

Lawless government oversight

Ireland's legal and judicial system is lawless in that the law is applied on a preferential basis. Just compare the judge's reasoning in his judgement (number (4) in case study order) and my analysis of it (number (5) in case study order). A Nation is founded not just on laws but also, and just as important, on the proper **facilitation** an **application** of them.

The law in and of itself is a beautiful thing. It breaks down every issue objectively and provides the basis of a solution/ruling. But the law can easily be circumvented by getting in front of it and preventing its **facilitation** (Irish lawyers avoiding taking cases against the Irish Government relating to fraud and corruption) and a judge can purposefully **misapply** statutes as I believe the judge did in my case. Therefore, the law can be rendered useless and yet appear to be fully functioning.

I could not find legal representation in Ireland as not even one Irish law firm would take my case. I proved this at my hearing when I exhibited a sample of the email requests I had made to Irish law firms for an opinion on my case (four to five hundred out of over a thousand I had made). I don't understand why a judge would not take this into account in his judgement. Access to representation is paramount in any credible judicial system.

It's dangerous when a legal and judicial system becomes nothing more than word games. They say perception is reality. It seems that among the Irish public there is a perception of institutionalism in Ireland in that generally we perceive our oversight institutions to have credibility just by their very existence and claims (and I'm sure the optics of some images of stone pillars on websites and elsewhere reinforce this). But perceptions can be changed. A better-informed public can achieve this.

What happens when most Irish people realize that the Irish judicial system puts the cart before the horse when it comes to holding the Irish Government accountable in that judges first decide the outcome of a case and then back their decision into the statutes which my case demonstrates? While the Irish people well understand that Irish Government corruption exists, I don't believe they fully understand the extent to which the legal/judicial system protects this corruption. They act interdependently.

I hope this case study will go towards changing Irish public perceptions of, but not faith in, the judiciary and help prevent certain judges from taking advantage of the power bestowed upon them by the Irish people. I'm all for respecting our judiciary but I'm certainly not going to allow any of them take advantage of me in order to protect Irish Government fraud. They're meant to work for us.

I believe there have been some positive changes since my Reports were published but not near enough. I know my Reports have been considered by the Irish Government and while they will never admit guilt or hold themselves accountable, I have no doubt they have made changes to the system but in a way that tries to give the impression that it was this way all along to anyone who might be assessing them.

So, if you do see any increased level of accountability, or more likely the perception of it, on the part of the Irish Government recently, it has occurred since my Reports were published (perhaps I come across conceited by saying that, but I will take at least some credit here after many years of valid work on this – you have to put these members of government in a position where they have to act) and such accountability will be very carefully crafted by them and only when nobody else they care for in their political/business circle can be brought down.

You'll also notice that I had to add some additional notes to my [first](#) and [update](#) Reports (added on the same page as the link to each Report) because the Irish Government I believe had certain links in these Reports disabled after they were published.

Incidentally, upon briefly running into an Irish lawyer friend of mine not so long ago in New York, the lawyer's reply to my mention in passing of my continuing efforts to hold the Irish Government accountable was "At least somebody is trying to!". While this may sound of little importance, you must understand that it's impossible to get any Irish lawyer/firm to hold the Irish Government accountable for corruption/fraud.

So, when an Irish lawyer makes such a comment, I believe it's reflective of their desire to see a more accountable government but they're between a rock and a hard place in Ireland unfortunately because should they decide to do the right thing, their career is effectively over or at least will be seriously undermined by the Irish Government and others.

This lawyer is on good terms with the Irish Government, indeed engages with some members on certain matters, and has an excellent bio and track record in their area of specialty but is inclined towards accountability in government and elsewhere not because of the Irish legal system but because they have been influenced by the U.S. legal system having practiced law here for many years and experienced a far more transparent legal system than Ireland will ever have.

Whether a minor point or not, it does corroborate the evidence I presented in my Reports and at my High Court hearing where I show that the Irish Government is not being held accountable in part due to the avoidance by Irish law firms (facilitation above) to represent anyone with a case against it regarding fraud/corruption.

