

# America's 5<sup>th</sup> Revolution

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(Volume II)



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### #11 Guru's Housing Innovations (Part III)

*Scene: Jordan's Office: Follow-up to Entries #9, #10*

Jordan: "Guru. Thanks for stopping by again."

Guru: "You're welcome."

Jordan: "Let's pick up where we left off. The challenge was how to keep a house tight over a 100-year life. You were going to present ideas how to avoid the creaks and moans that creep into a house."



Guru: "Picture the interior of the house. In each corner there are support beams but the beams are hidden by a decorative panel. In the support beams there are large bolts."

Jordan: "OK and then what?"

Guru: "You know when you drive over a bridge – George Washington Bridge over the Hudson or Verrazano Bridge – there are big bolts that hold the beams together. Think of those bolts but smaller size."



Jordan: "So I pull off the panel and tighten bolts?"

Guru: "Yes, tighten say every 4-5 years and you will avoid the creaks and moans you often get in an older house."



Jordan: "Interesting idea but doesn't that mean the support beams are metal instead of wood?"

Guru: "Steel is my preference. In this country we started building houses out of wood because there lots of trees were readily available. Woods has some real benefits but some drawbacks as well."

Jordan: "Such as?"

Guru: "Wood is great if your dimensions are not exact. Building a house on site with wood is much easier because the tolerances are not as tight. But when the tolerances are tight, wood becomes more difficult to manage than metal."

Jordan: "Back to my auto days – the early cars had frames made of wood. As the industry migrated to higher volumes it also began using steel for frames. Steel held tolerances and made assembly lines more productive."

Guru: "And the steel frames last much longer, whether in cars or in a house. No worry about termites and other critters. The goal is have that house still be up to date in the 100<sup>th</sup> year. To do so we need steel frames."

Jordan: "But haven't steel houses been tried before? We looked at a house in Michigan made with steel framing. Liked the house but concerned about how we would make modifications."



Guru: "US Steel helped build some houses – in the late 1930's I think, probably including the one you looked at in Michigan. I agree those designs were rigid – no pun intended. The new designs keep the benefits of steel and incorporate flexibility."

Jordan: "Why are we continuing to use wood for beams in houses? Aren't the frames of commercial buildings steel?"

Guru: "Wood made a lot of sense in colonial times and settling the west. But wood makes less sense today. In fact I think wood framing hinders innovation in housing, not helps it. But, hey, I'm just an architect and sometimes builder so what do I know?"

Jordan: "Using steel would also protect against hurricanes and floods. Right?"

Guru: "Absolutely. And protecting against floods can be relatively simple."

Jordan: "OK, I'm game. How?"

Guru: "Think about building a house on stilts. Inside the stilts are worm screws. The normal position would be house at ground level and look like virtually every other house. When there is threat of a flood, activate the worm screws and the house rises say 6-8', which should avoid damage from most floods."



Jordan: "Another brilliant idea, Guru. One more thing about these new houses of yours – what is the source for utilities?"

Guru: "We...societal we...have a chance to overcome a lot of problems with today's infrastructure used for delivering clean water and electricity. Like framing houses out of wood, what made sense 100-150 years ago does not necessarily make sense today."

Jordan: "Give me some examples."

Guru: "Look, you know more about this stuff than I do."

Jordan: "I know the systems but I do not have an architect's perspective. You talk first about how the systems can be integrated and then I'll talk about system components."

Guru: "OK. Manufactured housing allows houses to be installed as single units or in clusters. A major inhibitor to innovative grouping of houses has been the requirement to use existing infrastructure for electricity, clean water, sewage treatment."

Jordan: "Why an inhibitor?"

Guru: "Electricity is generated at a large plant, and then sent out over wires to users often many miles away from the generating

plant. The cost of delivering is high – lots of poles and wires and a good portion of the electricity lost along the way. Not really lost but...you know what I mean."

Jordan: "The resistance of the metal wires creates heat. Centralized power plants made a lot of sense at first. Homes had no electricity and there was no way to produce electricity cheaply except at these large plants."

Guru: "Same concept with water treatment and sewer. Large plants serving many residential and commercial locations. Very costly infrastructure – underground pipes to the customer. Made sense when it started because no way to treat sewage at the house in the urban environment. But that, too, was 150 years ago."

Jordan: "Been around a bit longer—at least 2,500 years. The Romans used the same concept to deliver water and take away sewage. Some of the aqueducts are still in use today. I think it might be time for a change."

Guru: "I'm not one to change for change sake, but forcing homeowners and industrial facilities to use the infrastructure restricts flexibility in layout. Much of infrastructure is laid out in a straight line, which means houses are in a straight line. Trying to change the infrastructure is costly so we have new housing dictated by decisions of 100-150 years ago."

Jordan: "Plus, repairing the existing infrastructure is very expensive and disruptive. Even a small repair can affect a large number of

people. Seems to me we have the tail wagging the dog when it comes to innovation. If you had a chance to make a change, what's a good application?"

Guru: "We really need to cluster homes. Could be a greenfield project. However, my preference is installing in a city where the infrastructure needs repairing or updating and new housing is needed.

Jordan: "Any idea where?"

Guru: "How about Detroit? Lots of other examples but I know you spent a lot of time in Detroit."

Jordan: "Detroit is perfect. Lots of open spaces in the city and an infrastructure that needs repair. How would the project work?"



Guru: "Take a couple of block area that is vacant. Look at the land and decide the best way to position the houses. Might be all in a row or might be some type of clustering with a central building. Lots of options."

Jordan: "Then what?"

Guru: "Once we have the general layout, then decide the best method to provide electric-

ity, clean water and sewage treatment to that cluster."

Jordan: "Are you talking about one system."

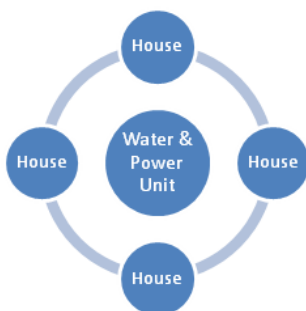
Guru: "No, likely some combination. But systems should be commercially available off the shelf. Electricity could be a combination of solar and thermal, which could convert heat from driveways and roof shingles into electricity. Maybe a small vertical wind generator in addition to the solar. This is really your bailiwick."

Jordan: "Keep going. What about water and sewage?"

Guru: "Use that system you designed for treating hog waste. As I understand you can fuel the system with diesel, natural gas or even biomass, like leaves, grass and some refuse. Doesn't the system purify water and generate electricity? And even process waste?"

Jordan: "Yes it does. The system can be scaled for 3-4 houses all the way up to say 30-40 houses. You still need some infrastructure to deliver electricity and clean water and process sewage but it is cheap compared to the current infrastructure."





Guru: "What about waterless toilets and the new ways of treating sewage?"

Jordan: "That's one of the benefits of the design. As more efficient approaches come along, it is easy to make the transition. With the current approach -- electricity, water, sewage -- once the delivery infrastructure is installed, the community is stuck with the approach...and any mistakes...for 100-150 years. Very expensive to make changes. Some infrastructure might be useless."

