

Just in Time

by John Yeats

Precisely right on time,

Time Magazine's Dec. 16, 2002 issue exposed the facts relating to the scam the gambling syndicates are pulling on Native American tribes. *Time* is not one to trust when making moral judgments. However, the facts in this expose would cause even a person void of morals to express righteous indignation.

While it cannot be proven . . .

that laws are being violated, it is obvious the higher laws of integrity and justice toward the less fortunate are smashed to the ground with each pull of a one-armed bandit, a.k.a slot machine, at the Native American gambling establishments. According to the expose, the overwhelming majority of Native Americans receive no benefits from the proliferation of Indian casinos and bingo halls. The only persons actually hitting the jackpot are the investor/operators of the casinos who pocket often more than 40 percent of the net profits.

How can they do this?

Perhaps the lead paragraph in the *Time* article will shed some light. "Imagine, if you will, Congress passing a bill to make Indian tribes more self-sufficient, that gives billions of dollars to the white backers of Indian businesses--and nothing to hundreds of thousands of Native Americans living in poverty. Or a bill that gives hundreds of millions of dollars to one Indian tribe with a few dozen members--and not a penny to a tribe with hundreds of thousands of members. Or a bill that allows select Indian tribes to create businesses that reap millions of dollars in profits and pay no federal income tax--at the same time the tribes collect millions in aid from American taxpayers. Can't imagine Congress passing such a bill? It did."

Congress passed the Indian . . .

Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 with the goal in mind of cutting costs and Indian dependency on the Federal government. However, as the article reported by Laura Karmatz states, "The law was so riddled with loopholes, so poorly written, so discriminatory and subject to such conflicting interpretations that 14 years later, armies of high-priced lawyers are still debating the definition of a slot machine." Even Oklahoma courts have tested the law's definitions.

What the *Time* article states . . .

is nothing more than what many Christian people have been saying for decades. Any form of gambling, Native American casinos, state-sponsored lottery, gambling in the office pool, the Bedlam game, the race track or the cock-fight down by the river, is sin, morally detestable and breeds corruption.

The *Time* article validates . . .

the corruption that exists within the parameters of the law. Our American culture has come to the place that it believes if no law is broken, then the activity must be "OK." With such thinking, we have vainly attempted to sanitize immoral behavior. Do we not understand that this kind of thinking is what kills a little child in the womb of the mother who opts for a legal abortion? It is this kind of thinking that justifies a man's indulgences in "legal" soft porn and cripples his marriage relationship. Just because we wrap immoral behavior in a suit of legal armor does not excuse the facts . . . facts illustrating that financial abuses and corruption, broken lives and defrauded citizens are commonplace with gambling.

The less gambling Oklahoma . . .

has the better off we all are. Gambling promoters never, NEVER deliver on their promises to the people. The *Time* article is "just in time" to further expose why state leaders and Native American leaders are foolish to give any credibility to the pro-gambling lobbyists who are attempting to cash in on our state.

Oklahoma Baptists are . . .

encouraged to maximize their influence and encourage legislators to sign a "no expansion of gambling" pledge. Many elected officials made their pledges last year, but this is a new legislative session with new issues and new pressures to find new streams of revenue. According to *Daily Oklahoman* sources, state Sen. Cal Hobson called the lottery "legalized armed robbery of the weakest and poorest among us." That was almost 20 years ago. Now he has been quoted as saying, "A lottery is coming to Oklahoma. The only question is when."

Legislators need our . . .

intercession and they also need our encouragement to be courageous for what is right. Actor Gene Hackman is quoted as saying; "The difference between a hero and a coward is one step sideways."

Pray for legislative heroes . . .

who stand for what is right and refuse to cower to the pro-gambling pressures. The states that have bought into the gambling lies are not doing as well as many would lead Oklahomans to believe. Our state doesn't need any expansion of gambling, and we certainly cannot afford the problems that always are associated with expanded gambling.

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