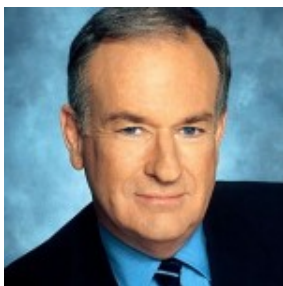


# Opinion: Being 1 percenter is not something to be ashamed of

By Bill O'Reilly

Growing up in Levittown out on Long Island, I remember my father buying pants through the mail. This seemed strange to me. There was a Robert Hall clothing store nearby, and it had pants all over the place. But my dad said he could buy two pair for the price of one from some guy in South Dakota. One problem: The pants never fit.

My father didn't much care. He saved some money, which he put in the bank, affording me an opportunity to go to private schools.



Bill O'Reilly

My parents never wanted to be rich and did not resent those who were, although my dad did not like Joseph Kennedy. He called JFK's father a bootlegger. The truth is, we O'Reillys did not even know any rich people. They lived in Garden City, about five miles away.

Today, I am a rich guy, a 1 percenter. I can buy all the pants I want. My late father could not even fathom how much money I make. I have trouble processing it, as well.

But I never worked for cash. I always wanted to do something

interesting and actually walked away from a high-paying TV job back in the 1990s to attend Harvard, where I secured a master's degree in public administration. There were tons of rich folks at Harvard. I did not resent them.

Today, the Occupy Wall Street crew and many progressive Americans believe that I am a greed head, even though they have no idea what I do with my money. Just the fact that I have it gives them license to brand me a dreadful "1 percenter."

The reason that I have prospered monetarily is that I put freedom to good use. I worked hard, got a great education, paid my dues in journalism and, finally, hit it big. America gave me the freedom to do all those things. In the past, my achievements might have been celebrated. Not today. Now, more than a few folks say I am not paying my fair share to ensure the security of my fellow citizens.

According to the IRS, the 1.4 million households that comprise the 1 percent (that is taking in about \$350,000 a year) pay 37 percent of the nation's income tax. That's a big number, is it not? And the *New York Times* reports that the 1 percenters contributed about 30 percent of all charitable donations in 2007. Another big number.

So I've decided that those demanding more of my money for "social justice" are really attacking freedom. In this country, it is not wrong to prosper. You should not be demeaned for "having."

President Obama will be doing the nation a huge disservice if he bases his upcoming campaign on class warfare, because that's really an assault on individual freedom. Yes, we are all Americans, and we should all be in it together. But that doesn't mean the government can guarantee individual outcomes. In a free society, it can't.

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