From an investors perspective, how does an Irish legal and judicial system that is seriously compromised as regards **holding the Irish Government accountable** affect them? For all intents and purposes an investor might believe that it won't, as the law in their case will be business related (not political) and therefore not as compromised.

But how will they know this? How will they know when a judge will be influenced to make a different decision because the corporate litigation the investor is involved in might indirectly relate to a certain Irish politician's business interests?

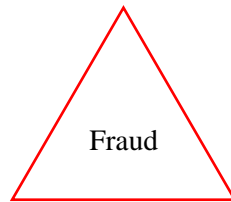
Irish Government corruption and how it's protected from accountability in my case can be represented or visualized by a triangle (**Corruption Triangle**) with the Irish Government at the top vertex, and a certain large accountancy firm and Ireland's Information Commissioner respectively at the bottom two vertices.

Of course, this is just a simple representation as there are many other aspects to it as my Reports and case study have demonstrated, but it focuses on the two main players that have insulated the Irish Government from accountability in my case. Between each vertex (along **each red line** of the triangle) lie many other Irish oversight bodies mentioned in my Reports that protect the Irish Government from accountability. The Irish High Court being the last bastion of protection from accountability.

The Table of Contents of my first and update Reports above list most of these.

Corruption/Fraud Triangle

Irish Government



Large Accountancy Firm

Information Commissioner

What can be done?

While the High Court's ruling confirms my prior concerns about some (many?) Irish judges, Ireland is nevertheless a developing nation with some level of institutional structure which, as bastardized as it is, gives the perception that it is a developed and a properly functioning Republic. Therefore, while my case study points to some serious issues, its purpose is to in some way get these issues addressed.

What can be done to help fix Ireland's compromised legal and judicial system? **First**, as I have been doing all along with my Reports (and now my case study), it's important to inform as many people as possible of my efforts to hold the Irish Government accountable. An informed public, both domestically and internationally, is the first step.

The powers that be (all political parties, not just the one/s currently in government) don't like a well-informed public as that's what keeps the establishment in power. Power and ignorance go hand in hand. Just look at other nations like Russia, China et al.

While in Ireland you cannot usually get your hands on documents related to High Court cases unless you're a party to the case, in my case you can as I was a lay litigant. Therefore, I can bypass the secrecy behind Ireland's judicial system, one where even the Freedom of Information Act does not apply. And this is my **second** recommendation.

We need to counter the secrecy in Ireland's legal and judicial system (and rest assured it is a secret organization) by getting more Irish people to hold the Irish Government accountable by representing themselves in court. This way the public can then be informed of what transpired in greater detail as opposed to cases being hidden behind Irish lawyers and judges.

Perhaps an **independent lay litigant organization** could be established to provide resources that people like me could have benefited from when taking High Court action against the Irish Government. I had to not only prepare my argument and prove my case but also figure out how court procedure worked, how to submit documents (Notice of Motion, Affidavits etc.), how to file at Central Office etc.

Luckily, I have a sister living in Ireland who could help me (even though she's not involved in my case, but did what any caring, supportive sister would do). To be honest, I wouldn't have gotten my documents into the High Court without her. But not everyone has a sister who can hustle on their behalf on the Irish end, and so we need a resource center but one that has no Irish Government involvement whatsoever.

Of course, every organization in Ireland (and abroad!) will be infiltrated by members of the Irish Government to some extent over time but this can be minimized. Certainly, this lay litigant organization should never accept any type of Irish Government funding, which is part of the Irish Government's MO in influencing and compromising what would otherwise be independent and healthy organizations.

Incidentally, I was Googling some words including the words "lay litigant" and I brought up the article below. It's interesting that this gentleman's experience in Canada is very similar to mine in Ireland.

The client most lawyers fear – and won't represent at any price – NSRLP
(representingyourselfcanada.com)

Faith in our institutions – America vs. Ireland

I don't want to get overly political here (my Reports are apolitical in the sense that they're not partisan) or placard my case study with a 'The End is Nigh' sign but this is a serious issue and appropriate considering the current geopolitical climate.

