Witness to Occupy

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Kenneth and Ramirez drink and smoke and analyze an Occupy Protest.

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The light is beginning to leave the sky as a protest goes on in one of the many banks that contributed to the financial collapse of 2008. Roughly made, cardboard cut-out picket signs, held up by hairy, hairless and army-sleeved arms alike, poke up in various parts of the massive crowd, and chants fill the room as if on cue. The joys of freedom of speech are in the air.

Two twenty-something men known as Kenneth and Ramirez step up to the wide window of the bank, dirty and stinking. Kenneth has a forty concealed in a small paper bag, half empty. Ramirez holds a custom Swisher Sweet swelled to abnormal size with marijuana. They both could get tickets for drinking and smoking in public, but donâ t consider this.

â Now what are we doing today Kenneth,â Ramirez says, and puts two gloved hands up on the glass. The blunt pokes from his lips.

Kenneth shrugs. The paper bag crinkles as he drinks some beer. â Donâ t know. The real question is though, what are we doing here?â

â Watching these people do a lot of nothing for nothing, it looks like.â

â Yeah, well, things get fixed from the streets man, so what else they gonna do? You get enough push on the streets and then Congress is pressured to act on legislation.â

â Yeah, but a lot of the higher-ups donâ t want that and want to keep the power consolidated in the top one percent of the country, and in turn control the money, which they can use to lobby government officials to enact the type of legislation that they want.â

Kenneth nods and slurps some more beer. â The one percent that you speak about, many of them work in corporations and such and thrive off less regulation. It allows them to get away with getting as much money as they can from an entity with corrupt means without getting arrested. Maybe a bad thing ethically and morally but in that world itâ s about the paper man. They get insane bonuses that they donâ t need. Tear companies apart and fire everyone and resell them at a profit.â

Ramirez nods and turns to Kenneth. â Very true. Most of the people protesting in this bank are likely Democrats and as you can see theyâ re all pretty young as well. Like in their twenties and early thirties. They feel that too much money is concentrated in the top percentile with the multi-millionaires and billionaires and because these people can lobby and influence legislatorsâ you know, congressmen and suchâ they can make sure that the disparity between the richest and the poorest of the country remains.

â So for the poor that means thereâ s no ladder to climb to become middle class and for the middle class it means that they may one day become poor. Those two financial tiers make less and less while the rich make more and more. The middle class family can no longer have a decent income with their current job and lose the American Dream. The poor, wellâ ¦pretty much fucked.â

â Yeah, fucked is right brother,â Kenneth says, his eyes still looking through window of the bank. He puts his beer down. â The higher ups really think they know it all, like us small people donâ t know anything. You know what I think though? I think sometimes the smaller people are more open to learn. A lot of the ones on top choose not to know. Or are just inoculated to such an extent that the right information just canâ t get through.â

â New regulation standards have been passed, which is a start Kenneth, as far as improving things. Now people need to get educated for the better jobs. And we need more jobs back here in the United States. The rich need to pay more in taxes, and yeah, the bums need to try harder to find a job. Figure it out. Donâ t care how hard it is.â

Both men have their hands on the glass, identical expressions of sadness on their face.

Kenneth sighed. â You know man, sometimes I think we know more than the ones that run all of this.â

Ramirez bursts into laughter and claps Kenneth on the back and they turn and walk away. â No offense Kenneth, but that sounds pretty ridiculous man.â

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