

The Misery of the Capitalist Boss

Semi Sobriety

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**Note: This is a joke about losing sobriety. Readers who try to believe it do so at their own peril.*

Under the cool shade of trees on the elegant and modern university campus, diligent and well-educated researchers and students with advanced degrees from recognized universities sat chatting. After a while, they fell silent again. They all thought about how their lives had found a bit of stability, with monthly paychecks (even though they were just enough to get by), thanks to the university boss. The university boss was the owner of the university, responsible for paying salaries to nearly a thousand teachers and researchers. Of course, salaries were paid in cash because, nowadays, people no longer receive wages in the form of extra pants or a few bottles of fish sauce, which were non-negotiable.

Where did the boss get the money to pay them? Well, it came from business operations, but what was the mechanism behind it? Did he rush to the accounting department and withdraw a lump sum of money every time a sale was made? Of course not. It wasn't that crude these days. Not to mention, if you read the news or browse the web, you'll see that nowadays, many bosses often declare, "I work selflessly; I don't take a salary."

This mechanism has something called profits. Profits must come from assets. Among the important assets, stocks are now the most significant. The owner of a business is called a boss because he holds a significant number of company stocks (equity shares), and as a result, a significant portion of the profits generated by the company, after deducting taxes, belongs to him. That's the plainest meaning of the concept of "capitalist boss."

It's a simple matter but also the source of the bosses' misery. Capitalist bosses have nothing but stocks. (Of course, like everyone else, they have a home to live in.) Everything they do requires money. Money for services, money for drivers, money for investment and shopping, money for family expenses, and even money for salaries (in this case, the salaries of the researchers and professors at the university he owns), and countless other expenses. Thousands of expenses, but all of them exert pressure on the boss's stockpile of shares. You know, a sturdy tree can only bear so much weight before it breaks, and the boss's stockpile of shares is clearly bearing the weight of thousands of tons. Very heavy.

There's a saying in folk wisdom: "The wealth hurts, the owner suffers." When a valuable asset—as analyzed earlier—is the only thing the boss has, and it's subjected to pressure, torment, conflict, and division, then how can such a responsible and disciplined major shareholder sleep well and find peace of mind? The main point is that the boss has to endure; there's no other choice. The

boss can't just get rid of that asset in exchange for mental peace because it's the only thing he has. Someone who lives in agony without any other options is truly miserable. The fate of those living in dire circumstances is pain. Even if they fly first class, drive bulletproof Rolls-Royce, dine at 7-star restaurants with lobster dishes the size of thighs, and so on, they still cannot escape the fate of the wretched. They truly have to live like that; there's no choice. The constant rotation of assets around that agonizing stock forces them to live in a hellish world. Even when a boss is berating a high-ranking manager under his command, it doesn't mean he's heartless. It's simply that he has no choice and is showing a shade of a wretched life. That's it, nothing more, nothing less.



The most amusing thing is that the boss's employees keep dreaming of living like that miserable boss. In fact, they even try to imitate or do strange things to experience a bit of the hellish life that the boss can't escape from. For example, while the boss can't escape working 20 hours a day, then the employees, who are required to work 8 hours a day, try to work 12 hours to show dedication and in the hope that the boss might invite them to a meal with lobster.

But the most telling example of losing one's sober spirit is some employees starting to buy stocks. They don't realize that as the number of accumulated stocks increases, so do the profits over time, and they end up falling into a trance that leads to extreme suffering, just like what the boss has to endure.

Fortunately, despite the likely losses of sobriety, clarity, and joyful choices, the asset-induced burden may still bring a bit of benefit, just enough for consolation. That is, when their assets grow large enough for the profits to be substantial, they truly understand the predicament of the boss who used to pay their salaries. In the midst of suffering from being overwhelmed by their assets, they can now embrace the boss, shedding sincere tears, and share their mutual misery in a way that can only be described as "humane."

References

[1] Vuong, Q. H. (2023). *Meandering Sobriety*. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoC2TXNX6L>