The judge's decision in my case sends a strong message that the judicial/oversight system in Ireland is just adapted to what those in power want it to be. They can mold it anyway they want to cover up for any type of financial crime on the part of the Irish Government or indeed their close associates. Just take a look at the history of accountability for financial crimes in Ireland. It doesn't exist.

Are members of the Irish Government and the judiciary so confident in their ability to cover up crimes that they feel they can easily and continuously take advantage of a people they believe have been sedated over the years by the use of socialist type spending and policies that remove any propensity to revolt? The Irish people God love them will accept a bit of fraud here and there on your part as long as you throw them something, right!

Remember, no matter how much money you dole out, people will never be happy...give an inch, and all that.

And we're all familiar by now with the recent Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol Riot...it was more than that, it was an attempted coup of a beacon of Democracy for the rest of the world, one which has given great and wonderful opportunities to anyone who wants them. If it can happen in the U.S., it can happen anywhere, right! Why are Americans losing faith in their institutions? Why are they feeling disenfranchised? There are plenty of people who feel disenfranchised in Ireland. Are the Irish too losing faith in their institutions and if so, why?

I believe so but for a different reason.

America

I mentioned in my [final Report](#) (click on 'Attachment 1' link within the Report) back in October 2019:

“How easy is it for a nation to fall into revolt? Or do you think that a laughable question, the usual reaction of the masses prior to most every historical crisis? Or has one already begun? How much better would Irish society be without it?”

History has told us that it certainly doesn't require a nation's support. It only took an organized seven-man Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood to change Ireland's history back in 1916 (marked by many official ceremonies in 2016), and although the executions played a part, I don't fully accept that there would have been no further momentum for the cause had they not occurred.”

I'll admit, I was surprised that this subsequently happened in the U.S. as opposed to elsewhere.

From watching and experiencing to some extent what's been going on these past years in the U.S., I asked myself why Americans are losing faith in their institutions? From my experience and some research, the U.S. seems to be suffering not so much from a Socialism vs. Capitalism scenario, which we are led to believe by politicians, media and other pundits who make a lot of money from hype and division (for power), but more from grievances over how capitalism is being implemented.

In other words, **capitalists** on both sides of the political aisle (it's rare to find any partisan capitalists!) are causing all this chaos today through inequitable capitalism. The **political parties** fall in behind this inequity as willing accomplices and amplify, alongside the **media**, the effects of this politically.

And caught in the middle are the voters (Rep., Dem. and Ind.) who upon experiencing the effects of this inequality manifest it in movements such as Occupy Wall Street to now an extreme divisiveness that encompasses every political issue, both large and small, in the U.S. i.e., the perception of inequality, whether accurate or not, is spreading everywhere.

The root cause, or a major contributing factor, is the capitalists, or more accurately the capitalist complex (not unlike the military-industrial complex President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously warned U.S. citizens about) that has hollowed out the middle ground in America. Instead of ‘military’ you have politicians, and ‘industrial’ is now expanded to include potentially all industries.

I could have chosen the word ‘politics’ or ‘government’ instead of ‘politicians’, but politics is a process which in and of itself is a good thing (political science), while government is the apparatus or machinery of the political process. Politicians on the other hand can be any bum who runs for office. And as for most media today, everything they publish/broadcast is put through a political narrative lens, albeit done quite subtly.

But how has this inequality evolved to such extreme divisiveness? Because the politicians have enabled this divisiveness to hide their involvement in this inequitable capitalism by influencing or at least not de-escalating this extreme partisanship among their voters in order to make the other party the fall guy, that is, the other Americans, and the result of this is the great divide we have in American politics today.

I just hope voters on both sides realize they’ve been duped not only by the other side but also by their own parties, and demand from their Representatives serious change in this regard (according to a **Politifact ruling**, “But the general point that millionaires in Congress far outpace those among citizens is correct.”). I’m all for capitalism, but it must be practiced in the context of social equity and fairness. Otherwise, we may as well go back to the good ol’ days of the robber barons.