Guru: "How do we get the idea from paper to production? You can tell I love this stuff. I want to make it happen -- and not just in Detroit. This approach can work throughout the US, Europe...worldwide."

Jordan: "Guru, you have me excited, too. Can you head up the project to begin rebuilding some key cities with potential to support more manufacturing?"

Guru: "You have a deal."

*(More in future installments re innovative housing, micro-infrastructure and manufacturing.)*

## #12 Pound Dog Club: Don't Join

Voice: "Jordan, there is a lady here to see you. Says her name is JC and you know her."

Jordan: "JC, great to see you. An unexpected and pleasant surprise. What brings you to town?"

JC: "Nice to see you, too. Been too long. Lots of conversations but no face-to-face for a while."



Jordan: "Have a seat. Want some coffee?"

JC: "Yes, please. Black, no sugar."

Jordan: "Both of us black, no sugar. From your days in NY, right?"

JC: "Yep. By the way, hope it's OK that I brought my friend. Here boy."

Jordan: "And who is this distinguished gentleman accompanying you?"

JC: "My new love. Jordan meet Ralph."

Jordan: "Where did Sir Ralph come from?"



JC: "Zee pound. Ralph was abandoned early on. I decided he needed a home and I needed a companion."

Jordan: "That's very nice of you. He looks like a very nice companion."

JC: "He is. But like all men he needed some training."

Jordan: "Need I be reminded? You know I am a pound dog, too."

- JC: "I know but we're not going to talk about that. I have something else I want to talk about for a minute."
- Jordan: "You talk only for a minute? Since when?"
- JC: "Cut it Jordan, I need to talk."
- Jordan: "OK. What is it?"
- JC: "Not sure if you heard with the revolution and all the chaos going on but my sister died. Painful. And now I am the only one left. No more family and only a few people I really know – like you."
- JC: "I had not heard about your sister and I am very sorry. How can I help?"
- JC: "First, just listen and then tell me what it is like to be alone with no family. I've known you were a pound dog since grammar school. But no one really talked about it since I'm not sure it mattered much to anyone."
- Jordan: "Your question about being alone is an interesting one. I've never been anything but a pound dog...like your pal Ralph. No known family, no records, no history. All that information is sealed someplace."
- JC: "Can't you get at the information?"
- Jordan: "I don't even know where to begin looking. Besides what does it matter at this point, other than it would be nice to have some medical history."
- JC: "Go back to being without your family. How do you manage?"
- Jordan: "You make up family, friends mostly. I am not the first pound dog and certainly not

the last. And you are not the first person to be left with no relatives."

JC: "I know but I feel so empty."

Jordan: "And you always will feel empty. Hard for people with relatives to understand the feeling. They might not like their relatives but at least they have them. We do not."

JC: "But you had a pound-dog brother. What about him?"

Jordan: "I don't know how he feels. We've never talked about it. To me he was a person in the same household I grew up with. But a blood relative, no."

JC: "Are we becoming melodramatic?"

Jordan: "I don't know. It's a tough conversation to have, at least for me."

JC: "At least I am not alone feeling empty. Empty because my sister died and empty because no one else on my side is left."

Jordan: "You are not alone feeling empty. Frankly, I don't have any advice on what to do about it?"

JC: "About what?"

Jordan: "The loneliness. We all get lonely at times. This is just a different kind of loneliness but unfortunately it is permanent."

JC: "Listen to us. You'd think we were on some talk show spilling our guts about some irrational behavior."

Jordan: "Well, maybe we are. But fortunately Sir Ralph is the host and he's not going to say much to anyone else."

JC: "Good boy, Ralph. But really, I guess all we can do is live with what we have."

Whining and moaning won't change any facts.

Jordan: "And whining and moaning won't make anything better. That's up to us. JC, welcome to the pound-dog club."

JC: "Thanks but I'd rather not be a member."

Jordan: "We are members and I think we can use that membership to solve a real problem."

JC: "What's the problem?"

Jordan: "How do we manage all the kids left homeless or parentless in this revolution? We had a bunch before, now the problem is much worse."

JC: "When you say manage are you talking about feeding, housing and educating these kids? It is a big problem and even bigger challenge to solve. Any ideas?"

Jordan: "We are not the first country to have the problem. How have other countries solved it?"

JC: "I like the way you answered my question with a question. Were you ever a consultant? Anyway, a tried-and-true model to address the problem – although the model seems somewhat archaic – is a group home..an orphanage. I'd rather think of it as a boarding school."

Jordan: "Such a home could work for say ages 10-12 and above but what about those who are younger?"

JC: "You might have to include kids as young as six. Kids start elementary school at age six and most have been to kindergarten.

So the issue is managing the kids before and after school."

Jordan: "Sounds almost cruel but I am not sure there is another solution."

JC: "Not as cruel as you might think...or at least not outside the norm of today's households. Most parents work and have someone else manage the children after school, even if the kids are at home. The key to an effective home for these kids will be getting the right people involved. But I don't think there is a realistic alternative."

Jordan: "We need someone to lead this effort who..."

JC: "No, Jordan, I am not interested. And I'm not good at that management stuff."

Jordan: "JC, do me a favor. We'll find someone who is a manager and who can handle the day-to-day issues. But we also need someone to outline what this program should look like, what the kids should learn, etc."

JC: "OK, I can handle the ideas part but promise me you will find a manager. And give me a few days to put thoughts together."

Jordan: "Thanks. I'll buy you custard if we ever get back there."

JC: "Great. I'm the only person who grew up in that town that didn't like custard. See you in a few days."

### #13 Homes for Pound Dogs

*Scene: JC in Jordan's office a few days later.*

Jordan: "JC, nice to see you again.  
Good couple of days?"

JC: "Are you going to say hello  
to Ralph? I thought you  
had better manners."



Jordan: "Good morning, Ralph.  
Nice to see you again, too.  
Now, what about a plan."



JC: "Yes, I have a plan. But you  
cannot put me in charge. That's not my  
expertise. I won't do it."

Jordan: "I promised to get someone else to run the  
program you developed. When we finish  
this conversation, I need to get your per-  
spective on something."

JC: "Perspective on what?"

Jordan: "Let's wait and first address helping the  
pound dogs."

JC: "Jordan, don't call them pound dogs,  
please."

Jordan: "OK. But what do we do with these kids  
without parents or homes? What ideas did  
you come up with?"

JC: "The approach is old school and we talked  
about it briefly last time we met. After a  
lot of teeth gnashing, it seems like the best  
idea -- boarding schools with room, board  
and an education program. And lots of  
emphasis on education, academic and so-  
cial. Sort of modern orphanages."

Jordan: "OK keep going,"

- JC: "The boarding schools would be scattered throughout the country, trying to keep kids in areas where they grew up and/or have relatives."
- Jordan: "What about foster parents? The idea of a group homes seems so cold and less family like."
- JC: "I thought the same thing at first. But then I did some research. Group homes...really boarding schools...when managed properly, can create a family atmosphere."
- Jordan: "Better atmosphere than foster homes?"
- JC: "Not in every case and under ideal circumstances probably not in most cases. But the situation we're in is not normal. We have large numbers of kids and a small percentage of families willing to take in foster children. It is a big mismatch. Plus we have very few qualified social workers to help screen foster parents and manage the system."
- Jordan: "Society is now paying the price for many states cutting back on funding social programs and staff to support the programs. You're right. Seems as if we have no choice but boarding schools. What else do you have?"
- JC: "I've got some more details that I can share with whoever is going to head up this project. And, Jordan, remember your promise -- I am not going to run this program."
- Jordan: "I remember the promise. I have some contacts to recruit a manager. My sister-in-law being one. She's been involved with social



services for more than 20 years. She must have a boatload of contacts."

