

Nomad America? The Super Rich and the Brutality of Corporate Capitalism

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Director Chloe Zhao has created a somber, almost tragic look back, look now and look to the possible future for many of us working stiffs. The film is called Nomadland (2021) starring Frances McDormand as Fern, a 60 something widow forced out of her previous life and onto the road. The town where she had lived with her late husband, Empire, Nevada, was a company town for a gypsum mining concern that had supplied most of the inhabitants (including Fern and her husband) with employment for generations.

The recession of 2008- 2010 caused the company to go bust... along with most of the employees. Everything in the small town basically went under. Fern found herself with no home and no source of income. She took the advice of a friend and began to live in her van. Fern took work at the nearest Amazon depot until she had enough of that dreary work existence. She became a Nomad.

The film actually uses a few real life Nomads as characters. Who else can convey what this way of life is all about than someone who lives it?

The sadness mixed in with the close fraternity of these folks brought tears to this writer's eyes. Then the anger set in. A whole community of people who live between the margins, having to continually travel to and fro, finding part time jobs to subsidize them for a brief period, speaks loudly of the brutality of this Corporate/Capitalist system.

Marc Levin's fine 2012 documentary, *Lost on Long Island* walks hand in hand with Chloe Zhao's film. Levin actually followed a group of Long Island, NY, residents, mostly from the financial industry, who got laid off during the aforementioned recession. To see these folks go either *underwater* on their homes or foreclosed, with no real substantial employment should have been a 'Wakeup call' for all working stiffs. Apparently it has not! Director Mark Herman's 1996 film, *Brassed Off* was based loosely on the 1984 UK miners' strike to keep 20 coal mines from closing. Again, it revealed how tragic it was, especially for the older men, when faced with little hope for an economic future.

In a nutshell, many working stiffs are perhaps a few paychecks away from becoming what I will call *Economic Nomads*.

As it is, when less than 10 % of private sector working stiffs belong to unions, the dice will fall the wrong way. The goal of the Super Rich is to see more of us forced to become part time workers with little or no benefits, or if full time, to be *Independent Contractors* with again no benefits or protections.

On top of that, these Super Rich control rental housing nationwide, as they bought up millions of foreclosed homes since the '08 economic downturn at *fire sale* prices, and became landlords. How many working stiffs are paying *outrageous* monthly rents, sometimes accounting for well over 30% of their earnings? Bad enough that husband and wife have to both work, regardless of children, but what about the single mom? How does a mother of even two kids stay above water financially?

To solve many of our current dilemma we need Socialism.

Let Amazon and ALL corporations be owned and run by its workers and not top heavy executives. Let the banks and rental properties be owned by localities in a low profit arrangement. Imagine a mortgage bank charging but *overhead*. Imagine a housing development being owned by the community, charging fair rents... AND the opportunity for each tenant to own their residence.

If 25% of the monthly rent was held in escrow until such time that the tenant could afford to take out a mortgage... just imagine how many working stiffs could have a place of their own. In the UK doctors are employed by the National Health on salary, with no need to worry about excessive malpractice insurance or how to find and keep patients. No one in that nation would ever *dare* to switch with us as to their coverage.

Imagine if small businesses were held on the pedestal they should be at.

Imagine if Uncle Sam subsidized small business owners to afford to pay a *real and viable living wage*... Let us say \$20 per hour. Uncle Sam sets the bar at \$10 hourly per employee for the owner's share, and pays out the other \$ 10 to the employer.

With all that Uncle Sam has been shelling out to bail out Wall Street etc, this plan would not only save small business Mom and Pop America, but *Stimulate the economy!* Let us leave the nomads to the history books.

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