According to the **Economic Policy Institute**, “From 1978 to 2020, CEO pay based on realized compensation grew by 1,322%, far outstripping S&P stock market growth (817%) and top 0.1% earnings growth (which was 341% between 1978 and 2019, the latest data available). In contrast, compensation of the typical worker grew by just 18.0% from 1978 to 2020.”

Additionally, “In 2020, the ratio of CEO-to-typical-worker compensation was 351-to-1 under the realized measure of CEO pay; that is up from 307-to-1 in 2019 and a big increase from 21-to-1 in 1965 and 61-to-1 in 1989.”

My family’s business, Allied Pharmaceutical Distributors/Allphar (SME), operated in Ireland from the early 70’s to the mid-90’s when it successfully merged with a

pharmaceutical cooperative. When I see the figure above, that is, a ratio of 61-to-1 in 1989, I can only laugh as the compensation my parents received, as CEO and largest shareholders in the company, wouldn't have come close to this relatively low figure.

And we had a comfortable life, and the business was successful. When I see today's ratio, that is, 355-to-1, it's clear to me that American employees are being fleeced big time by employers. Our democratic capitalist model is not tenable if this greed continues. And I say this not as a socialist or a leftist but as a strong believer in American capitalism. And this gross disparity was created on both shifts, Democrats and Republicans.

How has the U.S. capitalist model gotten so out of control and how does this affect our society and culture today? Can we do anything about it? I'll try to address these questions in the final section but since Ireland is the subject of this case study, where do the Irish stand when it comes to faith in their institutions.

Ireland

The people of Ireland by comparison, already immersed in welfare capitalism for better or for worse (and so no deep ideological divisions like here in the U.S.) are all too familiar with **government corruption** (alongside very little accountability) over decades but even more so of their inability to do anything about it. Therefore, I believe the Irish people lack faith in the accountability process but not necessarily in the legal/judiciary process (yet!).

But as my case study has demonstrated, this part of the accountability process is seriously compromised and must be addressed.

Could this growing frustration, particularly of those who feel disenfranchised in Ireland, spill over into public upheaval in time? Sounds ridiculous doesn't it? But so too would a riot at the U.S. Capitol have sounded before it happened.

But the Republic of Ireland hasn't had a revolt in 100 years, right! Is this because, as mentioned above, the Irish Government's socialist type benefits are enough to continue to keep the masses, particularly those who feel disenfranchised no matter

how much money you dole out to them, from revolting over the establishment's serious abuse of power such as that detailed in my case?

Yes, but to a point as I believe there's a tipping point to everything particularly now that outside influences from the protest actions of citizens in other countries are much more acute.

And while my exposing the judiciary's involvement in protecting Irish Government crime risks diminishing faith in Irish institutions and further increasing frustrations over the lack of government accountability, it's therefore important that the Irish people understand how the judiciary contributes to this never-ending problem so that a comprehensive solution can be found and implemented in order to avoid these types of riots or public upheaval i.e., we don't want a better-misinformationed public!

Therefore, I hope my case study will not only expose, but prompt action other than storming Dáil Éireann by having some meaningful influence where it's needed. But a lay litigant organization as mentioned above will be required to compete with the incumbent legal authorities if there is going to be any meaningful change. In other words, it'll take more than just one person. It will require a collective and a structure/network.

I pose the question/s (don't shoot the messenger!) – who are the antagonists when it comes to revolts? Those who revolt or those who cause the revolt like the compromised judges, the government etc. who renege for personal gain on the deal they made with the people that provides for a democratic establishment?

When a Nation's institutions can no longer be trusted and will not be changed from the inside, what's the next step? In other words, if I follow the appropriate course of action and spend many years gathering evidence and preparing Reports on a case where it's clear that a crime has taken place on the part of the Irish Government, and ultimately take my case to the High Court of Ireland, and the result is that not one body I have appealed to holds the Irish Government accountable, then what's my next step?