JC: "Good. I have another topic to discuss -- education."

Jordan: "OK but we need to start that conversation tomorrow morning. And, I know, start late morning. Little JC needs her sleep. I really do want to hear your thoughts."

JC: "Let's go Ralph. C'mon boy."

## #14 Moving USA Back to Center. Where to Start.

*Scene: JC and Jordan after discussing some other issues. Jordan's Office.*

JC: "OK Jordan, we agreed to wrap up for today on discussing education. You wanted to talk about something else. I'm ready...if you pour me a glass of wine."

Jordan: "I hope you like a hearty cabernet from Sonoma County. That's all I have on hand."

Jordan: "I'm your kind of woman. Pour me a glass, please. Now let's talk."



Jordan: "OK, here's the question. #1, 'Does money distort people's thinking?'"

JC: "Duh, Jordan. That's the question? You know it distorts people's thinking. Now ask me the real question."

Jordan: "How do we use the revolution to bring people back to a more balanced set of values? More in the center."

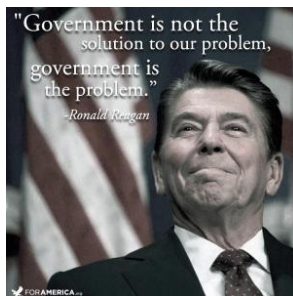
JC: "Now that's more like it. You talking center of what? Politics? Values? Helping others? What's important in life? Respect for others? Education?"

Jordan: "Yes to all."

- JC: "Jordan that is a tall order. Where are you headed with that question? This sounds like a couple of glasses of wine."
- Jordan: "The revolution came about, in large part because the middle class in this country was decimated. Most people talk about income when referring to the middle class. I want to expand the scope and talk about a value set."
- JC: "You asked me if money distorts values. I say 'yes.' Are you saying that other values are distorted with money?"
- Jordan: "Not for everyone. For a whole group of people, however, the more money they have, the more self centered they seem to become. Again, not everyone but a large group."
- JC: "Is money the cause or the effect?"
- Jordan: "I'm no psychoanalyst..."
- JC: "No, just a psycho. That was such an easy set up, Jordan."
- Jordan: "C'mon, JC. It seems when wealth started to be more concentrated, the more society shifted away from middle class or center values."
- JC: "A shift like that occurred in the 1920's and look what followed -- the Great Depression. But also think what happened to societal values. The Depression and WWII were great equalizers. Nearly everyone suffered, no matter how much money they had. As a result, the country moved back to the center."

Jordan: "And notice what happened economically after WWII. All classes gained, many people got a great public education, we as a society started making progress cleaning up the environment. What else? Politicians actually worked together to get things done."

JC: "As I look back, all of what you described seemed to start coming apart during the Reagan Administration."



Jordan: "A lot of Republicans would disagree with your conclusion. But if you look at data for income distribution and attitudes, there is a lot of empirical evidence to support your observation. But the question is, 'Was Reagan a major cause of the change or were people just ready for Reagan and tired of sharing with others?'"

JC: "Whether sharing is the right term or some other term is appropriate, I don't know. What I do know is when people and organizations focus only on self is when we start to have problems. Reagan claimed over and over and over again that government was the problem, not the solution. But, hey Mr. President Reagan, who is the government? People are the government. So for Reagan, those people were the problem."

Jordan: "We need to avoid such divisiveness once the revolution calms down."

JC: "I'll tell you a good first start is to change the tax laws. Many people who have joined the revolution are frustrated because some people got way too greedy, and then got even greedier. The greedy could not get enough money. I'm not a socialist but the tax laws seem to reward white-collar thievery, especially on Wall Street."

Jordan: "The focus on money, money, money tears apart countries, organizations and families for generations. One that hit home to me recently was our temple. We expanded a few years ago much to the chagrin of many congregants."

JC: "So what's the problem, already?"

Jordan: "The problem already is threefold. #1, the capital campaign fell short because one of the alleged big dogs moved and did not fulfill the pledge. #2, operating costs increased dramatically. #3, membership is flat to down and the expansion was to be funded with new members."

JC: "Didn't anyone think about what might happen if?"

Jordan: "Yes, and those of us who raised questions were ignored. Because of my manufacturing background, I kept hammering on what would likely happen to operating costs with two times the floor space. My concern was costs would at least double and likely increase even more. But those

comments fell on deaf ears. I was not part of the old boy big-donor network.

JC: "What's going on now?"

Jordan: "The temple seems to have lost its soul for lack of a better term. The expanded building has some nice features but most members I talk to think the interior feels cold and impersonal. And most of the time the conversations from staff and some clergy are about money, money, money and not people, religion or ideas."

JC: "What about the head rabbi?"

Jordan: "Promoting all kinds of causes outside the temple. To me the rabbi seems focused on building a reputation in order to get a higher position in the Reform movement or some position in politics.

JC: "And what about the congregants?"

Jordan: "The congregants are left holding the bag...and many are very frustrated. Congregants have given the rabbi a nickname -- robot rebbe. Not very nice but seems appropriate."

JC: "What's the solution?"

Jordan: "Like many people and organizations that need to change, most ignore advice. Change only occurs when they hit rock bottom. My guess is the temple will need to face closing...or even close...before any real change is accepted."

JC: "What about a change in clergy?"

Jordan: "Changing out robot rebbe -- err, rabbi -- would be a good start. And then changing some staff."

JC: "The problem seems similar to what this country faces. But are you certain the temple will fail before changing?"

Jordan: "I'm not 100% certain but my track record on these type predictions is very good. Not sure why it is so good but it is."

JC: "I'm not sure what else to say. Sounds as if the temple is likely to keep on the same path until one day it realizes no more money, no more congregants and then no more temple...or there is a revolution started by the congregants."

Jordan: "A revolution might be the only solution. Most people...and I am in the same boat sometimes...seem to have a very hard time either understanding consequences of behavior or acknowledging that behavior has consequences.

JC: "For most people, it is probably some of both. Jordan, we are not going to solve this problem today...and I need to go. And Sir Ralph needs to go, too."



Jordan: "OK, JC, just bail out on me. I know you have to go. Thanks for the time. And you, too, Ralph. I do want to continue this conversation? Talking to you is a great help."

JC: "Glad I can help, Jordan. C'mon Ralph. Let's go."

## #15 Education Reform: Return to Basics and Pay Teachers

*Scene: Jordan's Office. Follow-up to earlier meetings with JC.*

Jordan: "JC, nice to see you. All OK?"

JC: "Yes, everything is fine Jordan. But why do you start meetings so early?"

Jordan: "Because I know you like to get up and at 'em. By the way, where is Sir Ralph?"

