

Don't Let the Door Hit You, 2013

As always, some bad guys got a real blast of karma in 2013. The monster Ariel Castro, who imprisoned and tortured three girls for a decade in Cleveland, was sentenced to life in prison. It turned out to be a very short sentence, as Castro hanged himself after just one month.

Another villain who got his due was abortionist Kermit Gosnell, whose Philadelphia clinic was described as a "house of horrors." An understatement. Some babies who had the misfortune of being born alive were brutally murdered by the butcher and his assistants. This evil Gosnell is serving life, but claims he is "spiritually innocent." Tell it to those babies, "doctor."

One Boston Marathon bomber got justice within days of that despicable act; his little brother, who sits in a tiny cell, may wish the same had happened to him. And in a case of a Patriot being a pinhead, the inked-up Boston Patriots' tight end Aaron Hernandez, a wannabe gang-banger, was cuffed and charged with murder. Jodi Arias was convicted of killing her boyfriend, while George Zimmerman walked in Florida.

Anthony Weiner, Miley Cyrus, Lance Armstrong, and others were deservedly hammered in the court of public opinion. Far more distressing, hundreds of innocent Americans were killed or injured when a vicious tornado wiped out their Oklahoma town in May.

But disasters, natural and self-induced, happen every year. The primary reason that 2013 is not a year to celebrate is because of one thing: the folks continue to get a bad deal.

Most Americans work hard, are honest people, and look out for their neighbors. They deserve prosperity, and capitalism has

been the best system ever devised for providing it. But as technology changes, so do the rules, and the U.S. government has not acknowledged that. The official unemployment rate is around 7 percent, which doesn't even include the millions who have given up looking for work. But if you have a college degree, you're far less likely to be jobless. And if you have a valued skill like plumbing or auto repair, you'll work as much as you want. However, if you can't write a sentence, if you speak like the Jersey Shore crew, and/or you have a bad attitude in the workplace, the odds are against you.

In most situations, the employer is holding all the cards. Competition for jobs is intense, both here and abroad, which drives wages down. President Obama wants you to believe that the feds can change all that and can right those private marketplace wrongs. That is, to be pithy, total bull! They can't, and they are bankrupting the country with false hopes. Only individuals can improve their own circumstances. Pinheads in Washington cannot help us.

The most important thing for workers to understand is that you have to make yourself indispensable. You must make money for your employer or make his life easier, preferably both. Also, you have to learn as much as you can about your chosen endeavor. Again, if you can fix things, you will earn good money. If you can sell things, you will prosper. If you're primarily interested in tattoos and social media, you will suffer economically – unless you're touring in 2014 with Garth Brooks or Lady Gaga.

In prosperous times, the marginal workers get by. But in tough times, they get the shaft. Let's hope that 2014 finally brings relief on the economic front. But don't count on that happening. If you make your own way, a happy new year – and a prosperous one – will be far more likely.