one was in a position to hire anybody.

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4. neo now asking

Those other manufacturers would have needed to hire workers to handle the orders that would have gone to GM and Chrysler. Why wouldn't they have been in able to hire technical people to handle the huge increase in orders?

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3. Jon replied

The industry was shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs.

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4. neo now asking

Can we agree that we can thank "Trickle-Down-Economics" for that?

Along with all the monopolies in every industry; and the offshore hoarding of America's wealth by the rich; and the export of American jobs abroad; and ... you get the picture.

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3. Jon replied

It wasn’t just the Big 3 cutting manufacturing workers. Dealerships, parts suppliers, etc. were hemorrhaging jobs. And all of the ancillary businesses (shops, restaurants, grocery stores) in the towns where they were located were suffering, too. In states like Michigan and Ohio, the auto industry ultimately accounts for between 1 in 6 and 1 in 8 jobs. Its collapse would have devastated the Midwest for decades.

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4. neo now asking

What evidence exists that an economic slowdown in auto sales would last decades? Has any slowdown in American history produced that result?

Even The Great Depression was dissipating well before a decade had passed.

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2. neo replied

Why couldn't foreign manufacturers have increased imports?

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3. Jon replied

The problem in 2008, 2009 and 2010 was demand. There were simply not customers to buy new cars from anyone. (I believe the industry’s pre-recession sales peak was 16 million vehicles sold in a year; by 2008/09 I believe it was less than 9 million.)

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4. neo now asking

If I understand capitalism correctly, isn't that the way it is supposed to work: supply and demand? Since demand was way down, why is it government's responsibility to create it?

If a product like coal should no longer be in demand (which is rapidly coming, courtesy of Mother Nature) why should government bail out the Koch Brothers?

That isn't capitalism; that isn't even socialism ... it's highway robbery.

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3. Jon replied

Without the auto bailout, foreign companies would have eventually gained ground in the U.S. market without GM and Chrysler. But the recovery in demand for cars would have been years further off; the loss of domestic auto jobs would have hurt the American economy too deeply.

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4. neo now asking

If that is true then you might have a tough time explaining this ...

<https://www.cars.com/articles/the-2015-american-made-index-1420680649381/>

The major corporations have been outsourcing American jobs for years to take advantage of cheaper labor and tax breaks. Did you notice in the link, that the years on the first graph came after the Bailout?

Obviously, domestic jobs are a zero priority for the rich. At every opportunity, they will sell us down the river for an Indian Head nickel.

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2. neo replied

We know from evolution (specifically extinction studies) that when a vacuum is created (i.e., the dinosaurs) survivors flood in to occupy the vacated space (i.e., mammals).

In the economic recession, there would have been any number of capitalists jumping at the opportunity to start a business or enlarge their existing businesses to replace those that had failed. In fact, isn't that the way capitalism is supposed to work?

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3. Jon replied

In theory, yes. But in reality, the problem was customer demand. The challenge for the U.S. economy and for government and business alike was that demand was so low.

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4. neo now asking

That tends to happen when the 1% strip most of the wealth out of society. It's hard to buy things when you have no money. Which leads me to wonder: why would anyone think that the best solution was - to give the rest of OUR money to the ones who crashed the economy, instead of stimulating demand by giving it to consumers? (whose money it was in the first place)

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3. Jon replied

Even if interest rates are low (as they were), businesses and entrepreneurs aren’t going to invest if there is no demand for the new products and services. (This is one of the reasons corporations were soon sitting on trillions of dollars. When demand is low, it’s a horrible time to invest.)

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4. neo now asking

And what happened to those trillions of dollars they were sitting on? It got a hell of a lot bigger, didn't it? Why invest ... when you can legally steal?

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3. Jon replied

That’s why the stimulus program was urged—and should have been even larger. By putting money into infrastructure projects, into state and local governments and directly into Americans’ hands, the Obama administration was trying to boost demand for products and services. But some kinds of stimulus, like unemployment benefits, food stamps, aid to states/localities, etc. have a much higher “bang for the buck” because they are immediately spent and put back into the economy. Tax cuts for the rich, however, have a low “multiplier” because those dollars and generally saved and not spent.

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2. neo replied

Shouldn't the bailout billions have been given as loans to those who had not savaged the American economy?

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3. Jon replied

In the case of TARP and the bailouts to financial institutions, they were loans and they were paid back.

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4. neo now asking

Is it your position that all was paid back?

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3. Jon replied

Krugman, among others, that the $$ should have bought Uncle Sam ownership stakes in the companies, allowing the government as the largest shareholder to make the policy and management changes the institutions would otherwise never make by themselves.

In the case of the auto bailout, the feds did a mix of loans and ownerships stakes. The result is the government could dictate terms—cutting brands, closing dealerships, negotiating union contracts, etc—that GM and Chrysler management otherwise would might not have.

