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THE DAY MONEY PAID OFF

by Philip Flowers

Cast: MR. MONEY (the answer man)
THE QUESTION MAN
THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER
THE AVERAGE AMERICAN
ROGER MUDDY (news reporter)
JACK CROAK (on the road)

Setting: a small audience of reporters and other interested bystanders facing a podium displaying a large gold dollar sign, backdropped by an impressive but obviously fake wall.

THE QUESTION MAN: (hesitantly) Mr. Money, sir, I ...

THE ANSWER MAN: (confidently) Well boys, no need to be formal here, just call me Bill.

THE QUESTION MAN: Well then, Bill, sir, we all, and I think I can speak for the majority, realize that you are probably best for the job but there seems to be an underlying suspicion that perhaps you may be slightly overvalued as it seems that...

MR. MONEY: Nonsense! Why sure, I've had to spread myself thin at times and now is one, but don't let that cloud the crystal clear facts. Why, where would you be without me?

THE QUESTION MAN: We of course realize how valuable you are and have been to us, but there is still a feeling that you have lost touch with the common man. I mean there are quite a few people that just don't see much of you anymore.

MR. MONEY: (with disgust) Oh, there's always the lazy, un-inspired creeps that give me a bad name. I'll make it clear I want nothing to do with them. I keep good care of my own kind though, and I'll vouch for it.

THE QUESTION MAN: We, of course, appreciate this rare interview and your candid replies, but I'd just like to ask...

MR. MONEY: "I have answers for only those who need not ask." My forefathers said that, I believe. Kind of catchy, isn't it?

THE QUESTION MAN: I'm afraid I don't quite follow...

MR. MONEY: Oh, merely being whimsical, but let's get on with it. Time is money, you know. (polite laughter)

THE QUESTION MAN: Oh yes, very funny. There have been rumors spreading through the financial world that your colleagues in Europe have decided to give you a rough time. It doesn't seem as though they value your friendship as much as they once did.

MR. MONEY: Oh, we all have our little problems, even me, but I have heard from reliable sources that the government has come up with a multi-leveled, bi-lateral agreement that should short-

change any major crisis that may arise in the foreseeable future. THE QUESTION MAN: Then you don't foresee any major crisis even within the next ten or so years?

MR. MONEY: Oh, nothing that money can't solve. (hostile laughter)

(An average American thus far having stood to one side now steps forward. Bitterly.)

AVERAGE AMERICAN: Well, let me ask a question that strikes a little closer to home. It seems that you've outspent yourself. I mean your questionable philosophies have hit home even to our children. Why you can't even buy a five cent cup of lemonade anymore! Don't you feel that there is something morally wrong here?

MR. MONEY: (disgusted) Oh, I think you're just making a mountain of change out of a few dollars. Why, inflation is and has been a part of the American way. It helps competition thrive while only quite a few lose out. For those who are so unfortunate, there's help: loan companies, banks, credit cards, well, Lord, I could go on till the next fiscal year. With all the fine services available to everyone, there should be no room for complaint, except of course for those few educated bums that know better.

(The average American retreats, confused.)

THE QUESTION MAN: Well, let me touch on a rather controversial subject. I have heard from reliable sources that you have almost complete control of the government. It's been rumored that you may even control our daily lives.

MR. MONEY: Why yes, it's true that I am quite popular and my name is a common household word, but let's not over-emphasize my importance. You've got to take into consideration the human aspect, which I try to avoid.

(The audience is becoming restless.)

THE QUESTION MAN: I don't quite follow you, I mean that sounds like double talk to me...

MR. MONEY: Oh you're quite right. (fanatically) because the main reason I called this press conference was to announce my Domination of Your Life...

(The press conference is in an uproar, but above it all an innocent bystander rushes the podium and says ...)

INNOCENT BYSTANDER: Why you son-of-a-bitch, you oversized moneybag, I'll, I'll cut right into your profit margin! (Picking up a giant eraser) I'll eradicate you, erase your memory, I'll pull the gold right from under your feet.

(Off to one side an unidentified gentleman calmly burns his check-book, credit cards, which burn a little slow, and other assorted papers.)

INNOCENT BYSTANDER: Suck it up, moneybag, your credit is overdue, your buying power is gone, (photographer lighting a cigar with a fifty) you're out of change, and you'll always be the same.

(With that last remark the innocent bystander gently drops a gold brick on Money's head.)

(Cut to evening news: a small desk and the sound of teletype.)

ROGER MUDDY: Good evening, this is Roger Muddy with the occasional news. I'll try to make this short and sweet. The reported crisis with Russia is over. It's unconfirmed as yet since both governments folded only one hour ago. As for that thrilling assassination of Bill Money, the money magnate, it appears as though most other countries have followed suit and done likewise. One other item of interest: Wall Street was burned to the ground this afternoon amid much cheering and jubilation.

We have a final report from our man on the road, Jack Croak. (Enter Jack in teeshirt and bermuda shorts.)

JACK CROAK: I was out on the road today in Hometown U.S.A. I have here with me a former taxpayer and a member of A.A. (Average American). Sir, could you tell us your feelings about the events of the past few days?

AVERAGE AMERICAN: I... I'm afraid it's just a dream.

(As the curtain closes.)