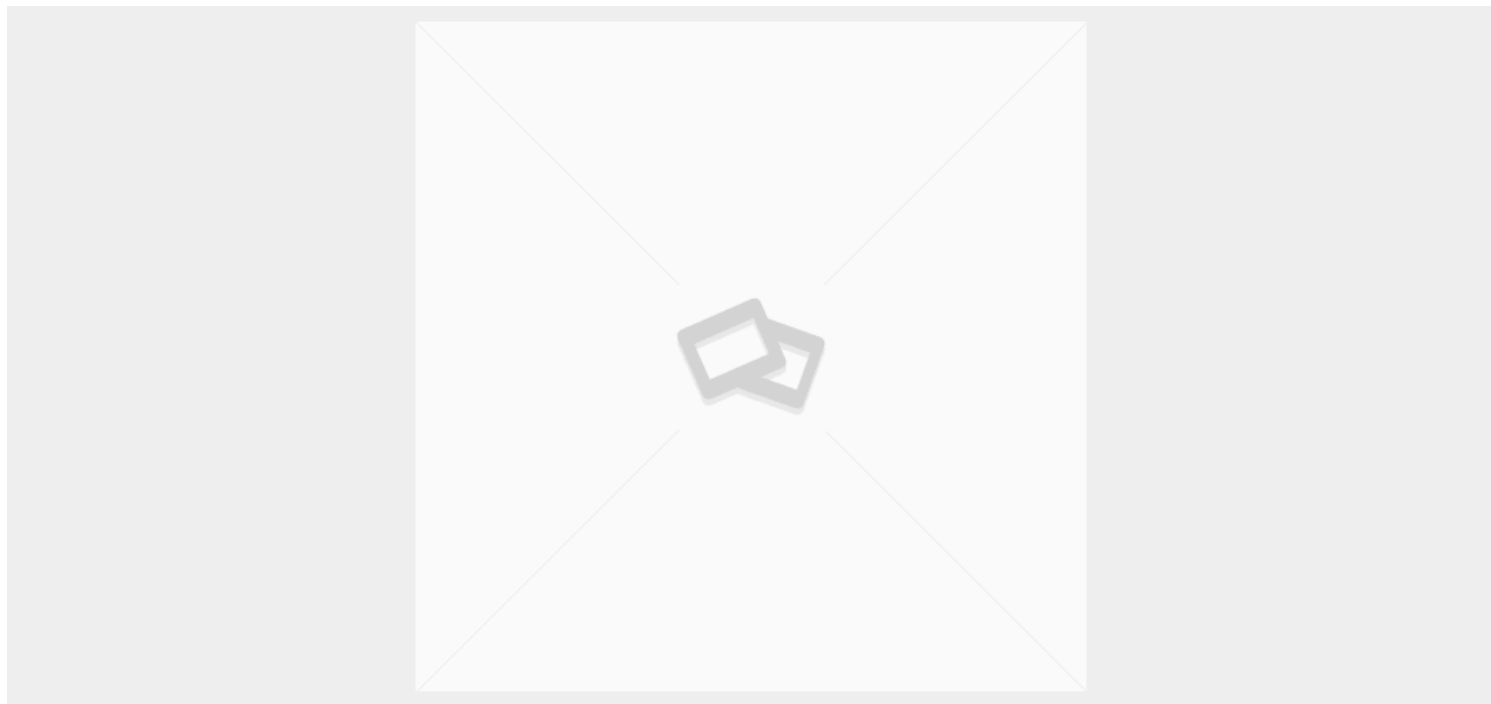


JUSTICE: WHERE ART THOU?

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Category: [Opinions](#)



By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA USA, 17 April 2009

It's strange how one thing leads to another. Take, for instance, the following statements--all related, in a manner of speaking:

-- One murder makes a villain, millions a hero.

-- Kill one person, and it is murder, kill millions and it is a statistic.

-- If a man is killed in Paris, it is murder; the throats of fifty-thousand people are cut in the East, and it is a question.

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There are still some people left in the world who recall Charlie Chaplin's 1947 black comedy, "Monsieur Verdoux," in which he plays a man who loses his job, but is too proud to admit it and who must also provide for his family, so he preys on rich women in other cities, killing them if needed to get access to their money. When he is finally arrested, his defense is, more or less, "Why should I be punished for killing one at a time, when nations make wars and kill millions." The film helped black-list him in America because some people saw the film as "anti-capitalism," which leads me, more or less to my theme.

But, first, a detour.

The central theme of these quotations--which cover three centuries--has yet to catch up to the 21st century. These comments concerned lives. Today, we are concerned about money, about which there seem not to be relevant quotes. So, I will use one of my father's: "Some people think they have made a success of life, when all they have made is money."

We are living through a very serious period, economically speaking, in the world, and two major events have made the headlines. The first is the deeds of the greedy, selfish Wall Street bankers and financiers, and the other is the deed of one individual.

The latter's victims were wealthy and well-to-do people who did not know when enough was enough and wanted more. He is going to jail.

The victims of the former group were millions of innocent people who lost their homes, their jobs,

their savings, their retirement plans, their funds for the education of their children because greedy and selfish bankers and financiers did not have enough and wanted more and didn't care whom they hurt in getting it. They are not going to jail.

In fact, they are getting more from the tax-payers who are suffering, indirectly, as a result of what is happening to those who are directly hurt.

Don't misunderstand, I hold no brief for Bernard Madoff but, let's face it, his victims--who didn't make their money by being stupid--just plain wanted more and trusted Madoff with their life-savings, in some cases. Frankly, they deserve little sympathy, but the greater crime is that he is in jail, awaiting sentencing to what is expected to be the rest of his life. If people are stupid enough to give a liar money, why should the liar be punished? But, as my lawyer brother once commented, laws must protect people who can't protect themselves.

But, rest assured, the greedy and selfish scoundrels who virtually brought this country to its knees (and also many other countries as well), will never see the inside of even the most luxurious country clubs that pass as jails for white-collar thieves. Instead, the government is devising ways, and creating the means, to give these villains more money. These are people who earn money, but do not create it.

Permit me to call to your attention a news item that did not get much play in the local media. You will recall that a couple of years ago, there was a scandal in the milk industry in China during which tainted milk killed several children and made thousands of people very ill. The Chinese officials, though slow to act, finally investigated, found the culprits, and--that news item said--four of the people involved have been executed and seven others are serving prison sentences.

What does this country's treatment of its villains say about this country's attitude about right and wrong, good and evil, moral and immoral, justice and injustice? Not very much.

Of course, what it could be saying is that this is no longer a country for the individual entrepreneur. Alone, Madoff could steal only \$64-billion, but had he aligned himself with a group of Wall Street bankers and financiers, he could have stolen hundreds of billions.

No one is talking about jail-time for the Wall Street villains. In fact, some of them are now in positions of authority in the new administration, so punishment is out of the question. The conflict in Washington seems to be "how much more money can we find and who will get it."

In the past, during America's innocence, parents taught their children to be honest, to work hard, to play fair. What kind of example is being set for today's youth, when they see that those who almost destroyed the country--far more than a dozen 9/11s--and amassed billions are not punished, but one man who separates fools from their money is punished?

My suggestion to parents is, "Tell your children to stay away from China."

