



# NOTES FROM THE TRENCHES

by Eddie Havoc

I was considering various topics for this one. All, of course, related to the particulars of an "original" musician. Then I hit on it...NATIONAL HEALTH NOW! I remembered a few years ago when several benefits were held to help pay the medical expenses for Robert Gordon (for those that have to ask, he was that guy who did "My Gal Is Red Hot, Your Gal Ain't Doodley Squat" in the early eighties, a rock-a-billy icon, y'all).

The reason he needed help was...HE HAD NO MEDICAL INSURANCE! In the new "service economy," an increasing number of people are in this predicament. Several people I know have had their jobs "outsourced," and guess what? So was their medical coverage.

We've all seen those ads on TV in which our "esteemed Governor" talks about the state-run insurance program that'll keep all New Yorkers healthy. Well... a very close friend of mine, (musician; works a day job too) called the number for information. He told the person on the other end that he made \$200 dollars per week. Oh yeah, he was "underestimating" a bit, but not by that much. This is a total of \$800 per month.

Now any "of age" person (and every perceptive under aged person) knows that \$800 per month is NOT a living wage. One could rent a cheap room, but not eat or maybe eat and live in their car. Oh...yeah, what about the car insurance?

Well, my friend was told that the maximum that he could make and qualify for the program was \$798 per month. You got it, he's S. O. L. for making two lousy dollars a month too much. But he can still watch innumerable commercials telling him to see his doctor to be tested for a variety of potential ailments. The invariably shouted reply is: "With what money?!"

Several contrary opinions and questions have come my way while composing this rant (yeah, let's be honest). Among them was the notions that vast sums of money spent on research that would be diverted from the medical and drug companies if universal health coverage was instituted.

Okay...we've all seen the TV ads right? You know "Insupicine isn't for everybody, go ask your doctor..." First: your doctor should already know

what you need, HE'S THE DOCTOR or at least maybe he saw the same ad...? Second: I guess we know approximately, well... that TV ads in prime time on a network... ARE REALLY EXPENSIVE! \$50,000 to several hundred grand for each airing. And, by definition, advertising is not research and/or development. So much for that imaginary bottom line.

Then we have the government grants assistance, "corporate welfare" and such. This is OUR money being invested. According to the generally accepted rules of capitalism, (yeah, I know...) investor are supposed to receive royalties or dividends. I don't know about anyone else, but I haven't seen any checks in the mail.

Another chest-thumping retrograde chimed in with, "The government shouldn't have to take care of someone when they are sick." OH YEAH? (and I'll try to stick to generalities here) If not, then why should we take care of "it" when "it's" sick? we rally 'round the flag, try to do our duty and pitch in only to find what started as WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER quickly devolves to "our glorious wealth and property is safe now, so go away and flip burgers somewhere."

Every other industrialized, first world country seems to have some form of universal health coverage. Granted, some systems are more efficient than others. So let's get that Yankee ingenuity going for a good cause. Our rulers (yeah, I said it) have had the benefit of "one for all" for quite a while now. Let's see some "all for one," too.

We all pay enough in taxes. What do we need; a national audit? So again, use those computers, pens and pencils and start letting our rulers (oops...said it again!) know. One more tidbit: when some "upstanding pillar of the universe" plays with his tie, frowns and starts lecturing that "THERE'S NO FREE LUNCH!" Chances are that HE is having one already, probably at you and your family's expense.

-Later, Ed