**SO YOU HIT THE JACKPOT?**

**Your mouth is wide open, your hands are shaking, your brain is in utter disbelief. You hear someone playing the drums, but turns out it’s your heart. Congratulations! You just won the lottery, hit the jackpot!**

Finally, the Universe gave what you deserve. After all that suffering, you are rich! And not rich as in, look at my brand new car, but rich as in look at my brand new island. You cannot help but feel rewarded, blessed, and above all: like the luckiest being on the entire planet. However, feelings are feelings and reality is reality. You had luck, indeed, but snap back to reality: it was the bad kind of luck.

Andrew Jackson Whittaker Jr. was an American businessman, with a career and a construction company. As a semi-accidental result of his entrepreneurship and ambition, his company was doing more than just ok, and he was beyond financially stable, and was approaching boredom, without breaking and backing away.

Experts estimated Jack’s net worth to be about 17 million US dollars before he hit the jackpot. The Powerball multi-state lottery was, at the time, the largest prize sum ever won by a single individual and a single ticket, in the history of the American lottery. Awarding him with an amount of a grand total of 315 million dollars. Mr. Whittaker was determined, or, at least he said so at the time, to continue with his life, as if nothing had changed. He hoped he would be able to spend more time with his family, while continuing to answer his own phone, open his own front door, and perhaps, if need be: turn to God for guidance. "He's still working on me.": was his interpretation of God's words.

What happens when one wins such a gravitational sum? Well, Whittaker decided to donate part of his winnings to the Church and other Christian Charities, deeming 10% to be quite a generous quantity. Needless to say, the Church of God was delighted and in humble gratitude built a multi-million dollar facility for the innocent christian children. Nevertheless, Christian Altruism didn’t turn out to be his savior.

Wise old Whittacker frequented a local restaurant, where he was used to breaking his daily fast: breakfast, getting his daily dose of caffeine. Attracted by the aroma of caffeine in the cute cafe, other addicts arrived. The lucky winner quickly became the subject of financial stalkers, that is, mobs of people whose daughters had coincidentally acquired cancer and were in desperate need of Whittackers charitable christian values. Currency burning with clarity.

Some of them even had prepared powerful presentations, generating genius business ideas. Presenting perpetual motion machines, a feat which would insult the intellectual integrity of physics fanboys and fanatics. Others, lacking the lucrative spirit for financial finessing, bluntly begged for bars of cold cash.

As a result, Whittaker walked away from the cafe, leaving his favorite breakfast place in the past. His future found security in hired professionals: operators were ordered to sort out his mail, a couple of detectives filtered out con men and scammers. Admittedly, he really wanted to make good choices, helping people who needed him.

Sadly, this is not the story of such a saint. Two weeks after the lucky day, he was seen in the Pink Pony. Far from being a harmless happy hippie place, it was a harmful horrible horrendous nightmare.. The Pink Pony strip club caters to slithering snakes like white man Whittaker. Throwing thousands of dollars on the counter, claiming that he was there to “whoop it up”, Whittaker began dishing out demands.

The manager of the club suggested that he re-pocket his wads of cash, stating that the strip club serves up serious struggle for those asking for trouble. Equity in that environment is equivalent to toying with trouble.

Although he escaped assault that night, he most definitely drank himself to hell and returned, heading home in a lottery winner’s taxi, that is, a luxurious limousine. Thereafter, things really started to go severely south.

Losing money may be sad, but being betrayed by so-called friends is heart-breaking. But there is something worse than betrayal, something that cannot be repaired.

Whittaker’s car was twice broken into, the culprits were not unknown criminals, but trusted acquaintances. These life-long “friends” had observed Whittaker’s routines and machine learned that large quantities of cash were kept in the car. The first time, prescription drugs were put in his drink. The second, they intimidated Whittaker’s granddaughter, insinuating insults to her person for information. Their methods resulted in a total of $700,000 stolen dollars.

Brandi, Whittaker’s granddaughter, was not only pressured to produce information. Worse than that, her loving grandfather gave her large amounts of money. This attracted certain people, and the filtering mechanisms of young teenager Brandi were not well established. Her fickle firewalls fell down, and she did not fare well, and had to say her farewells.