I can't impose sanctions on the Irish Government, right! I'm not another government. What course of action is left open to me? Short of taking the law into my own hands, which is not something I would even consider, my options are limited if not exhausted. It's next to impossible for a lay litigant to appeal a High

Court order at the Court of Appeal, certainly much more difficult than bringing a case to the High Court particularly when no Irish law firm will represent you. And you only have 28 days from the date of perfection to appeal.

So, all I can do is accept that these bastards got away with this crime and move on with my life? Is this the state of affairs when it comes to holding the Irish Government accountable? There is effectively no recourse?

I don't ask the above questions lightly – after researching my case over a period now spanning about eight years during which I prepared objective and credible Reports culminating in this case study on my High Court hearing, my observations are well informed.

It takes many decades to build a nation and it's a shame to think that a bunch of Irish Government members can hollow out Ireland's vital oversight institutions and potentially bring Ireland, this time the Republic, back to revolt.

You'd think the Irish Government/judiciary would have learned its lesson from the Ireland-UK experience and how the UK government and judiciary were biased against the Irish in the past (and that's no reflection on the English people themselves who I've worked with in the UK and got on very well with). The Irish Government and judiciary are now behaving likewise in their treatment of their own citizens? There's irony for you.

While I believe I've had some success by at least shedding light on the practices of Irish Government oversight bodies, it's not enough. I have nothing officially on the record unfortunately that might **have a greater impact on Irish Government accountability**. Therefore, I still have faith that someone or organization with the necessary power can get a result, if not official the next best thing, from the work I've done so far.

But as far as I'm concerned, my work is done on Irish Government fraud and corruption. You can take it or leave it...I'm putting my efforts into my new homeland from now on where you can get results.

On a related note, the Irish Times removed its comments facility that allowed you to comment on any of its articles. And all past comments were removed back in May of this year, 2022. I have my concerns about this. Their web platform was migrated over to a newer version. I'm sure many of us have been involved in at

least one web migration during our career and we all know that you keep your existing version up and running until such time as the newer version is debugged and ready to go online.

So, the Irish Times' missing comments facility has nothing to do with the migration. That said, the Irish Times hasn't officially blamed the migration process for this but rather stated to me in part when I questioned them about it:

“This article <https://www.irishtimes.com/media/2022/05/23/the-irish-times-unveils-redesigned-website-and-app/> explains that work on our commenting function is ongoing and that it will return in the near future. By way of an update, I can say this is most likely within a couple of weeks.”

I received the above response from the Irish Times back on May 31, 2022. As of this writing, it is now the end of October 2022 and even past comments by subscribers have not been reinstated. While I try to minimize if not avoid conspiracy theories in my articles, my experience as an Irish Times subscriber (including some communications I've had with them) is that, although they arguably have a world class team of columnists and writers, I'm not yet confident that their comments platform is not used in a way that protects certain Irish Government members from free speech.

Are Ireland's media institutions also compromised adding to the problem? Is there an ongoing criminal investigation relating to public office (and close associates in the private sector) that could benefit from past comments made by subscribers? While this may be wishful thinking on my part, perhaps the Irish Gardai have had a change of heart when it comes to holding the Irish Government accountable?

I paid for a service which included being allowed to make comments on articles, and this service has now been removed. Worse still, all past comments I and others made have also been removed from articles. There is no reason I can think of not to have past comments by subscribers showing.

I've mentioned before on more than one occasion including in my Reports the importance of the print screen function as a means of keeping a record of things that may represent proof later on down the road whether that be screen shots of articles, comments, communications or anything at all you feel might be important to record. Screen shots represent proof as they include a time/date stamp.

Fortunately, I made screen shots of comments I made on some Irish Times articles in the past and pasted them in my 'New developments' post, one of the most viewed posts on Failte 32 according to my web stats, otherwise they would have been lost forever it seems.

Finally...how do we restore a better American Dream?

Earlier I had asked how the U.S. capitalist model has gotten so out of control and how this affects our society and culture today? And can we do anything about it?