JC: "He's the only smart one. Sleeping. That's where I should be."



Jordan: "Ok. Let's pick up where we left off. A lot of people want practical ideas on how to improve education in the US. You agreed to put some ideas together. So start."

JC: "The first issue is the need to rebuild the public education system in this country. This country was built on a quality free public education. It is shameful we are taking tax dollars and putting them into private schools and so-called charter schools letting public schools deteriorate."

Jordan: "Keep going."

JC: "You and I and several generations of Americans got a great education in public schools. By the way, I hope you do not mind. When you were on your call I asked Greenie to join us. She really understands education."



Jordan: "Great. Have not talked to her for a while. How is she doing?"

JC: "Much better. She's on her way over. And speaking of the devil..."

Jordan: "Hi Greenie. Been a while."

Greenie: "Jordan, great to see you. Disappointed in the company you keep. Hi, JC."

JC: "Thanks for the compliment. We just started to talk about the importance of public education."



Greenie: "You guys know my story. My sophomore year in high school, my parents shipped me off to private school thinking I'll get a better education. One year in private school and I came back to public school."

Jordan: "What were the issues?"

Greenie: "First, classes in private school were not as challenging as our public school. Granted, in public school we were all in accelerated classes. I think they call those advanced placement classes now. You'd think private school would be more difficult. But it wasn't."

JC: "What else?"

Greenie: "Diversity among the students was minimal. Almost all white, upper-income kids. Was like being in a bubble."

Jordan: "Anything else?"

Greenie: "Attitude. For the administration and a lot of the parents – and some kids – money seemed to be the key issue. Which families had the most money. And the school always seemed to want more money."

JC: "Money. That sounds like a conversation Jordan and I had. About another institution of higher learning – his synagogue."

Jordan: "OK you two, what about the proposal? How are we going to recreate a system offering quality public education?"

Greenie: "For me the first step is a commitment to public education. Not just public education but quality public education. Such a commitment used to be bi-partisan. Now it seems as if Republicans believe only private schools can provide a quality education – private and charter schools, I should say."

JC: "The commitment to quality public education must include decent pay for teachers. I am still dumbfounded by the legislature in North Carolina taking away all incentives for teachers to get an advanced degree. Then the legislature cut the number of teaching assistants."

Greenie: "Did I read also that while cutting funds for public schools, the NC legislators gave more money to charter schools? Something like 36 more charter schools for one year..and 50 or more the next year!"

JC: "I understand the idea of charter schools but charter schools eat away the very heart of quality public education. I do not agree with charter schools accessing public funds for what is effectively a private school. Charter schools in essence cherry pick students."

Greenie: "The NC model for education seems to be completely backwards from what is required for a quality public education system. Were changes a disguised move to re-segregate the schools? Sure seems like it."

Jordan: "My opinion, yes. In fact, emphatically yes about re-segregating. Many people in the south still resent *Brown v. Board of Education* and the elimination of separate, but equal."

Greenie: "What you're saying is charter schools effectively overturn *Brown*."

Jordan: "Exactly. The goal seems to reinstitute *Plessey v. Ferguson* – separate but equal, but really unequal. Further, because some public schools are below full capacity, the legislature will not allocate funds for capital improvements or acquiring new technology."

JC: "So Jordan, how much latitude do you and others have to make change in the education system? Who is in charge, really? What is your role?"

Jordan: "I'm functioning like a chief operating officer of a company. My role is trying to bring people together who can help rebuild different organizations. The organizations need to address problems that precipitated the revolution. Once we get the groups organized, not sure what my role will be, if anything."

Greenie: "In the meantime, you are the HMFIC."

Jordan: "Well, #2 HMFIC."

JC: "What is a HMFIC?"

Greenie: "I'll tell you later, but let's just say he's in charge of most stuff. Sorta like Joseph and the pharaoh."

JC: "OK, I got it."

Jordan: "So I'm hearing we need to stop funding charter schools and start focusing on improving public education. What's the first step?"

Greenie: "The first step being increasing teacher pay."

JC: "At the same time, we need to increase qualifications for teachers. You...we want to attract people who want to teach but also who are well educated. Put some respect back into the profession. With the right pay and some respect, we will get people considering a career in private industry to start teaching."

Jordan: "Speaking of qualified teachers, I remember Ester 'What?' Cohen in math class. What a great teacher."

JC: "She was tough, demanding and motivational. I learned a lot of math under her."

Greenie: "Think about the number of great teachers we had – math, several in English and a bunch of others. I continue to be amazed at their skills."

Jordan: "I agree. What about school facilities?"

JC: "School facilities need to be adequate but society seems more concerned with how a building looks than what is being taught



inside. Older buildings are OK as long as wired for the internet."

JC: "Funny how some college campuses are revered for older buildings. The NC legislature will fund new buildings, as long as the buildings look like something out of the Ivy League. They must equate how a building looks with quality of education."

Greenie: "As a society, we seem to insist on newer facilities, especially athletic facilities, rather than insisting on quality instruction in English, math, sciences, history and some other basics. A disconnect on priorities?"



Jordan: "I agree. New facilities should be a low priority as long as basic needs are met. More emphasis on the curriculum?"

Greenie: "We also have to recognize that students have different skills. Not everyone needs to be on a college track."

Jordan: "Hold that thought Greenie. My apologies for the interruption but I have to take this call. Get some coffee and we'll continue the conversation."

## #16 Teaching Students Who Learn Different Ways

*Scene: Jordan's office with JC, Greenie. Continuing conversation interrupted by a phone call.*



Jordan: "My apologies for the interruption."

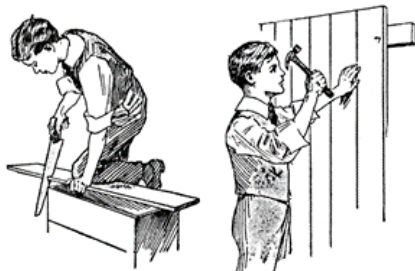
JC: "We understand, Jordan. You're a big cheese...or at least you think you are. Just kidding. We appreciate what you're trying to do."

Greenie: "As I was saying, we...societal we...need to recognize that students have different skills and different ways of learning. Not everyone needs to be on a college track. It is important to bring back into high school the teaching of skilled trades."

Jordan: "What did they call trade-like classes? I've forgotten."

JC: "We called those classes 'shop,' right?"

Jordan: "Yes, shop. Classes were in carpentry, metal working, electrical, auto mechanics, plumbing, computer repair and other stuff."



JC: "Having everyone on a college track makes no sense. Based on my teaching experience, forcing kids into a standardized program that is effectively college prep is a disservice to students who are not book learners and disservice to the public."

Greenie: "I support that 100%. Kids who are not book learners get frustrated and many end up dropping out of school. We...again societal we...end up with people who are good in skilled trades but have no high school diploma, and then no job."

Jordan: "I like the idea where a student can be on a college track and take a shop class. The same for students on a skilled-trade track. If they have interest in another subject – history, for example – they should be able to cross over and take more history classes. Switching to a different track for some classes gives the students a chance to meet different groups of people."

