

What You Can Buy With \$75 Million

Written by Jack King, BT Contributor
May 2018

The governorship of Florida, no experience required



Our midterm elections here in America are still six months away, and I have no doubt there will be quite a lot of “politics fatigue” before we get to November. Normally, midterm elections are somewhat dry and boring, but I have a feeling that will not be the case this time around.

I had decided to take a break from writing about politics and to write instead about good things and good people in Florida and America, but when we have crooked politicians like Rick Scott and Donald Trump, it’s important to keep our eye on the political ball before they steal everything from us and this country. We must be diligent when we have politicians “working for us” like “Don the Con” and “Dumpster Rick.”

I expect to take some heat for not keeping *BT* readers as well informed as I should lately. Sometimes there is just too much information out there, much of it questionable. And with the news media in such sad shape, it’s even more difficult to find trustworthy sources.

It’s also not easy to keep you up to date when we publish on a monthly basis, but we’re doing the best we can.

I haven’t followed Rick Scott that much (avoiding the malignant Tallahassee Syndrome), except to know he’s a slime ball. What I didn’t know: just how wealthy a slimeball he is. So here are a

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few financial facts that should make you squirm.

In the late 1980s, Scott and his partners tried to buy the for-profit Hospital Corporation of America. It was a hot time for medical businesses, and they were being bought out left and right. Scott's partners were successful with this venture (now called Columbia HCA), and went on to others, wheeling and dealing in the medical business.

In the 1990s, Scott and his partners bought a controlling interest in and then sold several other health-care companies, always making money.

Then, in late 1997, investigators from the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Department of Health and Human Services served search warrants on Scott, Columbia HCA, and dozens of doctors with ties to the company.

Amid the controversy, Scott was forced to resign as president. Four months later the board of directors pressured him to resign as chairman of the company. He raked in a \$10 million golden parachute that also left him with ownership of ten million shares of stock worth more than \$350 million. Not bad for an amateur crook.

In 2003, the feds collected from Columbia HCA a record \$1.7 billion in fines and penalties to settle multiple charges of Medicare and Medicaid fraud. Scott was never charged, though much of the criminal activity occurred while he ran the company.

Isn't this a great county? If a poor guy robs a 7-eleven of \$30 and a six-pack, he goes to jail for two years. If your health-care corporation steals a billion dollars in taxpayer money, they let you buy a very nice house in Naples, with wealthy neighbors who'll play golf with you.

It got better. Scott just kept investing his money in other large medical companies. One of them was Solantic, which specialized in urgent-care centers. The company became the target of an employment discrimination lawsuit, and Scott refused to release depositions taken in the case, which was settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

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Scott stayed in the medical business, kept making money, and maintained his mansion in super-rich Naples. If you remove the maids and gardeners, Naples just might be the wealthiest town in the world.

Apparently Scott got bored with making millions from home, so he decided to run for governor. It is most unusual to run for governor of a major state as your first foray into politics, and Scott quickly found that no one would give him money -- maybe because he knew zero about politics. So he did what any red-blooded American with \$500 million would do: He wrote himself a check for \$75 million to finance his campaign.

Not worrying about money, he wandered around the state and put up lots of TV and radio ads. Looking back now, it seems obvious he didn't have a platform or even a campaign plan.

Democrats thought he was funny and not much of a challenge. Republicans thought he was just weird, but when they found out that he had *that* much money, they jumped onboard.

And now the Rickster wants to be a U.S. Senator, but I'm not sure he's qualified. First of all, the pay is too low, and secondly, you actually have to know something about governing. If you want to get elected, you need to convince people that you can actually accomplish something.

Oh well, I guess that stealing money in corporate America can be considered a job skill.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com