She dropped out of high school, drove around exploiting expensive cars, eating junk food as if she were trying to reach a sumo wrestler's weight. It was not long until drugs began to appear in the equation. Such drugs were not limited to cannabis and alcohol alone. Brandi Whittaker started taking white powders. The crack cracked her open, exposing its extremely addictive properties.

However, Brandi was not exactly poor and upon family suggestion, she agreed to go to rehab. Twice. Unfortunately, addiction remained her affliction. Following her pathetic path like a parasite, her boyfriend, Jimmy jimmied along: eventually dropping dead of an overdone dose.

Grounded by guilt, as it was her money that enabled the deadly drugs that killed her boyfriend. Three months later, Brandi was buried, along with her name. Although the cause seemed to be an overdose, Whittaker suspected foul play. The apple of Whittaker’s eye was dead and gone. Unable to avoid ruminating over the root cause, the seeds of supposed success, lended by the lottery winnings, his sanity suffered and withered with Brandi’s demise, dirt on his sad soul.

Whittaker’s case is not isolated. Billie Bob Harrel committed suicide after endless requests for money from friends and family. Evelyn Adams declared bankruptcy after gambling away her fortune. Thomas Strong died during a quarrel with the police, coming straight from the underground. Jeffrey Dampier was kidnapped and murdered by his own sister-in-law, inlaws becoming lawless.

Homicide, drug overdoses, kidnappings, and bankruptcy are normally not logically linked with the lure of the lottery. Nonetheless, and needless to note, troublesome tragedies attributes allocated, allotted by the lottery. Therefore, if you are ever lucky enough to lose the lottery, you might be interested in the intricate instructions to avoid the loss of heaven and pain of hell: the undesirable brutality brought by bankruptcy, demonizing, dehumanizing, delegating death.

The first step is to remain calm. Not because your yoga teacher says so, or because your meditation app mandates it, but because you must translate the trainwreck of thunder and thoughts. Above all, rise above boasting, blast your bitterness, be better. No need to say nothing, no fala nada.

Before declaring yourself the winner, you contact and confirm, acquire the affirmation of an attorney. Accept ayuda, protection from potential peleas, build barries for battles you might be faced with and forced to fight. Extra points for an attorney, independent of incentives, already introduced and used to incriminating criminals, well versed in dancing with wealthy willpower.

The second step is to decide how much you are going to give away, and don’t give away your integrity. Give money to family and friends, christians, children, and charity. Set up a favorable foundation. But again, be brave, be bold, be cunningly consistent.

People are going to ask you for money no matter what, and deciding beforehand how much to give will clear uncertainties not only for yourself, but also for potential perpetual-motion machine inventors, pitching and bitching. It can also deal with family quarrels about who gets what. Decades of Christian Christmas dinners and manipulative Monopoly games have proven that you definitely want to avoid family quarrels, so trust your experience.

The third step is to hire a financial advisor and establish a safety net for your inner circle. So to sum up, if you ever become a lottery loser, which is a BIG IF IN ALL CAPS, don’t panic, or at least keep the panic organic, and get help. Professionals are pertinent.

Buying a lottery ticket is not an advisable financial move, as the estimated return is lower than the investment. Not quite like the riveting rocket science scene. However, it is safe, not surprising, to acknowledge the real reason why one should abstain from buying lottery tickets. Not because of the low likelihood of winning, but because of the dangers and delusions it demands.

A reasonable point in favor of lottery spending $ is that it gives hope, and, in a way, you are buying a pleasant state of mind. You are buying the chance of a magic trick that will ease worries, solve problems, and take you into a world beyond your wildest dreams.

But as Whittaker’s example shows, dreams can easily become memes, or nightmares. It is easy to think that you can do better than those who failed before you, see US politics. And maybe you are right, but do not be a fool, keep it cool. It will not be an easy path of least resistance. If you hit the jackpot, it’ll hit you back, and if you mistake your heartbeat for the sound of drums in Rio, go see a doctor. And a lawyer. And a financial advisor.