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**Are We Being Legally Mugged?**

**By Carl Hampton**

As the FAT CAT Oil Companies get richer by the day, the average American is working harder and longer for less money. Hello!!!! What's wrong with this picture????? How long can this go on!

At the end of July, all the oil companies reported massive jumps in their revenue and profits. Was this profit made from LEGALLY MUGGING the American public? Let's have a look at the facts.

Two of the top three oil companies in the world, Exxon, Mobil and Shell recently posted combined second quarter profits just under \$18 billion on record high prices on crude oil. Both companies had exceeded market expectations. Nice, as long as you are not (the average American) struggling to make ends meet.

Exxon and Mobil managed a 12% rise in revenue to \$99 billion. The first time a U.S company had passed the \$1 billion a day for a trading quarter. As I was filling up the tank, I remember thinking how pleased I was about that little bit of history.

This second quarter has shaped up as the richest three months ever for the six largest oil companies. ConocoPhillips, the U.S third largest oil company, was pleased to tell us that PROFITS had jumped 65% to a record 5.19 billion. The Energy Department in Washington reported that U.S retail prices rose by 30% from last year.

There is no other industry that could get away with this type of behavior. At the first sign of any problem anywhere in the world, UP goes the gas prices and WHO pays for this, we do as Americans. We are told by our LEADERS that the oil companies are (protecting) their margins. Get a clue --- record REVENUE and PROFITS is NOT (protecting) your margins it's LEGALIZED MUGGING of the American public, pure and simple.

You would think our LEADERS would want to PROTECT the great American public from this type of suffering, but you would be wrong. We never seem to be very far away from another election and election campaigns cost money BIG MONEY. Enter the oil companies with their very deep pockets. All the time, we as the people continue to allow politicians to spend these obscene amounts of money on

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their election campaigns we will always be subject to the power of these special interest groups.

Will someone PLEASE explain to me how they can justify spending tens of million of dollars on a Senate seat election and hundreds of millions on a Presidential election??? After all these jobs pay only a few hundred thousand dollars a year in salaries at best. What do we get for this money?

Answer: LIES AND SMILES. They all promise to make a difference and they do – WE ALWAYS SEEM TO END UP WORST OFF.

Wouldn't it be nice if politicians pay was related to productivity and results! Wonder how many of them would want the job then?

Have an opinion or a question you would like me to answer, then write me!

Your" Money Matters By Carl Hampton the best selling Author of "From Credit Despair To Credit

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**"Are You Revolting To–Day...Or Are You Just Being Mugged?"**

**By Roger J. Burke**

**"Are You Revolting To–Day...Or Are You Just Being Mugged?" by Roger J. Burke**

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A funny thing happened to me on my way through a website today...I got mugged! And, it wasn't the first time either...in fact, it's been happening more often than I care to admit.

What do I mean? Well...just bear with me, for a few moments, while I recount a similar event, but in an entirely different environment.

On the main street of our town, a new hardware store opened a few weeks back. Being the type of guy who regularly watches Tim the Tool Man, I just hadda go, right?

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When I get there, it looks all very nice, new paint, bright lights, lotsa great adverts onna windows, all very enticing. So...I go in, bbbzzzzzzzz, fall through the darn buzzer (usta be 'tinkle, tinkle' on the door...much nicer in those days), and meet this guy standing there, pad in one hand, pen inna other...

He smiles thinly – and I wonder why I think of a wolf – as he says, "G'morning, sir, and what is your name, address, post code, city, country, phone number, occupation, number of children, marital status, type of car you drive, how old is it, blah, blah, blah..."

By this time, my head's spinning, and I'm sure I'm having a nightmare – as my daughter likes to say – as I hear him, dully now, droning on and on, and I finally manage to turn and stumble outta there, eyes glazed, gasping for air...

Rest easy...that didn't really happen to me, of course, at that new store. In fact, the exact opposite...I was totally ignored! ;-(

However, all too often now, whenever I arrive at some websites these days, there seems to be a thought that we all must give up a mountain of personal information before we are allowed the privilege of buying their products! Name and email for an ezine subscription, fine; ask for any more and that's just plain arrogant.

Well...we ain't gonna be mugged anymore...we're revolting! And so should you!

Now, before anybody accuses us of being Luddites, be it known that we are among the most vocal about using new technology and methods. The problem is, some – perhaps many – of those who are

introducing and using all this new stuff suffer from a delusion: many of them think that the rules of engagement have changed!

Pardon me...as Ripley said to the bored board in the boardroom...but has the IQ suddenly dropped around here?

Yes, the technology of communication and business is changing rapidly, but the reasons people buy products are not changing...period. With all major technology changes throughout history – writing, printing, telephone, radio, TV etc – it gets progressively easier to be separated from your money, that's all. But the reasons you buy stay the same; giving up a lot of personal information is not one of those reasons!

E-Commerce and e-tailing suggest the possibility of still easier buying (and, just quietly, still easier separation from your money, as you know)...but, why should we be mugged first, if at all? When was the last time you were personal-data-mugged at your bricks-and-mortar shopping mall or wherever?

Of course, you can choose to be mugged...but, maybe you live in LA or New York City? Jaaarst kiddin', OK! ;-(

On the web, there is absolutely no need for web-muggers to gobsmack you with demands for personal

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information before you buy their product or get information about the affiliate program or MLM program (the worst offenders, in our opinion) or whatever! Sheesh!

Don't be mugged (and don't be a mug!). Make a difference...tell 'em you're revolting!

Better yet...tell 'em they're revolting! And then go to the competition. :-))

Roger Burke has been involved with computers since 1967, and has managed to break quite a few, over the years. He, and his wife Sherry, are now actively engaged in online self-publishing and promoting specific affiliate programs at <http://online-wealth.com> . If you have any comments or questions about this article, please send emails to <mailto:webmaster@online-wealth.com> .Copyright 2001, Online-Wealth. All rights reserved.



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