JC: "And a chance for the groups to get to know one another. Remember when I dated a guy who was more skilled trades than college track? My parents were upset

but that guy had skills that none of us have. I still marvel at how he could fix things."

Jordan: "And where is your ex-boyfriend today?"

JC: "You know, Jordan. A very successful business repairing complex machinery. He has clients worldwide."

Greenie: "We also need to bring back the arts. I know all the testing in basic skills has merit. However, lots of kids who are really creative do not do well on standardized tests. Forcing standardized tests is not fair to them and frankly discourages them from trying to learn more."



Jordan: "I know a number of people and parents who share that frustration."

Greenie: "The frustration is not just among artists and those good in skilled trades."

Jordan: "Tell me about it. Some of the best design engineers I know struggled to make it through school. Ironically, most of the really good designer engineers seem to be dyslexic. They seem to be great at visualizing solutions but lousy at spelling, reading and taking standardized tests."

JC: "How did they become engineers without going to college?"

Jordan: "Some never make it to college. While they are good at design, because of lack of certain book learning, they do not know how to solve certain problems."



JC: "So what do we do about it?"

Jordan: "Let me give you an example. One of the best engineers I know is also one of the most dyslexic people I know. He is also a Carnegie Mellon grad."

Greenie: "How did he get in Carnegie Mellon?"

Jordan: "He and a couple of buddies won several national science awards in high school. He lived in the Pittsburgh area so the dean of engineering at Carnegie Mellon was aware of the awards. The problem for him getting into Carnegie was his SAT's. He maxed the quantitative portion of the SAT's but failed miserably on the qualitative portion. The dean recruited him and told him Carnegie Mellon would help him with the qualitative classes."

JC: "Smart move by Carnegie Mellon. We need more of that kind of thinking. Teach the students the way they learn the best and not just to some standardized test."

Jordan: "You guys realize you are talking yourselves into a job heading up the education program. And, yes, you can stay on the idea side and not get involved with day-to-day management. We need brains and ideas, not more bureaucrats."

Greenie: "OK Jordan, but give us a couple of weeks to get back to you. The concept does not seem all that complicated. We just need to keep it simple and understandable. The politics might be a completely different story."

JC: "My fear is the school boards and some of the whackos at the state level – starting with North Carolina followed closely by Texas – will put the kabash on these ideas. Instead, school boards will continue to mandate religious beliefs rather than science and continue insisting low pay for teachers in public education does not affect quality. What are these folks thinking?"

Jordan: "I hear you about the politics, especially at the state level. A major open issue once the revolution gets resolved is restoring a reasonable balance of power among federal, state and local authorities. To me, if we are to have quality primary and secondary education system for all residents, then we need to have federal oversight and a core curriculum for multiple tracks. Anyway, that's your job to figure out the basics. I'll work on the implementation."

Greenie: "OK, we'll develop more details."

Jordan: "One more item to think about. The US has a huge prison population. My bet is many of those incarcerated have not done well on standardized tests. So the question is how can we use education to teach them a skill and get them out of prison, working and then paying taxes?"

Greenie: "Any contacts we can talk to for ideas?"

Jordan: "Yes, I have a friend with a PhD whose specialty and field experience is a good match for this problem. And I know she is

interested. I'll contact her and then you all can get together or have a Skype call."

JC: "OK. Greenie, now let's get out of here before we get another assignment. Say goodbye Jordan."

Jordan: "Goodbye Jordan."

## #17 New Tax Brackets: Queeny and Cleo Report

*Scene: Jordan's Office. Report on taxes as follow-up to an earlier assignment.*



King George III



Queeny



Caesar



Cleopatra

Jordan: "Well, well, well. Look who's back – Queeny and Cleo. All well with you two?"

Cleo: "Yes, everything is fine. And look who we brought along – Caesar."

Caesar: "I'm here to help interpret some of the findings of the workgroup. But I have been informed by these two economic mavens to stay quiet until called upon."

Jordan: "So what else is new? Don't they always tell you to stay quiet, Caesar? By the way, are we meeting next week on your recommendations for defense and national security?"

Caesar: "Yes, this week we have a couple of more internal reviews and then we'll be ready."

Jordan: "Queeny, any word from my King George III?"

Queeny: "Apparently OK health wise but still has not come around. He is being stubborn...and I think stupid. But being stupid is his decision, not mine."

Cleo: "May we get started, please? We have a lot of ideas to present."

Cleo: "The first proposal is about the income tax rate. We selected a rate based on four criteria: #1 the rate must be progressive. A flat tax is regressive because those in lower income brackets have such limited discretionary income.

Caesar: "Do you understand what you just said?"

Cleo: "Pardon me, but did anyone ask for your opinion? Yes, I understand. Discretionary income means income left after paying for such necessities as food, shelter and clothing. If you don't make much money, you have very little left over. So there."

Caesar: "An economics professor and I didn't even know it."

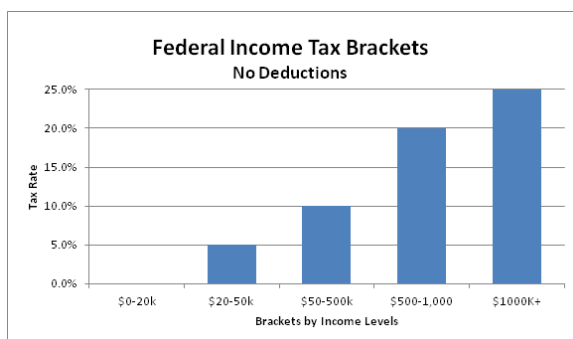
Cleo: "#2 criteria – the tax rate must be easy to understand. No complicated formulas. #3 is no deductions."

Jordan: "Did I hear that right? No deductions?"

Cleo: "No deductions. Deductions allow people to game the system. What starts out as a logical deduction gets distorted over time. #4, we need adjustments for inflation.

Jordan: "What are the proposed tax rates?"

Cleo: "To start with \$1-20,000, 0.0%; \$20,001-\$50,000, 5.0%; \$50,001-\$500,000, 10.0%; \$500,001-\$1,000,000, 20.0%, \$1,000,000 and above, 25.0%. With these brackets, most everyone will pay something. Remember all income is subject to tax – payroll, interest, dividends, Social Security benefits."



Jordan: "What else?"

Cleo: "No other income taxes. For upper income people, the tax rates are lower than the current rate so the incentive to earn more is increased, not decreased."

Jordan: "Are there any deductions?"

Cleo: "You know, Jordan, sometimes you are as bad as Caesar. You just don't seem to listen. I said no deductions. None. Nada. Zero. Understand?"

Jordan: "Interesting proposal. Caesar, as a high-income earner – well, former high-income earner – any thoughts?"

Caesar: "I cringed when I first read the proposal. But it does make sense. The proposal is simple and easy to understand and everyone is treated the same way. You do not have the shenanigans like hedge-fund managers paying a lower tax rate than the clerical staff."