Having come from Ireland and a different culture to that of the U.S. at least when I was growing up, I now see myself as an American having lived here for over twenty-five years, and so I humbly offer the perspective of a relative outsider that might provide a fresh set of eyes on the situation America is now facing (although much of what I say is already out there, but are we tying it together properly?). I want to see the country I now call home transition to an American Dream for all.

My understanding of the history of American culture, and certainly not a criticism of it as I have great affection for my new homeland, is that it seems to be rooted in mass production i.e., the simplification of production resulting in a significant increase in factory output.

Since the invention of the Model T in the second part of the industrial revolution, or more accurately the assembly line which led the mass production of everyday goods, **consumerism** began to take its grip on U.S. society.

While mass production/consumerism has its obvious advantages it also has its disadvantages in that too much of it can erode the social fabric. For example, culture and meaning in your life require something beyond just consumerism/secularism, that is, faith in something other than just wealth accumulation or instant gratification is critical to happiness.

Remember the Beatles song 'Can't buy me love' - the capitalists will make you believe that money can. Faith and consumerism have been competitors now for over a century and consumerism seems to be winning when you look around at all that is going on with our youth today, but competition can be a healthy thing if we can strike the right balance. As regards happiness and consumerism, the law of diminishing returns seems to apply.

Capitalists today are creating this **hyper-consumerism** by convincing us that our **wants** are **needs**. This way they can make more money than God. That's the problem we as a society have to contend with and distinguish between in our daily lives. Needs should be pretty clear but wants can go on forever. Too much of anything is bad.

We should understand that, while we should always endeavor to correct any inequality in order to improve our lives, we should be grateful for what we have. Make a list someday of all that you have such as your home, family, health (your health is your wealth), food, job, iPhone (the world at your fingertips), drink, mistress, talent, cigarettes, car, parties, vacation, tv, electricity, friends, etc. and you'll probably come to the realization that you ain't got it so bad.

Let's put things in perspective set realistic expectations for ourselves. Don't compare your situation/success to that of others who are outrageously wealthy for example or have talents you will never have. You're using the wrong reference point. Today, we all have a lot more of the basics than the last generation, and the one before and so on, ever had material wise. And yet people seem unhappier today.

A visit to Shriners Hospital occasionally might be no harm to remind us just how lucky most of us are today (if we can just stop listening to the politicians when they tell us they 'care' for us and how much of a victim we all are, in order to get our vote). We used to go on school tours in Ireland to broaden our general knowledge outside of a classroom environment. I'm sure U.S. schools organize similar outings but perhaps in future schools could include visits to hospitals and the like in these trips not only to broaden the general knowledge of our youth but also their empathy towards each other.

Otherwise, we end up pursuing our wants as if they're needs which is not a good thing as it can lead to much frustration when unattainable and put us deeper and deeper in debt (consumerism based on debt finance as opposed to being financed by an increase in living wages) so much so that we may not even be able to afford our basic needs.

Necessity is the mother of all invention...our best inventions will come from our needs not our wants and will result in a better society. Ask yourself the next time you buy something do I really need this, and you'll have made your small but important contribution to a better future society and a less secular one (note I say

less as we must have some secularism) by helping rebuild our middle class. Perhaps you could donate the extra few dollars you were going to spend to a worthy cause.

To quote the great Mahatma Gandhi, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed”

You will also find that you’ll be less in debt and on the road to saving and investing and not at the mercy of the robber barons, particularly the financial ones who will happily keep you in debt all your life buying the other capitalists’ products. They’ll even increase your credit line by thousands of dollars when they see you paying down your debt, without you even having applied for an increase or being notified of it, in order to keep you in servitude.

And a dependency on debt your whole life will result in a greater dependency on social benefits sometimes during and certainly later in your life. The more debt we get into during our lives, the more likely we are to become reliant on the welfare state.

