

# Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: A Satirical Essay

by

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*caveat lector*

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There was a crooked man  
who walked a crooked mile

There are two types of people on government supported welfare programs: those who need to be on the programs and those who don't. Of the two types, only those who need the support are victims of poverty. Everyone else involved with a welfare program, in whatever capacity and however remotely, is benefiting from poverty. That, of course, includes those recipients of welfare payments who don't need them. Thus, the primary consequence of government supported welfare programs is to insure that the number of people benefiting from poverty is greater than the number of people suffering from it.

Parkinson's Law,<sup>1</sup> as applied to government supported welfare programs, tells us that welfare recipients will increase in number such as to absorb all available welfare payments. As a corollary, that increase in numbers will shift the proportion of welfare types heavily toward those who don't need it. The only limit to the total number of recipients that can exist is the level of payment that can be tolerated by the rest of society. Scholars in the field of social dynamics usually refer to the phenomenon as Propulsive Poverty, and recommend against it. In fact, those scholars with a finely honed sense of cynicism claim that the only workable solution to the problem of providing welfare support is to stop doing so as quickly as possible.<sup>2</sup> While a week's notice to all recipients might be considerate, such scholars point out that courtesy isn't really necessary and that overnight termination would be best.

I've examined this recommendation at some length and found benefits of the most profound nature. However, before discussing those benefits, it's appropriate to dispense with needless concerns for those individuals from whom welfare payments are to be withdrawn.

First, we need not feel any remorse for the plight of those welfare recipients who don't need welfare. They're all, by definition, capable of supporting themselves by their own abilities, through honest labor. Those who are willing to do so will earn a living. Those who are unwilling will starve. Hopefully, they'll do it quietly, somewhere far away.

Likewise, we don't need to feel any remorse for those people who really need welfare payments. Although they're unable to earn an honest living, a promising future awaits them. Their problem is to survive and, having been abandoned by society, they don't need to feel any reciprocal obligation. Amidst the wealth around them, to survive, they need only to steal. Although this suggestion might draw gasps of horror or dismay from the Bleeding Hearts, Do-Gooders, and various other imbeciles, it's a sound concept. It stems directly from the removal of welfare payments and, furthermore, provides the only valid test yet discovered for the real and honest need for welfare support. That is, those who are caught will be automatically placed into another, less appealing, welfare system: prison.

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1 *Parkinson's Law*, C. Northcote Parkinson, 1957

2 There's never a question of whether or not to initiate a welfare program. Invariably, some fool has already done so.

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He found a crooked sixpence  
beside a crooked stile

The most obvious advantage to society of the Criminalized Recipients Iconoclastic Manpower<sup>3</sup> Exchange (CRIME) is one of cost. The erstwhile welfare recipients converted to criminals<sup>4</sup> by CRIME would represent a considerably smaller economic burden to society as criminals than as welfare recipients. Although their per capita productivity and consumption would scarcely change, they would be less numerous since fewer people will voluntarily become Criminals. That, however, is of relatively small importance when compared to the second cost advantage of CRIME. That advantage is that we would no longer need a large inefficient tax supported welfare bureaucracy and we ALREADY HAVE a large inefficient tax supported criminal bureaucracy. Thus, no new costs to society would accrue to offset the benefits achieved.<sup>5</sup> That means that CRIME would provide a much needed boost to the economy. The dollar resources previously earmarked for taxes to support the welfare bureaucracy would, instead, remain in the hands of consumers, available for the purchase of consumer products. The resulting consumer demand would stimulate growth throughout the economy, particularly in the capital investment necessary to meet such a groundswell of consumer purchasing. The new economic vigor created by such growth would provide job opportunities far beyond the needs of those individuals formerly filling the bloated ranks of the welfare bureaucracy, as well as the hoards of welfare recipients who didn't really need it. Such economic growth would easily offset the negative effects created by the new Criminals who, after all, weren't capable of doing much anyway.<sup>6</sup>

This discussion, even with the aid of footnotes,<sup>7</sup> has barely touched the surface of the cost benefits to society that would result from CRIME. More complete treatments will no doubt be published. Now, however, I must turn to another benefit of CRIME, a more profound benefit. That is, the effect of CRIME on the relationship between society at large and the law enforcement sector.