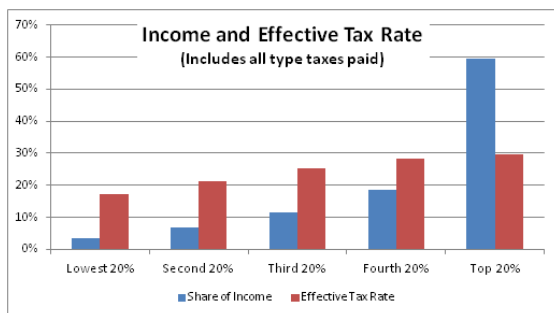
Jordan: "I'm not sure about eliminating the mortgage deduction."

Caesar: "I was concerned, too. But the current system is a mess. We have to make a change."

Besides, house prices seem more aligned with interest rates than tax deductions."

Jordan: "Keeping interest rates low and keeping inflation low will help the economy more than a tax deduction. As you said Cleo, tax deductions create distortions."

Caesar: "We also discussed if people with incomes less than \$20,000 should pay some tax. But Queeny and Cleo reminded me this group pays sales tax, property tax as part of their rent and other miscellaneous taxes. I was surprised at how high the effective tax rate really is for lower-income people. They convinced me the brackets make sense."



Jordan: "I remember chart. I was astonished at the effective tax rate for lower incomes. This proposal should help fix the inequities. What's next? Queeny, you're at bat."

Cleo: "May we take a 5-minute break, please?"

Jordan: "Caesar, has she always been like this?"

Caesar: "Always. And you learn to go along with it. We'll restart in 5."

## #18 Rock Man Cometh

### *Scene: Jordan's Office*

Jordan: "Rock Man, nice to see you. How's the world traveler?"

RM: "Back in the States for a while. I thought it would be calmer here. What's with the revolution?"



Jordan: "How long have you been back?"

RM: "About a week. Heard you had another important job and wanted to stop by and say hello."

Jordan: "How did you get past security?"

RM: "I have all these clearances for traveling and one of your colleagues asked me to brief you on a couple of countries. Actually, he arranged the clearance."

Jordan: "One more thing, and then I want to ask you to do me a favor. How's the corporate wife of yours? President of the company?"

RM: "Not far from it. Head of international operations, which means lots of traveling but headquarters are in the States."

Jordan: "And the kids?"

RM: "One at Harvard. Sorry, I tried together to consider your alma mater but she's liberal arts and not a techie. The other is at a trade school. He's great at making things and not great at English literature."

Jordan: "That's wonderful. And a great lead in to what we need help with."

RM: "And that is?"



Jordan: "This country needs high-energy, non-religious, successful, black man to lead the effort to get more kids to stay in school and get an education."

RM: "What did I do wrong to get this request?"

Jordan: "C'mon, you know you are the perfect candidate. One of eight children of a dirt-poor family from Eastern North Carolina. Yet, all the kids got a college education."

RM: "It even amazes me sometimes how my parents pulled it off. I do not know how they did it. We had nothing."

Jordan: "The great appeal is your success is not tied to entertainment or athletics."

RM: "I'm sure I told you this but I started out in one college and then moved to another because it was not academically challenging enough."

Jordan: "There you go. Great story. And yes you told me before and I often repeat the story for other people."

RM: "Least we forget my spouse, she is the big dollar earner."

Jordan: "To me that makes the story even better. You, the macho black man, who becomes a stay-at-home dad to help raise the kids. The whole story is 180 degrees from what many people perceive as the role for the macho black man."

RM: "Might be too far outside the norm."

Jordan: "No. What we want is for parents and kids to look at you and the family and commit to try to accomplish the same thing."

RM: "Do you have some program laid out? What am I supposed to do?"

Jordan: "You decide the best approach. Look, no matter how hard I try it's impossible for me to walk in your shoes or to get the attention of black kids."

RM: "I agree there is a big problem...but it is more than just black kids. Its kids of color...even a lot of white kids. I know you understand that so we need to be careful not to make this just a black issue."

Jordan: "I hear you. At the same time, my belief is we have become too politically correct when addressing social issues. Black families have issues that other families do not. But to me blacks are best at addressing those issues. You think anyone at the synagogue will believe a Buddhist's interpretation of the Torah?"

RM: "Understood. Blacks do have specific issues. We are not going to make progress until we address them."

Jordan: "RM, you have a blank sheet of paper for this project. You decide the best approach. Don't over analyze it. You know the issues and probably the solutions."

RM: "So how long do I have?"

Jordan: "Let's review a draft proposal in a week. Sooner if you are ready."

RM: "Why did I stop to see you? OK, Jordan, I'll get back. And, by the way, thanks for asking."

## #19 Rock Man Frames the Issue

### *Scene: Jordan's Office*

Jordan: "Rock Man, you're back. Productive week, I assume. What do you have to present?"

RM: "First, I guess I want to thank you for giving me this challenge."

Jordan: "Guess. What do you mean guess?"

RM: "Well, I've often thought about what is required to make the black community more vibrant but no one ever pushed me for details. Like many people, I've been focused on the family. What we needed to do to get better. Addressing problems of the community is different and a more complicated."

Jordan: "For certain difficult and there no easy solutions. Plus, solutions are likely to take several generations."

RM: "I'm glad you understand it won't be easy. The first question I asked myself was 'How could so many other ethnic groups enter this country at the bottom and within several generations be assimilated? Why haven't blacks done the same thing?'"

Jordan: "I have my own ideas but what did you come up with?"

RM: "I made a list of possible causes and then went through the list. #1 on the list is skin color. Being black makes one stand out, especially if you are dark like me. #2 is how we arrived in this country - slaves."



#3 and this might sound strange, but programs to help blacks have created two black communities – one better off and one worse off."

Jordan: "Interesting observation about programs having unintended consequences. I agree. You have some examples?"

RM: "Probably the most prominent example is the effort to assimilate blacks with better housing and better schools. The unintended consequence has been those efforts ended up destroying the black business community. The black neighborhood merchant was put out of business as black families moved to different locations."

Jordan: "While the end result of efforts to improve housing and improve schools might seem to have worked, we also have to ask whether the programs destroyed the vibrancy of the black community."

RM: "Here's what I know. There are very few, if any, black grocery stores. Few, if any, black dry cleaners. Few, if any, black bars and night clubs. You know there were little Harlem's throughout the country. Virtually all of those are gone."

Jordan: "What about farmers? How many black farmers today versus say 50-60 years ago? You grew up on a farm."

RM: "The entire black farm community in eastern NC is virtually gone. I realize lots of small white farmers are gone too but there are almost no black farms left."

Jordan: "And what has happened to the black community?"

RM: "For guys like me, who got out, got an education, we've moved up the income ladder. For others...and I hate to say this...many have become slaves to either minimum-wage jobs or government programs."

Jordan: "How are the better-off blacks helping those stuck toward the bottom?"

RM: "Want the truth? Not much as we could. Let me tell you a story -- and this is not unusual among higher-income blacks. A few years ago my daughter says to me, 'Dad, I don't want to be black anymore.'"

Jordan: "Say that again."

RM: "You heard it right. Here we are in a really nice neighborhood, private school and my kid's complaining because she is black."

Jordan: "What did you tell her?"

RM: "She's heard all the stories about being dirt poor but the stories mean nothing to her, especially about not having a pot to piss in. That is too far removed from reality for her. All she knows is her classmates are white and she is black -- and didn't like it."

Jordan: "She over it now?"

