

The Billionaire Expulsion Act of 2099

By Nicolas Revelo

They could have given us a little more room. I mean honestly, I still don't really see what I did wrong. Anybody else would have done the same thing I did in my position, right? I didn't come from some rich family like a lot of these guys. My mom left my alcoholic dad when I was a baby and I haven't seen him since. I went to regular public school and became valedictorian. I put myself through school, working part time. I've never stolen from anyone, I've earned everything I have.

"T-minus one minute to launch" blares through speakers.

I guess, maybe, possibly, there was the tiniest bit of luck involved, but the vast majority of my success was because I worked my ass off. Yes, my uncle happened to work in the admissions office at Princeton and showed them my application, but I got in off my own test scores and grades. Besides, everyone uses their connections. If my uncle had been a manager at Pizza Hut I would've worked there. And I'd probably be CEO there too. Looking around from my seat I don't see their CEO in any of the orange jumpsuits occupied by a fellow passenger. I guess he got spared. People do love pizza.

They put a window in here, but it's so fucking small and at the worst possible angle for my seat. All you can see is the light blue of the sky through a tiny triangle on the wall. Not a cloud in sight, so I guess they picked the right day to do this. Or maybe it's God giving them his blessing. Fuck that guy. Would it have killed them to give us one last view?

“T-minus thirty seconds to launch”. Others on board start to squirm, the reality of what’s happening finally dawning on them.

Look, you could make an argument that starting an online retailer at the beginning of the dot-com era was lucky timing and that I didn’t choose to be born then and had I been born just a few years before or later I would’ve missed the train entirely, but we can never know for sure. Maybe if just one thing had been different I would be working away like everybody else, instead being able to retire by the age of thirty. That could understand getting upset about. Someone in optimal shape staying home when they could be working, being productive and producing value. As bad they might think I was it would have been worse if I had been a drain to society and just focused on hobbies. I play guitar. I couldn’t afford one when I was growing up but now I have every guitar I could want, paid for personal lessons. I could’ve just done that and I’m sure they’d be just as mad.

“T-minus ten seconds to launch.”

Jump forward a decade or two and technology kept advancing to the place where we could start automating more and more of the work required to run the company. Anybody would have made the same decision, it was too lucrative not to. If I hadn’t done it, the board would have voted to remove me and replace me with someone who would have done it. What was I supposed to do, retire? People love to criticize people

like me for not paying taxes while being very profitable, but we followed the law exactly as written, so if you ask me their anger is pointed in the wrong direction. But even still the government needs a company like mine to be doing well. That's what's most beneficial for everyone, even workers. Without me what would they be doing?

“Nine.”

One thing I definitely didn't expect was this president following the spray tanning senior. And I'll admit, when she talked about sending billionaires “where they belong” I thought the worst case scenario was federal prison. I did not expect her to whip up votes on an actual bill. And that the approval rating was 94% from the start, it didn't even seem real. None of my assistants or executives had ever brought up to me how the consumers felt about us, they always said they loved us.

I remember her speech on the day she signed the bill into law. She said we were a cancer on our society, called us wage thieves. Me, who made it possible for millions of people to access cheap goods at a quick pace. Would higher wages really be better if I had to charge more for them anyway?

“Eight.”

The months of preparation for the launch didn't feel real at the beginning. We all still met at the same yearly summits, as if nothing was going to happen. You could hear

the absolute denial when the bill was passed in the House and Senate. *There's no way this is actually going to happen* echoed in conversations for months. I remember Elon had a more practical mental cope. *They're going to keep delaying it because of technical issues and it'll never happen.* He's a few rows behind me now, probably telling himself he can figure out a way to drive the ship and get us to Mars once we're out of orbit. He's going to have to figure out how to get out of these handcuffs first.

“Seven.”

Using my own private spaceflight company was bitter sweet. On the one hand it's a bit cruel but on the other I wouldn't want to go out on any other ship. I always thought there would be a movie about me. I guess that was just for Zuckerberg. He's a few seats over and has been completely still and quiet this whole time. I think he's trying to meditate his way off the ship. I never really got into all that, it seemed like a waste of time. Sitting here I think I was right. He does look more at peace than the rest of us do right now.

“Six.”

The Sacklers smell like shit in here. One of them hasn't stopped crying. It must be interesting being sent as a family. In a sense it might be a bit more comforting. I wonder what my kids are thinking right now. If I have any regrets it's probably that I

didn't go to more of their games and performances. But deep in my soul I know I would've just worked.

"Five."

I miss Stephanie. She's probably never been more grateful to have left me. I should've listened to her more.

"Four."

They really hated us all enough to go through all this trouble. Physicists working full work weeks, making sure every calculation is correct to ensure today goes as smoothly as possible.

"Three."

It was awesome being one of the richest people alive. You get everything you want when you want it. Literally no person or thing can stop you. I had an old ass bridge taken down so I could get my mega yacht through. I hired Aerosmith to play at my 50th birthday. I made them do "Walk This Way" three times that night.

"Two."

God maybe I should've just dropped a zero from my net worth and lifted all my employees out of poverty. I could've not had so many guitars. A lot of them, most of them, did just collect dust as they hung on the wall. There's a few that were delivered when I wasn't there. I never got to play them. Just a couple thousand for each one, but still.

"One." Fuck fuck fuck.

The ship starts to rumble. The sound of the engines exploding beneath me starts to sound like the applause of an enormous crowd. It feels like fifty-fifty shot on whether the ship is going to lift off or just explode. I guess either way everyone at home will be happy with the outcome.

I feel the g-force pulling my head down but I fight it, insisting on enjoying the pathetic excuse for a view that they gave us. By the smell of it, at least one person shit their pants already. My money's on Altman.

The light blue of the sky slowly fades into the darkness of space, and we're on the way into the abyss.