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2. neo replied

The bailout solution was the antithesis of capitalism. It was pure socialism. For a nation that prides itself on capitalism and demonizes socialism whenever possible, I find it ironic that when their backs were against the wall, the Big Boys screamed ...

"Socialism, help us!"

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3. Jon replied

You’re absolutely right that the Bush and Obama administrations helped these companies to “privatize profits and socialize losses.” That is, taxpayers picked up the tab for the losses these firms recklessly ran up.

In the case of the banks, what taxpayers probably needed was more socialism. That is, by temporarily taking ownership of the banks, the government could have fired the guilty and restructured the entities. Later, as the economy improved, Uncle Sam could sell his shares of stock for a profit.

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2. neo replied

Regarding the Wall Street and Big Banks bailout

Since there can be no moral justification for rewarding those who failed, with riches beyond their wildest dreams, the only reason given as to why we should bail out those who decimated the American economy, was that it was in the best interests of the masses. We were threatened with horrible consequences if we did not come up with the money and give it to them.

Why not call extortion what it is?

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3. Jon replied

In a sense, it was extortion. Neither President Obama nor the Dodd-Frank legislation went far enough in creating a regulatory framework to prevent another crisis of “too big too fail” from ever happening again.

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4. neo now stating

It took decades, but Republicans were finally able to remove Glass-Steagall.

Dodd-Frank didn't last nearly as long before they gutted it too.

Most Americans continue to display dementia when it comes to learning lessons from the past.

When Conservatives gain total control of the government in early 2017 (all 3 branches + a majority of the states), there will be nothing to stop them from cashing in again. I almost feel like saying that the masses deserve the government they get. But the truth is: that only applies to about half the people. I think political Comedian John Fugelsang put it best:

"*America is like 2 conjoined twins that can't be separated*

*and the twin without a brain won't stop smacking the twin that has one.*"

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3. Jon replied

At least in the case of GM and Chrysler, some upper management paid some price for their failure.

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4. neo now asking

I won't be happy until every single one of those bastards is sentenced to a decade behind bars, sharing a cell with Subway Spokesman, Jared Fogle.

Can I get an Amen?

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1. Jon wrote

*Now, this isn't the first time Bill Clinton's former head of the Council of Economic Advisers and John McCain's 2008 economic adviser touted the success of the stimulus. In the summer of 2010 the duo similarly concluded, "We find that its effects on real GDP, jobs, and inflation are huge, and probably averted what could have been called Great Depression 2.0."*

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2. neo replied

There are better reasons why we didn't experience

The Great Depression 2.0

The New Deal provided many safety nets to Americans for the first time ever, while simultaneously bringing unfettered capitalism under control. But in the 80 years that followed, the rich never gave up trying to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again.

They only had limited success until the 70's, culminating with the election of Reagan, under whom, top marginal tax rates on the rich (which had already fallen from 90% down to 70%) were cut more than half (first to 50% and then to 30%). From then on, the dominoes began to fall. Regulations were removed, monopolies returned with a vengeance, and unions were weakened everywhere. Within a generation, economic inequality had returned to pre-

depression levels. A better explanation for why we didn't experience 2.0, was because Republicans had only removed half the nets ... half still remained.

But they have made it very clear:

they want social security ... gone

they want welfare ... gone

they want food stamps ... gone

they want unions ... gone

they want affordable healthcare ... gone

they want industry regulations ... gone

they want public prisons ... gone

they want public education ... gone

They are working feverishly to remove the remaining safety nets. If they succeed, what is to prevent the next time being ... 2.0?

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3. Jon replied

What was left of the New Deal/Great Society safety net was not sufficient to prevent the size or limit the duration of the Bush recession that started in December 2007.

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4. neo now asking

How could anyone possibly know how big or how long The Great Recession would have been without the remaining safety nets?

How could anyone know how much different the recovery would have been had the Bailout funds gone to the masses instead of the Plutocrats?

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3. Jon replied

Ultimately, the stimulus was required to help jump start demand and extend unemployment insurance coverage and food stamp eligibility.

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4. neo now asking

Don't you recall that Republicans cut short U.I. benefits and also reduced food stamps benefits?

That money would have helped jump start demand - but apparently, it was more desperately needed on the yachts that were running low on caviar.

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3. Jon replied

As Zandi and Blinder said, the combined federal interventions—TARP, stimulus, auto bailout, payroll tax holiday, etc.—made the difference.

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4. neo now asking

Except that there is no way for them to know what would have happened had we followed any of the other paths available, is there?

They can only analyze and report on the path that was taken.

And the path taken proved to be paved with gold for the Plutocrats,

while we are still struggling with the slowest recovery in history.

