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Subject: How to Become a Twillionaire Without Really Trying

I offer this story in lieu of what may be GC missives and/or Burger Officionado issues that may not be forthcoming this week due to the holidays. Enjoy my friends for it is an absolutely true story.

The title above could have been, "How I Cornered The World Twinkie Market For 3 Hours." Yes, I did it. And here's how.

At 6:30 am this morning I realized that , my favorite childhood treat, would never again be produced by Hostess. Perhaps the brand and the recipe will be auctioned off to another bakery. Maybe Payard, Boulud or Greenberg's would become the new purveyors. But never again would that spongy, creamy goodness, just a few molecules away from plastic, be delivered in what was until Friday that ubiquitous, individually-cellophane-wrapped-10-to-a-box format. And so I knew what I had to do. Like those who feared the disappearance of what is now labelled "Coke Classic," I had to stockpile.

Ebay is really the bastion of the apocalyptic economy. There is virtually nothing one cannot procure on ebay. And so it was to this international electronic exchange that I turned to commence the implementation of my strategic plan. My inquisitive nature was rewarded. There were 50 lots of 1-5 boxes each of Twinkies for sale from every corner of the US. And so I commenced the bidding.

Ebay is, in theory, a perfect market. If you have not used it, you must try. Be forewarned, however, that it can be addictive. Also, don't let your spouse know. From the moment I disclosed the commencement of my quest to corner the global Twinkie Market, to become a Twillionaire, I became the target of no small amount of ridicule from my wife and six year old son. "Let them laugh," thought I! "Soon they will come crawling, begging to share in my secret stockpile of golden goodies!" Little did I know, however, that I was about to provide my son with the greatest crash course on the American Economic System ever devised.

So the bidding began. It started at about \$1.150 per Twinkie (1.15 p/t). Wanting to test the market and set the price I determined that my first lot should include only a single box of 10. This would permit me to bid high, thereby determining the effective price elasticity of demand for the holy Twinky, without spending too much money. I entered a maximum bid of 5.0 p/t (assuming that no one in their right mind would be willing to pay 5 bucks for a Twinky) and watched the market develop. (N.B. There is generally relatively little action in a typical Ebay auction until the last 3-5 mins; it's like professional basketball in that respect). As the auction drew to close perhaps 22 bids were lobbed in driving the price above 1.75 p/t! Lo and behold I won the first auction at 1.8 p/t. And so the bar was set.

As my confidence and thus my fortitude grew I started bidding on larger lots with greater precision. Sparing you the heart pounding high pressure experience, before one knew it Twinky auctions were coming fast and furious. There was one closing literally every 15 minutes from every corner of America. And we were winning every one. Yes, my fellow Americans, by about 8:45 am my son George and I had cornered the US Twinky market much like the Hunt Brothers unsuccessfully tried to corner the silver market in the late 1970s (they ultimately failed but, for a brief moment, we succeeded -- read on).

It was fascinating. We were actually bearing witness to American capitalism at its finest while simultaneously assembling a strategic stockpile of Twinkies (previously thought to have a half-life approximating 1,000 years but in fact having a "best used by" life of only about 2 months). In any case, amidst our sugar fueled euphoria emerged a stunning dynamic. The price of Twinkies on the World Twinky Exchange had more than doubled! Whereas we were paying an average of 2.0 p/t earlier in the day, the price had risen to in excess of 4.0 p/t and we had assembled massive reserves! It was time to engage in Twarbirtage and start selling off our Twinkies! Such an activity would cause a bulge in our wallets while simultaneously precluding a bulge in our waistlines! "Oh Frabjous Day, Calloo Callay," he chortled in his joy!

And so, faithful readers, it just goes to show that in America everything has a price and the opportunity to strike it rich is to be found around every corner. I'm sure you are wondering what happened next and what was retained in our strategic stockpile. That will be disclosed on a need-to-know basis my friends. Just let this be a lesson. Fun, food and profit can be found everywhere. And if you need a Twinky fix, well.....

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