
C H A P T E R

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I've Seen This Movie Before, and Know How It Ends: I Make a Billion Dollars

I've bought a few thousand books over the years, so I know the process you're going through. You've checked out the front and back covers, and now want to know: Is this book for real, or is this just another writer hoping to make the Big Time by impressing you with a theory?

Let me save you some time and give you the guts of this book, condensed to the most extreme level. Here goes:

1. Most people think the multi-trillion-dollar U.S. government bailout is a new situation without equal in history. The truth is that a similar event occurred in the 1980s, though on a smaller scale.

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2. The last time it happened, I went from being bankrupt to a self-made billionaire by investing in assets the government was liquidating. I used none of my own money—because I had no money.
3. This time around, the opportunity is even bigger. I'm going to ride it one more time. This book will show you how to ride your own way to enormous wealth.

There you have it. That's the whole book. If the preceding three paragraphs do not interest you, then I suggest you save your time and put this book down. Go check out a "how to get rich quick" book by yet another author who wants to become famous and really wealthy, but in reality is neither. Have a nice life.

What? You're still reading? In that case, you deserve a little more explanation of who I am, and why I am qualified to write this book.

- *Inc.* magazine featured me on the cover as "The Billionaire Nobody Knows."
- My annual after-tax take-home pay in some years exceeded \$100 million.
- I was ranked as the 25th-wealthiest person in America, according to one magazine.
- I paid cash for my own Gulfstream IV jet, and my private security detail consisted of former Secret Service agents from the presidential detail.

I could go on, but you get the idea.

You may be thinking: "Bartmann. Bartmann. Where have I heard that name before? Was this guy one of those rich kids whose daddy handed him the keys to a Ferrari? Was he born with a silver spoon in his mouth?"

That would not describe my upbringing. In fact, you know the baseball saying, "Three strikes and you're out"? I was raised with about 15 strikes already against me:

- I was born next to a pig slaughterhouse.
- My dad was a janitor and my mom cleaned houses.
- We were evicted from two places when I was growing up, because they were declared “unfit for human habitation.”
- I grew up with a pet dog—not to be my buddy, but to keep the rats off me as I slept at night.
- I lived for months at a time under a bridge viaduct and in a hayloft, and routinely ate out of Dumpsters.
- I was a gang member and an alcoholic by the age of 17.
- One night, in a drunken stupor, I fell down a flight of stairs and shattered part of my spine. I was told I would never walk again.

I could go on about my sordid past, but you get the idea.

I bring all of this up so you understand that I am not a distinguished professor who’s cooked up a great new theory. They’re a dime a dozen at the bookstore.

I’m also not a guy who made it big sometime in the past, but under entirely different circumstances than we face today. Those people are fine subjects for history lessons, but not for getting current, profitable information.

I’ll tell you exactly where I was when I decided to write this book: I was on my exercise bike in late 2008, watching the news about the \$700 billion government bailout bill that had just passed.

The assistant secretary of the treasury had called a press conference, and was explaining the outlines of the rescue plan the government was unveiling. He said it was a seven-step plan.

By the third step, I could recite out loud each step before he did.

How could I possibly know what the assistant secretary was going to say before he said it?

Because I had seen this movie before, and I knew the ending. The asset disposition plan that the government was unfolding was the same plan it used in the last crisis. It worked fine once before, so they decided to dust it off and use it again.

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Please stop for a moment and consider the essence of what I just explained to you:

I made a billion dollars from a standing start (okay, that's not exactly true; I was a million bucks in the hole). I did it without having the benefit of anyone showing me the ropes.

You, on the other hand, are in a much better position right now. An even bigger opportunity is presenting itself, and you have me as your guide.

What Opportunity Am I Talking About?

With one stimulus plan after another, the government is in the process of buying up banks with hundreds of billions of dollars of troubled assets. As you've heard everyone stress, the government wants to get back its couple trillion just as quickly as possible.

That means those banks will soon be dumping unheard-of amounts of assets onto the market at great discounts.

If you know what you're doing (which you will), and know where to look (which you will), you can buy bundles of these opportunities with 100 percent financing. Then you can manage the assets in such a way as to create a steady stream of cold, hard, immediate cash coming to you.

Is it beginning to dawn on you that the few bucks you just spent on this book might be the best investment of your life?

In the following chapters, I describe each aspect of this opportunity in much greater detail. You will see how the whole picture fits together. You'll have a whirlwind exposure to interesting but little-known parts of the world of finance.

The best part is you'll close this book with a clear idea of the next steps you can take to make a fortune of your own.

It's time for the very first question I know is on your mind. Throughout this book, I'll stop to answer the questions that alert readers should be asking themselves. Here's the first one:

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“Bill, if this is such a good opportunity, why would you possibly share it with the world? Why wouldn’t you just keep it to yourself?”

The answer is simple: There’s plenty of money out there for both of us.

Even when I made my first billion, I was only dipping a spoon into the ocean of dough I saw before me. Years ago I passed the point where I thought that a dollar in someone else’s pocket was one less dollar in mine.