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3. Jon replied

But you’re right about the bigger point. If Social Security and Medicare were privatized, the two programs which dramatically reduced poverty among the elderly, seniors’ standard of living would be immediately jeopardized.

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4. neo now asking

Beginning January 20, 2017, when all of those Fox News Fanatics

(senior white heterosexual Christian men with all their mistresses and cabana boys) finally begin to realize what they have enabled ...

do you see the same spike in suicides that I do?

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3. Jon replied

The further erosion of unions, the curtailing of workplace and environmental protections, etc. would hurt Americans’ quality of life. And the notion of shifting federal dollars for education and health care (Medicaid) as block grants to the states means they’ll do what they always do: restrict eligibility and cut benefits.

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4. neo now asking

Don't you feel honored to be an American?

A breed of human so stupid that evolution demands our extinction,

if for no other reason, than to enable the survival of the species.

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3. Jon replied

In a 21st century economy where workers increasingly have “gigs” instead of jobs or careers, expanding and redefining the safety net is essential. (As in Germany, these programs need to be countercyclical. That is, benefits should kick in during recessions, not be cut by cash-strapped states.)

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1. Jon wrote

*As the Washington Post reported in June 2012, the House Budget Committee heard testimony from the CBO chief answering a simple question: did the $787 billion Obama stimulus work?*

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2. neo replied

Well, we know it worked out FANTASTIC for the rich; the big corporations; the megabanks; Wall Street; and the giant automakers.

For the rest of us, we are told ... "it could have been a lot worse."

And there are people who think that is a great argument? Why?

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3. Jon replied

With income inequality at a record high, there’s no question the economic recovery is complete for the rich.

But the issue with the stimulus isn’t that it didn’t work. It did. With the jobs and economic growth that was saved, as the CBO and the overwhelming consensus of economists attest, the stimulus largely worked as designed.

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4. neo now asking

How can the experts claim it worked when we are still mired in its aftermath? How can they claim it worked when there is no way to compare it with other plans that were not tried?

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3. Jon replied

The problem is that the stimulus wasn’t big enough and its mix of programs skewed. A stimulus of, say, $1.2 trillion would have been closer to the magnitude needed. Just as important, the over-emphasis on tax cuts instead of infrastructure spending, grants to states and localities to maintain employment and program spending, and a “cramdown” of banks to provide homeowners with more mortgage relief could have really helped.

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1. Jon wrote

*CBO's own analysis found that the package added as many as 3.3 million jobs to the economy during the second quarter of 2010, and may have prevented the nation from lapsing back into recession.*

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2. neo replied

Even if the recession had continued longer than it did, the replacing of failed businesses and banks by new ones is pretty much what capitalism is supposed to be offering us, isn't it?

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3. Jon replied

In theory. But capitalism is amoral. The “free market” doesn’t care if millions can’t afford health care or if monopolies charge obscene prices. For free marketeers, whatever results is moral and just because buyer and seller came together as equals in a mutually-agreed to exchange free of coercion.

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4. neo now asking

How do they conclude that the buyer-seller relationship is equal?

How do they conclude that the capitalist-employee relationship is equal?

Those relationships are rigged from the start ... by the sellers/capitalists.

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3. Jon replied

But in few markets are buyer and seller equals (especially in health care). And if the buyers can’t afford the products or the seller is located in another country, real Americans lose.

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4. neo now asking

Or if the seller needs to add Wu-Tang Clan to his private collection for 2 million dollars, and some people have to die because they can't afford the jacked-up price of his life-saving drugs ... tough titties.

Has our government done anything to fix that abomination yet?

Don't bother answering ... the question was rhetorical.

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2. neo replied

Isn't that why monopolies were busted up a century ago - so that we wouldn't be in the dangerous position of having businesses that are "too big to fail?" Businesses that can, and did, hold America hostage until we paid them the ransom?

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3. Jon replied

When Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressives began their trust-busting and breaking up monopolies, the issue wasn’t so much as “Too Big to Fail” as “Too Big to Be Stopped.”

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4. neo now asking

But 100 years later, haven't we now learned that "too big to be stopped" and "too big to fail" are basically the same thing?

In each case, citizens are stripped of their assets by the Plutocrats, who apparently aren't satisfied with the return they are making on their investments and products.

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3. Jon replied

That is, monopolies and cartels could charge what they want, restrict markets and competitors and hold labor hostage.

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4. neo now asking

Pretty much like they are doing today, huh?

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3. Jon replied

The railroads, the steel companies and the oil companies did hold consumers, workers and even the government hostage.

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4. neo now asking

Remember "The Fiscal Cliff?"

I can't say nothing has changed because after The New Deal, America went through a golden age. But beginning with the election of Ronald Reagan, it only took one generation for America to hand almost everything back to the Plutocrats; and they took us hostage again.

It's what they do ... it's what they always do ... and we never learn.

