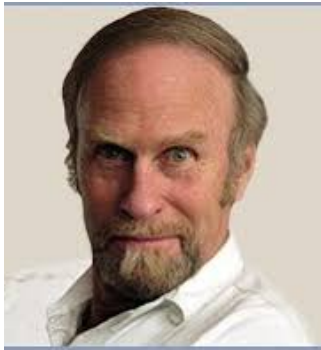


Ruminations of a Baby Boomer: Extreme Poverty and Extreme Wealth in America



By Frosty Wooldridge

Part 3: Rich versus Poor, Smart versus Illiterate, Middle America versus Inner-city America

During my college years, I became a volunteer teacher at Franklin Street School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I read all the educational success stories of inner-city teachers. I ate it up. My high-energy enthusiasm walked into those classrooms “knowing” I would change the world for the better.

Two years later, I fled those classrooms because of the violence, sexual deviance, drugs, beatings, alcoholism and emotional abuse those inner-city kids faced on a daily basis. Their parents suffered from illiteracy, joblessness and simply not being able to cope with American life or the jobs that required educational excellence. In a word: hopeless! I discovered nothing works in ghetto schools in Detroit, NYC, Chicago, Atlanta, Miami, Denver, Dallas, LA and any big city with huge minority classrooms. At one point in Detroit, Michigan’s flushing itself down the toilet, high school dropout rates ran at 78 percent. I worked there to see it myself. I’ll never forget a Detroit Free Press headline I read after I had worked a 16-hour day: “Welfare queen has her 24th child.”

I personally watched Detroit, which before 1941, featured 95 percent European-Americans, change to over 80 percent African-American and Hispanic by 2000. Today, it's quickly becoming a middle-eastern immigrant city, and, essentially a parallel society with its own religion, culture, Sharia Law, banking system and language.

What did I find as to our educational shortcomings in America? First of all, IQ's dictate a child's intellectual curiosity. The lower their IQ, the lower their interest in learning. When they live with uneducated parents with commensurate low IQ's, the TV becomes their



teacher—which leads to no interest in learning anything. Once they can't master simple math-science classes, they turn in anger and frustration to gangs and drugs. When that happens, their educational trajectory spirals into the toilet. When they hit 18, they repeat their parents' history with remaining on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. What am I talking about when I state, "low IQ's"? The range I'm speaking about runs from 75 to 90. The average European-American IQ in America stands at 100.

Inner-city kids stumble into dirt-poor jobs, and/or, the girls get pregnant and live on welfare created by LBJ's "Great Society." It's my estimate that welfare proved the worst program for minority America. The "Great Society" should have been "The Educational-Workfare-Personal Responsibility Society." Once you take away personal responsibility, it's a vicious cycle of reliance on 'free-bees', and it hasn't changed or improved since I started teaching in 1971.

The caveat? The television shows inner-city kids wealth beyond their means. It shows Black movie stars, sports heroes and musicians driving fancy cars and living in mansions. Something those inner-city kids will never see!

Do you remember Bubba Smith at Michigan State University in 1963-65? He suffered from functional-illiteracy, but on the football field, he hit like a freight train. He upgraded to NFL glory, but could barely read. All the inner-city scholarship kids in all the major colleges couldn't pass a reading, math or science test in high school let alone college grade academics—but they received 4.0 (A) marks because all the big colleges made money off their gridiron skills. Incredible academic fraud! It's continues today.

When I fled the inner city, I landed in Denver, Colorado where I taught at an average middle-income school where kids loved learning and performed to the best of their abilities.

But, as I traveled across America as a summer truck driver for United Van Lines, I witnessed ghettos in Detroit, Baltimore, Denver, Atlanta, LA, Houston, Phoenix, Chicago and on down the line. We're not addressing job skills or educational skills or academics that lead to personal success in the job market for minorities. At this point, very few school systems prepare inner city kids for working-talents in America beyond burger-flipper and janitor. Thus, their lives remain in the ghetto. Worse, as robotics displace workers from redundant jobs like auto-assembly, we'll see even greater unemployment for minorities.

Ironically, you see Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos enjoying \$60 billion and \$159 billion bank accounts. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi secured a bank statement reportedly in excess of \$124 million, but 62,000 homeless people live in the streets of her district. That goes with House Member Maxine Waters, also a millionaire via insider defense contracts trading, but callously watches ghettos grow in her district. In

California, you see the filthy, filthy rich and ghastly, dirt poor. I've bicycled through all of it!

The American Reading Society shows that 44 million Americans remain functionally illiterate: they cannot read, write or perform simple 3rd grade math problems. Over 40 million Americans subsist on food stamps and Section 8 housing. They live in trashed-out slums. Slums exist in America as horrible as the ones I saw in Asia.

And yet, in my last 50 years of traveling around America by bicycle, truck or motorcycle to all 50 states, nothing has changed for the better. Baltimore, Maryland consists of horrible ghettos, thousands of poor living in hopeless situations and crime everywhere. South Chicago stands as a monument to frustration, joblessness, hopelessness, drugs, violence and illiteracy. Not to mention it's the new murder capitol of America as it replaces Detroit.

At the same time while our poorest and least intelligent live squalor-filled lives, we spend \$750 billion annually for military dominance. We spent \$6 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan for the past 19 years with NOTHING to show for it. We're not safer, smarter or more secure. We've got wide-open borders that allow any terrorist to infiltrate our country. How do I know? I visited the border from San Diego to Brownsville, Texas, 1,952 miles, last spring. It's a free-for-all for anyone who wants to enter the USA illegally.

During my tenure on this planet as a baby boomer, I've visited the "hell-holes" of India, Bangladesh, China, Mexico City and many other overloaded, overwhelmed and overpopulated countries. They cannot save themselves. They cannot solve their problems. They face SUCH enormously disastrous futures that their citizens face horrific consequences as to food, water, energy, environmental degradation and horrible quality of life issues.

But guess what, we're heading in the same direction. We're on course to dump 100 million third world immigrants onto America within 30 years—thanks to our incredibly stupid members of Congress. We already suffer millions of kids with so many emotional, physical, nutritional and mental problems—that we cannot find solutions. Cell phones addict kids to emotional, intellectual and physical dependence 24/7. Fast foods addict them to Coke, Mt. Dew, Pepsi, triple cheeseburgers and greasy fries. Childhood obesity rates skyrocket off the charts. Diabetes runs off the charts!

Nonetheless, our leaders don't do anything to change it. Our governors feel helpless. Mental health and obesity clinics grow ever more crowded while the illiterate poor simply 'exist' from day to day.

And yet, the rich could care less and they do less. Bill Gates pretends to do a few things, but he lacks any vision of the ghetto-educational problems facing America.

What would you do to solve the rich versus poor equation in America? What ideas would you bring forth to educate students with low intellectual abilities and inner-city hopelessness? What ideas can you bring to the table to ameliorate the cell phone addiction syndrome? How would you stop the drug epidemic? How would you help bring the poor up to some decent-standard living conditions? How would you bring some kind of balance to the economics of America in order to give every child a shot at the American dream no matter how dumb, low IQ'd or parental history?

If we fail to find solutions, at some point the poor and illiterate will break our welfare systems, which will lead to racial, cultural and religious conflict that we can't imagine. Covid 19 will seem like a birthday party compared to what's coming, sociologically.

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