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3 With all due apologies to the ladies, if I said personpower then the acronym would be CRIPE and, cripes, who wants CRIPE for an acronym!?!

4 In the current context, criminal activity is assumed to be restricted to the various crimes of property acquisition as opposed to the so-called violent crimes. This is a safe assumption, considering the abilities of these particular criminals.

5 The singular opportunity to completely eliminate a bureaucracy without creating several more to take its place is so unique as to be absolutely unprecedented. It should be tried for the experimental value alone, even if no other reason existed.

6 It can be argued that the criminal sector has a beneficial effect on the economy. That is, theft provides goods to folks who might not otherwise have had them and, when the stolen goods are replaced, the market has been expanded by the amount stolen, increasing sales. If the victim isn't insured, then stupidity is its own reward. If the victim is insured, then the victim will be reimbursed and the insurance company can justify a rate increase. Everyone benefits.

7 Thank you.

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He caught a crooked cat  
who caught a crooked mouse

It has been said that Policemen and Criminals come from the same cultural origins.<sup>8</sup> Be that as it may, they do patronize many of the same institutions, one might call them clubs, and they consume a considerable amount of one another's resources. The commitment of Police resources to the pursuit of Criminals is a warm endorsement for the criminal sector. Were it not for the frequent diversions provided by hard working Criminals, the Police would be forced to call upon their own imagination and ingenuity for something to do. They would most likely fall to bickering among themselves or petty harassment of the Citizens. Since acts of constituted authority are usually difficult to distinguish from acts of other forms of authority, it's important to control the Police.<sup>9</sup> To that end the welfare recipients can be of great service to society, as I shall now demonstrate.

Many methods of controlling the Police have been tried. Direct opposition has been tried repeatedly but has the disadvantage of direct and usually damaging involvement of the group that should be the most protected from the Police, that is, the Citizens. Control by legal constraints is the method most strongly promoted by government, in spite of the obvious fallacy of using legislation to control the enforcers. That kind of intentional myopia is typical of government. Intimidation works poorly, if at all, because Policemen are inherently more intimidating than Citizens. Sniping is too slow to be effective. Furthermore, Citizens must snipe on their own time and at their own expense. Policemen get paid for it and supplied with weapons and ammunition. After some consideration, it becomes evident to the scholar that diversion by Criminals has all of the advantages. The Citizens don't have to be bothered by direct contact with the Police. The Criminals and the Police keep each other well occupied,<sup>10</sup> allowing both the Police and the Criminals to feel needed. Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders, naturally, have a field day. Since any increase in the criminal sector provides more work for the Police, the erstwhile recipients of welfare payments can be of great value to society. That is, in addition to the financial benefit, CRIME would result in an added degree of protection of the Citizens from the Police, a definite social advantage. Even that, however, isn't the ultimate benefit.

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8 The claim was at one time attributed to a convicted felon who, just before he was executed, objected that besides being untrue it was unnecessarily insulting to criminals. He had, he insisted, read it in the *Police Gazette*.

9 Police organizations cannot be prevented. They are the forerunners of all government, which cannot exist without them. Therefore, the best that can be expected, given government, is some form of control.

10 That, it turns out, isn't without its disadvantages, as I'll explain in the discussion of Racket Ratcheting, in the next section.

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And they all lived together  
in a little crooked house

However great the financial and security benefits of CRIME, there is yet a greater good. The seemingly uncontrollable growth of institutions has been studied and commented upon many times but, until now, no plausible reason for such apparently inevitable growth has been proposed. Landmark thinking, however, derived from the careful consideration of the consequences of CRIME, has provided an unexpected pair of bonuses. Not only has the previously inexplicable increase in the size of all institutions been explained but, in the same sweeping stroke of genius, a solution to the problem has been evolved. The key breakthrough was the recognition of the process of Racket Ratcheting.

