



THE COULDAWOULDASHOULDA EXCUSE

It's really mind boggling to me how easy it is for people to exclaim "Why didn't someone do something?" As if individually we aren't each "someone". I suppose it's code for the head-in-the-sand approach we take to assuming that someone is looking out for us and that the benevolent "Someone" wouldn't consciously let us come to harm. It's a way of letting ourselves off the hook for our complicity in creating a crisis by our action, inaction, lack of willpower and courage to see that today will, eventually, become Someday.

We've heard it plenty in recent months. Why didn't Someone do something to stop the banks from making all these mortgages? Same story with Bernie Madoff. For heaven's sake, why didn't Someone do something to stop him from stealing those people's money!

Who wanted to listen to those nut jobs who warned of a real estate bubble or who questioned how we might unwind those newfangled packaged mortgage loans upon which so much prosperity was dependent. The ratings agencies said those assets were good investments. They were the Someone looking out for us and they said things were fine. Greenspan said people would never use the market to do something against their self interest. He urged us to "Continue on as usual." And, we did. We continued on, despite the mounting warnings. We didn't want to hear them.

Now we cry – "Why didn't Someone do Something?!?" That's the way we've been, assuming that Someone is watching out for us. We've discovered that the Someone we were relying on fed us a big fat line. One we swallowed hook, line and sinker because we loved the taste of it and we couldn't stand the smell of the reality warnings we were getting. We shook off our own good judgment and believed that Someday would never come.

We're weak and cowardly and greedy enough to be fooled by companies who are willing to say anything to put their profit first. Yes, even if it kills us. We believed Big Tobacco when they said they had no idea smoking caused cancer. Turned out, they were liars. So were the oil companies by telling us that oil has no limits and global warming is a farce. The coal companies are doing it with their "clean coal" scam. Why do we trust these companies? They are not the Someone who will protect us from the consequences of our actions. Each of us, individually, and all of us, collectively, is the Someone we are waiting for! The real question is, are you courageous enough and strong enough to do what it takes? Or will you be one of the chorus of the masses singing that worn out refrain, "Why didn't Someone do Something?" when it is too late on yet another crisis. A real one, that no bailout will handle.

For over TWENTY YEARS – the scientific community has been warning us about Climate Change and its catastrophic impact. Not just our money, our very physical survival is at stake this time. It's been politicized. That what companies do when they put their profit before your well-being, they make you wonder whether there's a way you can continue your risky behavior without having to pay the consequences.

Let's face it. We've liked it that there's been controversy around this topic. It means we can continue on "business as usual" with a blind hope that Someone will do Something when it's serious enough, but that we won't have to give up anything or face any real consequences for our refusal to face reality now. Someday seems so far off. Melting ice caps, rapidly spreading drought, too many people using too many resources that are disappearing too rapidly. Please! Avert your gaze, hold your nose. After all, it's not a crisis – just all the signs that one is coming. No reason to really act, our kids can deal with the eventual consequences. We've already ensured that they will be managing our collapsed Social Security system and the weight of several trillion dollars in deficit. I'm sure they can also mop up Climate Change, too. It's good for them, it builds character – so party on, dudes, not our problem, right?

Whether you agree with me or are a confirmed denier, our economy is suffering - badly. We have become a consumption base, not a production based, economy and that's bad for our future. We need to get serious about moving from low-growth, high-pollution industries to high-growth, low-pollution industries that can get the millions of people in this country back to work. Climate Change policy will drive investment into the high-growth clean energy sector creating millions of real jobs. To maximize the economic benefits of climate change legislation, we need to ensure the legislation is effective and efficient. That's what will rebuild a strong US based and US produced renewable energy industry and it's the way to begin rebuilding our economy immediately.

Stop looking away and hoping Somebody does Something. Stand up. Be Somebody and do Something. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Get involved like I have with groups like GreenWorld.org, Defenders of Wildlife, 350.org or 1sky.org or be prepared to hang your head in shame when your kids cry "Why didn't Somebody do Something?" and your answer is "I CouldaShouldaWoulda."

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