RM: "Better but not over it. I don't think she will ever get over it no matter where she lives, no matter how much money she has, no matter how much education she has. She's still going to be black."

Jordan: "Is being black a problem for blacks or a problem for whites?"

RM: "That is a very perceptive question. Could I get some coffee and then we will discuss?"

Jordan: "You're stalling."

RM: "You're right. Now where is the coffee?"

Jordan: "OK Rock Man, you've stalled long enough."

RM: "Never quite thought of the issue whether blacks have a problem being black. My answer is 'yes' but I am not quite sure why."

Jordan: "What about being a minority? Is that the cause?"

RM: "You know it shouldn't be because all immigrant groups were minorities initially. And most all were discriminated against. Nothing new there."

Jordan: "Let me phrase the question differently. Has the effort to assimilate blacks increased the desire not to be black?"

RM: "Let me ask you. Do Jews want to be Jews?"

Jordan: "Good question, and maybe a lesson for blacks. For many years Jews tried to assimilate. The Reform movement reduced significantly the amount of services spoken in Hebrew. What happened is the services became more like a church service. Over the years, many Reform Jews felt something was lost. Now services include more Hebrew, more traditional prayers.

RM: "And what's the reaction among congregants?"

Jordan: "Some members are upset. But nationwide, there seems to be two groups form-

ing -- Jews who live in the modern world but want to keep links to the past and those who want to live in the past."

RM: "Are you suggesting that blacks return to the past?"

Jordan: "Yes, in some ways. Quit trying to be white and start being more black."

RM: "Huey Newton and the Panthers here we come! Or are you talking about something more moderate."

Jordan: "Forget the Black Power stuff. The only Panthers you should think about play football in Charlotte. The Black Power movement alienated a lot of whites...and probably a lot of blacks as well. My suggestion is focus on education. Focus on rebuilding black businesses."

RM: "What about all the inequality that exists? How does that get addressed? More government programs?"

Jordan: "RM, you know the answer. You...the black community...needs to solve its own problems. Government can help but mandates don't generate respect."

RM: "This is going to be a long road."

Jordan: "Yes, but guys like you need to start leading the change."

RM: "Do you really think it is possible after all these years?"

Jordan: "RM, from my perspective the black community seems to have no choice -- either begin solving its own problems with some help or watch conditions get worse and worse."

RM: "OK Jordan. By the way, I agree. Now I need to get started. Will you help if I need you?"

Jordan: "Of course. And say hello to you lovely wife."



## #20 Why Did the Revolution Start in Charlotte, NC?

*Scene: Caesar and Jordan in casual conversation.*

Caesar: "Jordan, the revolution started in Charlotte. Why do you think Charlotte, NC?"

Jordan: "Funny you should ask that. I asked myself the same question the other day."



Caesar: "And what did you conclude?"

Jordan: "We'll never really know. But my conclusion was the revolution would likely start #1, south of the Mason-Dixon Line; #2, in an area with rapid population growth the last say 20 or so years; #3, where population growth has been predominantly an influx of non-native southerners, mostly from areas east of the Mississippi River.

Caesar: "Those criteria encompass quite a few cities."

Jordan: "One other factor. No dominant educational institution."

Caesar: "Including a dominant educational institution eliminates such cities as Raleigh-Durham, Atlanta and Knoxville. But Charlotte has University of North Carolina - Charlotte and Queens University."

Jordan: "Neither UNC Charlotte nor Queens is dominant. UNCC is growing but not a big player academically and not yet part of the community. Queens is a nice school in a nice neighborhood but not a player."

Caesar: "I know some people in Charlotte will argue with you about UNCC and Queens.

Then, why does the city have to be in the south?"

Jordan: "Because the north participated in the last revolution, about 50 years ago. During revolution #4, there were riots in Newark, Detroit and Watts in LA. Each of those cities...and a number of others...had grown rapidly due to migration of people from different parts of the US."

Caesar: "But migration was long before the riots."

Jordan: "My theory is people who migrated originally viewed their new situation as superior to what they left, even if some inequities remained. Their kids had no understanding of conditions prior to migration and, as a result, had a different set of expectations."

Caesar: "So you believe these same type frustrations exist in some southern cities with large migrations?"

Jordan: "Absolutely. Think about Charlotte. Here's a sleepy town hours from the mountains and hours from the coast – really near nothing. Then a couple of locals each start consolidating smaller banks. After a few years, each company has grown into a larger regional bank. In the 1990's the banks grow even larger, with one buying and taking the name of Bank of America."

Caesar: "Charlotte becomes headquarters and now many key executives are no longer locals. And many of Charlotte's high-profile executives are Yankees and liberals to boot!"

Jordan: "You said it right there. The Yankees, as you call us, disrupted the little tea party."

Caesar: "This conversation is starting to get personal but I'll listen."

Jordan: "Caesar, you know in Charlotte I am viewed as an outsider...and always will be. But being an outsider gives one an advantage sometimes."

Caesar: "I agree. You don't get bogged down with a lot of emotional baggage."

Jordan: "A key issue is most old-line southerners do not want anyone from the north in town. Many old-liners are still fighting the Civil War...or as the old-liners call it, the War of Northern Aggression."

Caesar: "What else?"

Jordan: "Education. Brown v. Board of Education, especially. Underneath all the sappy smiles and politeness, a very high percentage of southerners, at least in Charlotte, want schools segregated."

Caesar: "C'mon, Jordan. How can you say that? Charlotte was one of the first southern cities to integrate."

Jordan: "You know my background. I take data points and look for patterns. When schools in Charlotte integrated, the number of private schools increased dramatically. Now, legislators allow public funds...encourage use of public funds for charter schools. And what happens? The number of charter schools...really private schools in disguise...shoots up dramatically."

Caesar: "But there are blacks at private schools and charter schools."

Jordan: "But how many blacks? And how many Hispanics? Now what about religious schools? How many of your children, and grandchildren, have gone to public school?"

Jordan: "Our kids went to public school when we lived in New Jersey and Massachusetts."

Jordan: "Not my question. When you lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line, how many went to public school?"

Caesar: "OK, you made your point. So now you have explained two reasons why a revolution in the south. We don't like Yankees. We don't want to go to school with minorities. That still does not explain why Charlotte."

Jordan: "I said my conclusion was not definitive. But here's another point. Charlotte had a very moderate, almost progressive mayor for what 10-12 years?

Caesar: "14 years. Elected 7 times, often by wide margins. Pat McCrory was well respected."

Jordan: "During McCrory's tenure, the populous begins expecting a progressive government, at least by old south standards. McCrory is followed by a mayor who continues McCrory's policies but he has a problem...he's black."

Caesar: "Quit playing the race card. You sound like...never mind. Quit playing it."

Jordan: "You asked me why the revolution started in Charlotte. My observation as an outsider is race is a major factor for many people. Like it or not, following McCrory as mayor, Charlotte elects a black mayor, then the country elects a black president. Plus, the influx of Yankees continues."

Caesar: "I'll be honest. I never quite thought about it that way. Each event is a major disruption to Charlotte, let alone the three combined. What else?"

