

# A Truckload of Bad Data

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A guy comes into the bar, and I figure he is a trucker because he looks like a trucker and he is wearing a greasy Peterbilt hat. So I say, "Are you a trucker?" and he answers "Yeah. What's it to you, old man?"

So I say, "I was just wondering, because it looks like the economic slowdown has shown up in the Dow Jones Transportation Average, which has made so little money in shuffling goods hither and thither that a share of all the companies in the index earned a total of 82 cents, which is down from the \$170.63 they earned at this time last year."

He looks at me and asks, "Who cares? And what in the hell is a hither and thither?"

So I grab him by the arm and say, "Well, as a self-employed person yourself, and as any self-employed person can tell you, there have always been times when earnings drop to 82 cents! Sometimes less! Like that time when 'word of mouth' got around about me and nobody would engage my professional services because everybody had heard that I was incompetent and pretty stupid, and there were long, long stretches where I did not make even 82 cents because I was, like they said, incompetent and stupid."

Then he says, "You saying I'm stupid? You looking for trouble?"

Suddenly, being the professional that I am, I could see that we were not going anywhere with this conversation, probably because he was prejudiced against smelly, drunken old men coming up out of the smoky darkness of a low-class strip club and grabbing his arm, yammering about economics.

Thus forewarned, I cleverly I reply, "Do I think you are stupid? Is that what you are asking me? Well, answer me this... Do you think that it is Beyond Freaking Insane (BFI) that the Federal Reserve is creating so much money and credit so that the federal government can borrow and spend the money, plunging us even farther into debt so that the total national debt, now at a terrifying 80% of GDP, will rise to 100% of GDP and then so horribly, terribly much more? Is this, in your trucking opinion, the Totally Wrong Thing (TWT) to do, and that the only Smart Thing To Do (STTD) would be to buy gold, silver and oil as protection against the complete ruination of the buying power of the dollar thanks to such oversupply of dollars and crushing debt?"

I figured he was going to say "Huh?" so when he looks at me quizzically and says "Huh?" I shout, "Exactly! And normally I would not even remark upon it except to seize the opportunity to ridicule the morons who own the stocks in the transportation index because, as I write this, they have bid the index up to a closing price of \$3,705.92, making the price-to-earnings ratio

soar to an unheard-of, laughable, impossible, ludicrous 4,493! Hahahaha! A P/E of 4,493! Hahaha! The normal range of P/E ratios is from about 4 or 5 up to 21, with the average being about 12 to 14! But the Transports are at 4,493! Hahaha!”

Again, he looked at me and said, “Huh?”

Before I could tell him that after due consideration, yes, I think he is an idiot who should be buying gold, silver and oil, both our attentions were diverted as the beautiful Miss Angela Divine began taking the stage.

As she slithered her hip-grinding way to the pole, gyrating to the beat of pulsating rhythm of the primal music, I noticed that she was wearing a gold G-string bikini! That’s my girl!