That’s poverty thinking. Instead, when you’ve made a lot of money, you begin to see opportunity everywhere.

Trust me: I’m fully capitalizing on the current situation. But even I cannot get my arms around the entire opportunity, all for myself!

How This Book Is Organized

There are specific steps for us to cover in your journey to great wealth. There’s nothing magical about any one of them.

The real magic is in applying all of them fairly quickly, while the window of opportunity is still open. You will see in Chapter 2 that this opportunity is indeed temporary. For very practical reasons, this is not something you’ll be able to teach your kids to do.

You should also know that you cannot take shortcuts with my system and still get maximum value out of it. You must apply the steps in order.

I’m a fanatic about creating systems. In fact, the Smithsonian Institution has a permanent display featuring some of the financial technology I pioneered. The Harvard Business School taught a case study on my methods.

Therefore, you can be sure that I followed the advice of Albert Einstein, who said: “Things should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.”

Here are the steps I cover in later chapters.

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Realize the Opportunity

Everyone is *looking at* the same stuff coming out of Washington, but only a few people are *seeing* what it means. What really matters is how you interpret the information. I dissect the current bailout in terms of the very specific forces at work that make this such an astonishing opportunity.

Understand How You Can Take Advantage of It, Regardless of Your Circumstances

There may be a few people who realize the wealth-building potential before us, but many of them will never become wealthy from it. They'll fall into the trap of thinking "My situation is different."

What a pity. They don't realize that we all have different situations. We all have disadvantages, shortcomings, and unfair circumstances of one type or another. Some people like me have had generous helpings of each type of problem. Those are not reasons for failure—they're merely excuses for failure.

It's my job to show you how you can succeed despite having a long list of disadvantages, and I do just that in this section.

Get Prepared

No, you can't read my book, close the cover, and go to the bank with a fat check. You'll actually have to get off your duff and implement my system. But you will see in this section that it's merely a matter of taking one reasonable step after another. No giant leaps necessary.

Contact Suppliers of Bad Debt

The network news only talks about "failed mortgages" that banks are holding. Yes, they have a lot of those, but there's a whole rainbow of other asset opportunities for you to work with. I describe the nature

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and differences of these opportunities, and whom to contact so you can participate.

Analyze Opportunities

Your judgment is never better than your information. If you do not know what to make of a great opportunity, you can hardly take advantage of it. You must have a tested and proven method to analyze many deals quickly, and find the ones that are worth pursuing.

Even in this special period with excellent opportunities, there will be a lot of garbage to contend with. After all, even if you are the owner of the world's richest deposits of gold or diamonds, you must swiftly sort through mountains of worthless rock in order to find those precious glimmers of value. It's no different with investment opportunities. Fortunately for you, I am your guide.

Land Your First Deal

Staring at a wonderful opportunity will do you no good. You must act on it. As a new investor in these sorts of things, you may find it scary to leave the world of analysis and take action.

It need not be scary if you know what you're doing and are not taking a big risk. When I developed my systems, I had nothing with which to risk. I could only take advantage of opportunities that didn't require much time or any money to nail down. I show you how to do the same.

Manage Your Deal

You lock in your profit when you invest in an opportunity, but you turn that profit potential into actual dollars only by managing it.

Before you start thinking "I don't have time to brush my teeth, let alone manage some exotic asset," hang on: I'll show you that you don't have to touch a thing if you don't want to. There are asset managers available who do this sort of work for a living.

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Wrap Up Your Deal

After you have maximized the value of your deal, it's time to move on. I explain the exit strategies open to you, and when to choose which. You'll have the luxury of deciding whether you want to continue to get a stream of income from these assets, or settle for a lump sum when you sell them to others. It's a nice problem to have.

Reward Yourself

I'm a big believer in hard work, but I don't believe in doing so merely for the sake of hard work. It needs to result in rewards, and that's the purpose of this book: to show you the path to exceedingly large rewards.

Even though I could buy pretty much any toy at any price on planet Earth, one of the greatest treasures I have is a little wooden elephant that cost pennies.

Mother Teresa gave it to me. If you don't already realize this, you'll soon know that helping others in need is one of the most rewarding uses of your new fortune. After I took care of my loved ones' needs, I found that donating to charity made me feel wonderful. We'll talk more about all the pleasant choices you'll have once you get your money machine humming.

Get Better to Grow Larger

Trust me: Once you complete one cycle of this money-making process, you'll lie awake at night, wanting the alarm clock to ring so you can bound out of bed and grow your empire even bigger.

I know a thing or two about growing businesses: My company was listed in *Inc.* magazine's "500 Fastest-Growing Companies" for four years in a row. In fact, the only other company on that list to ever grow as fast, as quickly as we did, was Microsoft.

I'll be your guide to growing your endeavor as quickly and as large as you wish.

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In the Next Chapter

You are about to get a real eye-opener: In the next chapter, I lay out why the opportunity before us is truly a once-in-a-lifetime event. It's a perfect storm of ways to profit, all coming together very quickly.

Most giant storms come and go so fast that many people never know what hit them. You're different: You are reading this book and will be prepared to benefit like very few can.

