

## The Last Racketeers - Part 2

Written by Alex Baer

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In his 1935 book, "War is a Racket," USMC Maj. Gen. Smedley D. Butler observed how commercial interests were too-well served by warfare. He noted his own position in that machine: "... I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism."

Definition, one of many around: *Racket - An illegal enterprise carried on for profit.*

To help your contemplative workload, it would be easier to ask you to consider some facet of life in the last 50 or so years that was **not** a racket. Public, political, business -- everywhere, rackets. The noise of making money. The noise of humans, alive:  
*What racket you in?*

We wish you well in your searches, looking for Shangri-La, for Xanadu, paradise, too. Good luck finding some activity not steeped in some scheme or some racket, not ultimately some corruption of Constitution, not some squandering of the Bill of Rights, not some hocus-pocus hamstringing our basic freedoms as human beings -- and, none of it off in some faraway case, but, right here, right now, right at home, all over the place.

Samples, examples? Here's a couple, materialized from thin air: Set aside war crimes, set aside fair elections. Discard those, now and forever, the way our nation has already done.

History notes findings of standards, driven by the United States, at Nuremberg, after WWII, regarding the minimum acceptable human conduct of Axis power leaders -- standards which should have held but did not. The violations, we insisted, were war crimes. We held parties to account for their criminal acts.

Modern leaders and lawmakers sneer, curl their lips at such stuff -- their actions tell us all we'd ever care to know. We are to play patty-cake, too, -- go play outside, just go away -- with our votes, holding public elections with the electronic software codes kept secret, all privately owned.

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You already know we'd be among the first on any plane, to go off jetting around, supervising another's elections, some other's country's leaders and war crimes: *Been there. Done that.*

If you push at the facts, the facts will push you right back, they will shove you right into Bush and Cheney, the facts will shove you down on your butt, they will kick your guts out.

The facts will take you by the hair on your head, slam your face right into the wall:

*Milestone, Supreme Court, United States of America, December 12, 2000, when the walls should have been tumbling down, all the way down, down for all time -- with us all, taking raw materials from that rubble, so we might build it better next time.*

If we took some laws seriously around here -- notably the RICO and Patriot Acts high among them -- almost all our leaders and societal pillars would be in jail, chucked into the jug, held without bail, held incommunicado... *Sorry, no mail.* ☐ *See you next century, Sunshine.*

String along a sec along, and wonder along with us, please: We know exactly what happens to us if we pinch a pop from a store cooler, filch some Fritos, nick some nicotine patches, shoplift a six-pack, flat-out steal some flat iron steaks -- we also know what happens to bankers who steal our homes out from under us, wheel away in our cars, take our retirement savings out for a ride, bankrupt the whole country, topple whole nations with digits on a page.

What do we do with so many suicidal squiggles printed and scrawled out on paper, imprinted, sanitized murder on such nice, clean, white sheets -- what do we do then? What do we do now?

When Maj. Gen, Butler stepped out in front of the mighty engines and dared the powers of his time -- traitorous and self-serving bank-gangsters, just as prevalent then as we have now -- he crossed a mental line he'd made through space, as did the engines of his day: They both crossed their lines, triggered each other, and they both slipped away.

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Butler stepped off, into an abyss of madness incarnate -- not knowing whether he would win or fail, knowing he must try, come high water or hell -- and he ventured into the scant and dark places, into elephantine fissures, places where maniacs make laws for all the rest of us to silently and certainly keep.

He tore them to shreds.

*So can we.*