My first experience of the American capitalist model is when I got my first career job in the U.S. in Texas with Merrill Lynch. In the financial industry, when prospecting for leads, those you approach tend to judge you based on your status, the type of car you drive and the like. I guess my beautiful 1993-ish Nissan Sentra didn’t help me? Incidentally, since we’re on the subject, and a car purchase is a significant contributor to consumerism, I remember trying to buy a car as you need one to get around in Texas.

I had just left two hotel jobs in Dallas to take up this position (I actually kept one of the jobs for a couple of more months while studying at Merrill), one paying \$5 per hour in one hotel laundry department and the other at the front desk of the Dallas Grand Hotel paying \$6.5 per hour, and so I didn’t have much to spend on a car, and what with having no credit rating established after only being in America 4-5 months, it was going to be difficult to get a loan for one.

I went to this area in Texas someone had recommended that had car dealership after car dealership along the highway or road. I first tried all the large dealerships but with no luck as they said I had no credit rating. After almost a full day going from one to the other, I walked into this cowboy outfit, literally. They must have seen me coming.

The cowboy I met played me well. He seemed to be trying this and that for me but eventually told me there was nothing he could do. So, I left but when I was about halfway out of the car lot, he called me back and told me there was one last option he could try. I knew at that stage I was being played big time, but I had no choice but to play along.

He finally succeeded in getting me a loan with a finance company for a Nissan Sentra he had out front which included some sort of mandatory service fee over a few weeks paid directly to the dealership, probably for the great job they did for me.

So, in my case as a new arrival, there was a barrier to entry to consumerism but once I had overcome it, it enabled me to access more and more credit. While I needed the car, I only wish there had been a greater barrier to entry to what turned out to be a lot of wasteful debt financed consumerism over the years.

The first thing you're told upon arriving in the U.S. is to establish a credit history/rating, not a savings and investment history. Perhaps instead I should have taken a leaf out of the book of other immigrants and saved like there was no tomorrow and bought multiple homes and rented them out as opposed or in parallel to pursuing more riskier business endeavors. It's better to be the landlord than the tenant!

But getting back to my point, I know I lost some account opening opportunities just based on how others perceived my economic status. But on the other hand, I probably got some other good leads based on other characteristics, so perhaps things balance out, I'm just giving examples of how material oriented our decisions can be. But economic status is important to gain respect in America. You learn that quickly after you arrive.

One caveat though, the con men and women will always have the fancy car and status image, so never use that solely as a basis for your due diligence on a new advisor.

Also, Merrill employees were awarded a private office (as opposed to a cubicle) based on their level of productivity. At the time at Merrill your value to the firm (aside from all the usual hyperbole stuff in their brochures) and performance evaluation was based on three criteria: assets under management; number of new

accounts; and productivity (how much money you make from current and new assets). I think most other financial firms had a similar performance structure.

I've seen grown men and women with the firm for years downgraded to smaller offices with none or one window instead of two or more (yes, even windows are a Merrill Lynch reward) because their productivity went below a certain level that period. This was so the firm could 'incentivize' them into higher productivity. You're only as good (your value to the firm) as your last sale I suppose.

Now, perhaps this is a good way to get your employees to increase their productivity even though they're already doing pretty good business for the firm for many years, but it ties in with my point above that our work culture is so imbedded in materialism.

Perhaps a less materialistic oriented incentive system and work culture can help dampen our voracious appetite for material things. Perhaps in future economic policy will favor trickle-up economics so that most of us won't have to wait decades for it to trickle down to us.

Coming from an Irish family of seven brothers and sisters, like many other Irish families we got two presents for Christmas, one we chose ourselves and the other a surprise. Therefore, we learned to compromise when writing our letters to good ol' Santa. We couldn't get everything we wanted but were very happy with what we got, and although money was tight while my parents were building their pharmaceutical business/company, we weren't poor.

I've seen the many presents my U.S. nephews used to get during the year when they were younger, some not even opened. Such consumerism takes something away from a child's imagination, the excitement, anticipation, patience, appreciation etc. that make up happiness. That said, it meant that I got to open and play with some of these prezzies when I visited ☺ - if I only had that mini motorbike when I was a kid!