Racket Ratcheting is a result of the interactions of Police, Citizens, Criminals, Bleeding Hearts, Do-Gooders, and Protesters, all of which have constituted inevitable sectors of all past societies. History doesn't record the first occurrence of any of those groups of people but, throughout history, their interactions have always followed the same pattern. The Criminals commit crimes. The Police chase the Criminals and harass the Citizens. The Citizens protest Police harassment, help the Criminals, thereby increasing criminal power, and are shot at by the Police. The Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders blame it all on the Criminals and support the Police, increasing Police power. Every increase in Police power increases the ability of the Police to harass the Citizens, thus generating more Protesters and providing more support for Criminals. This enhances the Criminals' ability to commit crimes. Rising crime stimulates the Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders, generating more support for the Police. All of society is thus involved in a self-sustaining race toward infinity in an attempt to replace the resources being sucked up by rampant Racket Ratcheting. The process accounts for all human excesses, from unwanted population growth through the miserly accumulation of wealth by kings. No instance is recorded in history of a successful reversal of Racket Ratcheting, nor should the historians be faulted for neglect. Indeed, every great society of the past has fallen victim to Racket Ratcheting<sup>11</sup> because the process was never before properly recognized.

However, when the process was recently acknowledged, it finally became possible to examine it for flaws. After careful consideration, it appears that the part played by the Criminals is the most amenable to tampering. The Police, for example, are too securely protected by institutional authority. The Protesters arise as a spontaneous response to the Police and, as such, cannot be independently controlled. The Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders have neither the wit nor the motivation to change. That leaves only the Criminals. A careful look at the criminal sector is thus in order.

There are two types of Criminals: those who are Criminals because they want to be and those who are Criminals through necessity. The first group (hereinafter called Group 1) is the most effective. It consists of well motivated people who are happy with their work. They're doing what they want to do, they enjoy the challenges and rewards of their chosen profession, and they're to be commended for a job well done.

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11 Rome, Carthage, Athens, Pompeii (Vesuvius came later.), Egypt, the Confederate States of America, Persia, the Chicken Farm at La Grange, etc.

## Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: A Satirical Essay

The second group (Group 2) is no different from the same crowd in every other walk of life. They don't like their work, they aren't paid enough, working conditions are terrible, and the boss is a jerk. They do what's necessary to get by and they don't rock the boat. They contribute little to the criminal mystique, make unattractive defendants, and seldom come to the notice of Protesters, Bleeding Hearts, or Do-Gooders.

Those two groups provide for all of the manpower that's needed within the criminal sector. They can be thought of as occupying different positions within the bureaucracy of the criminal sector.<sup>12</sup> Members of Group 1 will be found either occupying the ranks of management or moving in that direction. That's invariably true because a criminal bureaucracy is the only known example of a management system that selects for ability. Members of Group 2 follow an inversion of the Peter Principle<sup>13</sup> and settle to their level of competence within the ranks.<sup>14</sup>

When life in the criminal sector becomes too lucrative, then the ranks of Group 1 (the happy group) swell with opportunists out for the fast buck. Poor management results, holding the criminal sector in check. When life in the criminal sector deteriorates, then members of that group become dissatisfied. Since they're Criminals by choice, they're free to change jobs if they wish. Therefore, when deterioration sets in some Group 1 Criminals will leave the criminal sector in favor of the most nearly similar work elsewhere. That is, they'll join the Police. They'll probably become Police commissioners or at least Detectives. That, naturally, increases the ability of the Police to harass the Citizens and generates Protesters who provide added support for the criminal sector, again correcting the situation. Note that both corrections involve changes in Group 1.

This self-balancing characteristic of the criminal sector is ancillary to Racket Ratcheting and is called Criminal Feedback. It's important to realize that it doesn't maintain an absolute level of criminal activity, but a relative one. Thus, criminal activity isn't held constant but is kept in balance relative to the other participants in the Racket Ratcheting process.

