

## Willie Smith to the Corpse

Contributed by Willie Smith

Willie Smith: June 23, 2013

Dear Andrei, Guardian of The Exquisite,

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Â Â Â Â Holy cats â€“ mud oven! As an indication of just how far under a rock I indeed live, I never heard of such a thing. But, thanks to your mentioning and the internet's elaborating, I now possess of said gizmo a clear picture. Am in fact salivating at the prospect of mud-oven-baked bread, pizza, cakes, perhaps even an impromptu crematorium for the mother-in-law. I always wanted to live in a library, and now, thanks to the net plus a handful of stimulating emailers such as yourself, I do. The net is an anchorite's dream. At last one can both live under a rock and still be a practicing dilettante of the arts and sciences.

Â Â Â Â I've been enjoying Mark Sargent's letters from Greece. Thanks for letting them gnaw into The Corpse. The epistle where he recounts his stay in a Spartan hospital, admitted for vertigo, is priceless. I make my own rather meager \$40K gross annual living enmeshed in the American Medical Industry, so it was bracing to get slapped in the face with Sargent's all-holds-bared tale of 72 hours in the clutches of the Greek Medical Industry.

Â Â Â Â I put a crust on the table being a financial worker for Medicaid; Welfare by any other name. A financial worker is something like a barnacle attached to a social worker. My job only requires a high school diploma. Social worker requires a Masters in Social Work. Why, when Medicaid gets ahold of you, do you have both a social worker and a financial worker? Same reason why when you get AIDS you also get thrush. A financial worker is the bureaucratic equivalent of an opportunistic disease.

Â Â Â Â When my clients (this will be you should you live long enough to be subjected to the exorbitance of the nursing home, the extended cancer treatment, the daily dialysis, etc.) complain about the number of forms I nag them to complete and the way I poke about in their bank accounts, life insurance policies, burial funds, annuities and any real estate they might be silly enough still to own when they fall into one or another of the Medical Industry's gouging machines, I remind them that Medicaid is not socialized medicine. Medicaid is Welfare: the last safety net in America. They are eligible for Medicaid only because they can prove to their Uncle Willie that the Medical Industry has reduced them to a state of palpable indigence. If you have more than \$2K to your name, I deny you benefits; the State will not help you with your avalanche of medical bills because you are not legally impoverished. Go sell your home, spend the proceeds on paying off the nursing home, then come back and see me (with all supporting documents in your bony, liver-spotted fist) and I'll poke around further and try to find some other reason for denying you Medicaid, like maybe you gave away a car four years ago to your grandson; if you did, I will promptly establish a penalty period, during which you will continue to be ineligible for Medicaid.

Â Â Â Â So it was nice to hear from Mr. Sargent that socialized medicine can just as easily prove helpless in the crush of the worldwide Medical Industry. Although I think Mark's bills got paid OK; he just didn't get much in the way of competence on the floor; not that the American Medical Industry is noted for knowing what it is doing with the scalpel, the MRI or the colonoscopy.

Â Â Â Â I shouldn't be so flip in insinuating to my clients (this will be I, should I be so unfortunate as to keep on living another decade or two) that if only they'd vote in socialized medicine, maybe they'd get to deal with a better set of rules and be required to jump through fewer hoops with less stickum lining those hoops. Face it: the Medical Industry â€“ be it American, Greek or Rwandan â€“ will never be content until it has pocketed every last penny I and the rest of the planet possess.

Â Â Â Â Remember: Medicine is a science. If the language of science is mathematics, and the vocabulary of science statistics, then the heart of science is necessarily robotics. I believe we recently witnessed what can happen when robotics takes over the stock exchange.

Â Â Â Â Enough glum talk. I'm attaching a few of my usual cheery pieces for consideration for entombment. Hope you enjoy, even if you can't find them a spot. It's always a thrill to anticipate the eyes of The Corpse being cast over a page I have personally soiled with letters of our alphabet.

Nothing doing,

You bet, Â Â Willie Â Â Â