There are those for and those against the argument (welcome to academia!) that capitalism and democracy go hand in hand. I'm not going to get into the different types of capitalism here but generally they exist along a scale from more control by the people to more control by the few (government or private). But oligarchic and more extreme forms of state capitalism have been successfully implemented in

several countries including China and Russia. So, there is **not necessarily a causal relationship**.

Briefly, U.S. capitalism began as laissez faire capitalism which eventually spurred the rules and regulations we have today that provide for equitable employment conditions and, it's reasonable to assume, have contributed to our current democratic capitalist model.

But I'm worried about the direction U.S. capitalism is taking today in that if we don't get our capitalist model 'drift adjusted' we risk testing this causal relationship and possibly losing at least some of our democratic freedoms as we drift back towards a form of capitalism controlled by fewer and fewer.

So, what's the solution?

“Some countries incorporate both the private sector system of capitalism and the public sector enterprise of socialism to overcome the disadvantages of both systems. In these economies, the government intervenes to prevent any individual or company from having a monopolistic stance and undue concentration of economic power.” Source – Investopedia

Perhaps this is a solution if you can find the right balance but based on my experience bringing investor groups (FDI) to Ireland, it's critical that direct funding (grants etc.) of companies, whether startups, VC funds etc. by government is ended.

It's **this more personal, one-on-one, connection between government and the private sector** that can cause problems with our capitalist system as a result of bribes, quid pro quos and other corrupt practices. Ultimately, this can lead to a dominant corporate capitalist system (presently, America is at the beginning stages I believe) where big companies have more and more of a controlling position on the market and crony capitalism prevails. That said, I don't believe the U.S. will ever end up an oligarchy.

While I agree with some level of Government intervention, it must be limited to making pragmatic policy and regulations and the like.

What seems to be happening is that while during the 20th century the government/state got more involved in unchecked capitalism to protect

employees, the environment etc. which led to a mild form of state capitalism, today the government seems to be doing the opposite by participating in insider trading and becoming more personally involved with corporate leadership/fundraising and hence putting the economic benefits of employees on the back burner.

However, I can't help but get the impression that in parallel with a drift towards corporate capitalism, the U.S. is also experiencing a drift towards welfare capitalism, resulting in a type of dual capitalist model, a Tale of Two Americas if you like.

While I understand that unemployment insurance and other benefits can be abused, perhaps there's a correlation between a rise in corporate capitalism and a rise in welfare capitalism in that as the perception of income inequality spreads among certain groups of employees, they begin to justify actions such as taking advantage of the benefits system?

I remember a coworker in the past (around 2012/2013) who tried to get our employer to keep their work hours below a certain hourly threshold so that they wouldn't lose their benefits. Is this an example of just plain abuse of the benefits system (theft, greed etc.) or a reaction to the unacceptable CEO-worker pay gap in America?

I'm certainly not making excuses here for actions that I'm sure most of us would agree are unacceptable, but I believe it's important to understand what other motivations might be behind such actions so that resources can be better allocated.

While this is just one case, I've heard of others over the years that were likely just plain abuse of the system, but this case was different.

I remember this coworker as being family oriented, very hard working doing a low paying blue collar job that at times was punishing, and a person who didn't indulge in the vices. While most of us are unable to reconcile such actions in an equitable economic environment, does such a disparity in CEO-worker pay mitigate them in any way?

Newton's third law applies throughout nature folks...I didn't invent it :)

I believe every country should aim towards entrepreneurial capitalism if it can just be maintained by limiting mergers and acquisitions.

One gets the impression today that the emperors are trying to make a comeback. There are now four U.S. companies each with a market capitalization of over a trillion dollars, the highest being over two trillion, and an annual revenue of \$200B or more. That's higher than the GDP in most individual countries on the planet!

What impact will these behemoths have on our energy resources and environment just in the medium term? What level of consumption (energy resources, raw materials) will we reach in future because our new emperors keep convincing us that we need things we don't actually need?