Although the inherent characteristics of Group 1 maintain the balance of criminal activity within Racket Ratcheting, they're obviously of little use in reversing the process. For that, we must look to Group 2. Since those malcontents are forced by one circumstance or another to remain Criminals, they can be relied upon to drag their feet when possible. Their effect, called the Drag Ratio, is a negative one that is normally offset by the productive strength of Group 1. However, an abnormal increase in the size of Group 2 would disrupt that delicate balance. A sufficient increase in the Drag Ratio would result in a net decrease in criminal ability, with a greater proportion of Criminals being apprehended. The supply of lazy and unmotivated people, that is, the type of welfare recipients who don't need welfare payments, is endless. Thus, an

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12 The only thing common to all possible human cultures and sectors thereof is bureaucracy.

13 *The Peter Principle*, by Laurence Peter, 1969

14 The criminal bureaucracies are the only ones known to behave in such a manner. Scholars agree that the lack of government regulation in the criminal sector allows a natural interplay of economic forces not possible elsewhere, resulting in what is known as Servile Sedimentation.

## Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: A Satirical Essay

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increase in the Drag Ratio can be relied upon to happen as a result of CRIME. The effects are far reaching and I will now examine them.

Initially, CRIME would result in an excess of easy targets, which would throw the Police into paroxysms of delighted capture. So jovial would the Police become, and so busy grabbing inept thieves, that the needless molestation of honest Citizens and innocent bystanders would drop to almost nothing.<sup>15</sup> That would precipitate a high rate of drop-outs from the ranks of the Protesters and adversely affect the level of support enjoyed by the criminal sector. Meanwhile, the Criminals, finding themselves the targets of gleeful and unaccustomed persecution, would appeal to their erstwhile benefactors. They would find the one-time Protesters, now Citizens, to be sedately unsympathetic. Those individuals, comfortably involved in matters of interest only to themselves, would simply point out that the Police weren't bothering anybody important, just Criminals. And besides that, they would say, those Boys in Blue aren't such bad chaps after all, now that they're behaving properly. This would infuriate the Group 2 Criminals, who would turn the full force of their incompetence against the justifiably complacent Citizens. The resulting crime wave would be of little monetary consequence. It would, however, drive the remaining Protesters back into the ranks of the law abiding Citizens, thus completing disenchantment with the criminal sector.<sup>16</sup> This is important because it represents a complete reversal for the people who are normally Protesters. After CRIME, they would oppose the Criminals rather than support them.

As the Police vigorously capitalized upon Group 2 vulnerability, the panic stricken Criminals would be whipped into a frenzy of escape. Group 2 Criminals being what they are, nothing much would change.<sup>17</sup> The unaccustomed activity, however, would give the impression of radical change. Noting the desperate plight of the woefully harassed Criminals, the Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders would raise frenzied shrieks of outraged horror at the brutal tactics of the Police. The mighty armament of righteous rage, formerly reserved exclusively for the criminal sector,<sup>18</sup> would slowly be brought to bear upon the Police, another first in the history of human endeavor.

At that point, a significant re-alignment of support and opposition would exist. Note that previously, Criminals were supported by Protesters and opposed by Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders. Police were supported by Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders and opposed by Protesters. However, in the proposed scenario, the Police would be opposed by Bleeding Hearts and Do-Gooders and not supported by anyone. The Criminals would be opposed by the Citizens and not supported by anyone. Thus, all positive forces in Racket Ratcheting would be removed by CRIME, to be replaced completely by negative forces. It's the final thesis of this essay that such a concentration of negative influence, brought to bear upon the two primary participants of Racket Ratcheting, would result in the total reversal of the process.

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15 Almost....

16 It would be the first human society since the invention of government to be devoid of protesters.

17 Perhaps a few of the least competent would become precinct desk sergeants or traffic cops.

18 In fact, righteous rage normally defines the criminal sector.

## Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief: A Satirical Essay

It's easy to see that the forces at work within the Racket Ratcheting process will allow ratcheting in either direction. Once the process has been reversed, it can be relied upon to stay reversed so long as the Group 2 part of the criminal sector is supplied with excess membership. However, a word of caution is in order. The natural tendency of Racket Ratcheting is toward increasing size and the potential for a return to increasing size always exists. It's important that government supported welfare programs not be re-instituted or Racket Ratcheting will surely claim yet another great society.