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1. Jon wrote

*As it turns out, the Obama stimulus would have even more effective had it not been offset by draconian spending cuts by state and local government.*

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2. neo replied

Why didn't we give that trillion dollars to state and local governments then, instead of those filthy bastards who raped America? Why didn't we give it to small businesses and let them take up the slack left by those "too big to fail?" Why didn't we give it to the masses who lost their jobs and their homes?

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3. Jon replied

As I mentioned above, I’m with you on this. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the Obama stimulus) directed some money to states and local governments, it should have been larger. Obama’s 2011 “American Jobs Act,” which called for large infrastructure investments and aid to states/localities to keep 300,000 teachers, cops and firefighters on the job, was filibustered by Republicans.

One of the saddest ironies of all is that the Tea Party took off in early 2009 after CNBC host Rick Santelli denounced the idea of mortgage bailouts for individual homeowners. But that cramdown of the banks was never seriously considered, even as the banks got their billions. And the Tea Partiers protested they were “Taxed Enough Already” even as federal taxes hit their lowest percentage of GDP since 1950.

“Five Years after Santelli's Rant, a Look Back at 10 Lessons for Tea Baggers”

<http://www.perrspectives.com/blog/archives/002983.htm>

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2. neo replied

Why did we have to suffer through draconian spending cuts, while those who put us there dined on champagne and caviar ...

paid for by us?

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3. Jon replied

We all suffered because of the media triumph of free market ideology even as was being debunked and destroyed in the real world. And many Americans who could have benefitted from government regulation of and intervention in the economy believed—and continue to believe—it.

Republicans said taxes were too high when they were historically low. They claimed “the stimulus didn’t create a single job” and “Obama made the economy worse” when the data show the exact opposite. And we continue to hear conservatives claim “tax cuts pay for themselves” even though 40 years of U.S. economic history reveal they never come close.

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1. Jon wrote

*By May 2013, the Hamilton Institute estimated those austerity policies cost 2.2 American million jobs and resulted in the slowest recovery since World War II.*

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2. neo replied

But not for the rich; not for the megabanks; not for the corporations; not for Wall Street; not for the big automakers.

I remember news stories about the big corporations being told to tone down the wild parties and celebrations as it was raising suspicions and making them look bad. Do you remember those?

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3. Jon replied

Indeed.

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1. Jon wrote

*Maria Bartiromo said "... my marching orders are ... to help the viewer, help the voter better understand what each candidate's plan is; is it a realistic plan, can it work and how is it different from the next guy or gal, and that's what I plan to focus on."*

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2. neo replied

There is only one plan for today's Republican party: increase the wealth of the rich at the expense of the masses. Everything else is designed to distract the masses while their pockets are being picked.

If you know of an obscure bill proposed by Republicans that contradicts that statement, can you provide a link to it?

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3. Jon replied

In their defense, there are some ideas being kicked around by some Republicans that could help working families. The so-called “Reformicons” and their endorsers like Marco Rubio have backed ideas like expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit. The EITC has enjoyed bipartisan support in the past—even Reagan called the best pro-family and pro-jobs bill ever to come out of Congress. The problem is that Republicans who like the EITC invariably propose other tax reforms and deductions that hurt working families while helping the rich:

http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/03/08/1368928/-Rubio-Lee-tax-plan-means-more-debt-and-greater-income-inequality

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4. neo now stating

I should have said "passed" rather than "proposed."

And I should have limited it to this century.

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1. Jon wrote

*After all, the 800-pound donkey in the room is that Democratic presidents, Barack Obama included, consistently outperform their Republican counterparts.*

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2. neo replied

There is only one thing wrong with that last statement:

the Republican party ALWAYS outperforms the Democratic party

when viewed from the perspective of the Plutocrats.

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3. Jon replied

That’s actually not true. Job creation, income growth and economic growth are generally when better a Democrat controls the White House, and especially when Dems also control Congress. But it’s not just workers who do better. The stock market has done much better under Dems as well. And all of this happened at times when tax rates for the rich were higher—even much higher. As Harry Truman famously put it, “if you want to live like a Republican, vote Democratic.”

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4. neo now stating

I know better than to use the word "always."

Thanks for catching that mistake.

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Jon,

This exchange is unlike a scientific debate where evidence can determine a "winner." There is no winner/loser - right/wrong. These are just "positions."

We seem to be on the same side, but we disagree over how it was done.

If you want to answer the questions, you may of course, do so.

However, it is not really necessary. Our positions seem pretty set.

I learned a lot from this exchange. I had to do a lot of research. But the biggest benefit for me was, that after 9 years of debating science-deniers, Conservatives, Evangelicals, and every other idiot under the sun, I can't tell you how refreshing (and rare) it was to have a spirited disagreement with a rational mind.

For that ... I am grateful.

Good luck to you Jon,

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