Jordan: "McCrory becomes governor of North Carolina. But rather than taking a moderately progressive stance as he had when mayor of Charlotte, he takes a hard right turn."

Caesar: "What do you consider hard right?"

Jordan: "Reducing funding for public education. Funding charter schools with public money eats at the heart of free, quality public education for everyone. At the same time he cuts the pay incentive for teachers getting advanced degrees. On top of that he cuts funding for school books. Then he refuses to let poor people in the state qualify for expanded medical coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That's just the tip of the iceberg."

Caesar: "Stop. Enough. But the state budget was out of control."

Jordan: "I agree the budget needs to be fiscally responsible. Fiscal responsibility does not negate social responsibility. Legislators

need to consider the consequences of their actions."

Caesar: "Are you saying the changes by the Republican legislators contributed to the revolution?"

Jordan: "Absolutely. Many residents viewed the changes as 'take aways.' Plus the changes to improve the budget did not include a tax increase for higher-income people, but a tax decrease."

Caesar: "The tax decrease was to attract industry to create jobs for lower-income people."

Jordan: "Caesar, the trickle-down theory is BS. There are no credible data to support it. And most people think the theory is hogwash anyway. But one final point. Charlotte was a bit unlucky because of its proximity to South Carolina."

Caesar: "I'm losing you. What do you mean unlucky?"

Jordan: "South Carolina is a fascinating state. I think of it as a bifurcated state."

Caesar: "You need to be careful in SC using the word 'bifurcated.' They'll think you are more of a Yankee liberal than you are."

Jordan: "I know. But SC is bifurcated. Half the state is high tech – BMW, Michelin, Boeing – and the other half is still fighting the Civil War."

Caesar: "Keep talking."

Jordan: "And many of the Civil War folks have limited education but have a stash of firearms. Many of the Civil War folks worked in factories that cut back and sent work

outside the US. King George III's facility is a good example."

Caesar: "The two guys who broke up our Bastille Day party used to work at King III's plant, live in SC, not far from Charlotte."

Jordan: "Speaking of King George III, any word from him lately?"

Caesar: "No. I thought you might know something. But explain to me a bit more why not having a high-profile educational institution contributed."

Jordan: "I think high-profile educational institutions make cities more attractive to educated people."

Caesar: "But UNCC is becoming higher profile. They even have a football team."

Jordan: "Agreed. But UNCC has not yet become part of the fabric of Charlotte. 10-15 years from now – probably. But not now."

Caesar: "So you think an institution makes a city more tolerant...or at least attracts people who are more tolerant?"

Jordan: "Yes. The result of the institution is willingness, or at least an effort to address and solve problems."

Caesar: "I see your point but I am not sure I support it."

Jordan: "Understand. But if Charlotte had a more educated populous in the metro area, you would not find voters electing that whacko state legislator."

Caesar: "You talking about that former dentist from the Charlotte suburb, Matthews, I think."

Jordan: "He is the one who claimed the Affordable Care Act had done more damage to the US than WWII – and made his claim before Obamacare had taken effect. Those kinds of statements really upset people and tarnish Charlotte's reputation."

Caesar: "Probably upset more liberals."

Jordan: "Initially. Then the average Joe began to realize how much he was being shafted by the legislators. Being shafted combined with having lost a good-paying job and having lots of firearms made Charlotte an ideal location for a revolution."

Caesar: "Interesting observations why Charlotte. Some British general called Charlotte a hornet's nest during the first revolution. I guess Charlotte became a hornet's nest again."

Jordan: "Time will tell if the rationale about why Charlotte is correct. Now back to solving problems and helping the country move forward."



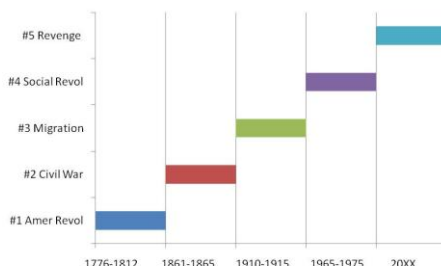
## #1 About the Blog and the Author

Why this blog? For many years people have told me my strengths are: (i) making accurate predictions on social and economic issues long before others (ii) offering practical solutions to complex problems (iii) teaching effectively.

As the title of the blog notes, I believe the United States is headed for another revolution, probably by CY2020. As a country we seem to have a revolution about every 50 years. Here's my count of the revolutions.

1. Revolution against British rule, which did not end until the War of 1812
2. Internal revolution, or Civil War, 1861-1865
3. Industrial revolution – say 1910-1917 – combination of an influx of foreign immigrants and migration from farms to cities
4. Rights revolution, civil rights, women's rights, environmental rights – late 1960's, early 1970's
5. Fifth revolution, labeled the 'Revenge Revolution,' which is what this blog is all about.

"Revolutions" in America



While I believe a revolution of sorts is inevitable, how we as a country manage the revolution will determine the amount of violence and bloodshed. I've designed the blog to lay out what I think are the issues, explain in what I hope are understandable terms, and then offer practical solutions.

The solutions are woven into a story. We all seem to learn more effectively with stories. I hope you find these stories interesting and helpful in understanding topics and proposed solutions. Doubtless you will not agree with all the proposed solutions...but at least you will have been presented another perspective.

Some of the stories seem more personal in nature and less about policy. I am including these segments because we are all products of our environment. We cannot divorce completely professional lives from our personal lives and background.

If you have a political bent leaning strongly left or right, you're likely to be disappointed in some of the proposed solutions. The goal is to present problems and solutions in an understandable way. Some solutions might lean more right; others might lean more left. I'm not keeping score about which side has more solutions. I hope you don't try to keep score either.

If you are a stickler for details, then read no farther. I've done my homework and the data are sound enough. If you want to nitpick, OK. But you'll be missing the point. Listen to people mak-

ing policy decisions in the United States. Whether voters or elected officials, few grasp the basics of an issue. The real world operates using less than perfect information.

I also decided the character in the story should be an assumed name. Why? To provide more freedom to address issues without the reader immediately assuming some sort of bias on my part.



The character name, "Jordan Abel" evolved one day. As far as the names and traits of other characters, like any author, I suppose, these are based in part on people one knows. If you are a friend and recognize yourself, don't take the character too seriously. The topic is serious but using you as a base for the character was convenient.

We all have quirks and it was much easier to write with someone in mind than to construct a character. Besides, even the seeming "bad guys" in this blog have some positive traits. Keep reading, you'll turn out OK...and I will deny to everyone else that you are the model for the character.

Where is this blog going? I don't know. I intend to keep writing. National politics and personal issues provide an endless source of material. I also hope that my prediction about an armed revolution in the US is exaggerated. However, from everything that is happening in the US, I think a revolution is inevitable.

If no one reads the blog, that's OK. Just starting the blog and the writing has been great fun...and at times cathartic. If you are a reader, I hope you enjoy it and I hope, on occasion, to provoke you to think about issues a bit differently. Thanks for your time. John R. Dabels for *Jordan Abel*

Have a comment, question? All are welcome. The intent is to stimulate discussion and help solve some problems. Use the comment section on the blog or email [jordan.abel5@yahoo.com](mailto:jordan.abel5@yahoo.com). Thanks for taking your valuable time.