
A Case of Election Psychosis

By Editor Test *Wed, Oct 27, 2010*

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Election Day was less than a week away. The Undecided Voter was stressed. He made an appointment with a dually-licensed psychiatrist who practiced behavioral finance and annuity framing on the side.

"Doc, I can't sleep. I stay up all night, trying to figure out who I should vote for," said the Undecided Voter as he reclined on the leather longue.

"How does that make you feel?" said the psychiatrist.

"Indecisive," said the U.V. "And anxious."

"I see," the psychiatrist said, tapping a note into his Blackberry. "And what is it about not knowing who to vote for that makes you anxious?"

"If I vote Democratic, then Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid will raise my marginal tax rates and over-regulate me. They'll confiscate my 401(k) savings and use it to fund outrageous pensions for policemen and school teachers."

"Then perhaps you should vote Republican," the doctor said.

"If I vote Republican, Christine O'Donnell and Rand Paul will take charge, and that knucklehead Gingrich will pull their strings. They'll lower my taxes and de-regulate me, but they'll destroy Social Security and gut Medicare."

"Let me pose a question," said the psychiatrist. "Would you rather have a 50% chance of gaining \$100, or a 100% chance of gaining \$50?"

"Who cares?" said the Undecided Voter. "Bonds are overpriced. Gold is overpriced. The Fed is propping up the stock market and there's a 50/50 chance of a Double Dip. Some days I think I should be long on small-caps. Other days I think I should load up on TIPS."

"Ah. Have you considered a variable annuity with a lifetime income rider?" asked the doctor. "Or perhaps a SPIA with a side-fund in equities?"

"I don't like annuities," said the U.V. "They're a terrible investment."

"You're looking at them through 'investment' glasses," the psychiatrist empathized. "Try looking at them as insurance. Guarantees aren't cheap, you know."

"I don't know what's real anymore," said the Undecided Voter. "Is global warming a serious threat to civilization, or is it a left-wing hoax? Do poor people ride in the cart while rich people pull, or is it the reverse? When we die, are we called to account for our fiduciary lapses, or do we just crumble into dust?"

A complex psychosis, the doctor noted on his PDA. *Might call for an equity-indexed annuity*. "Looks like we've got a lot of work ahead of us," he said, turning to his appointment book. "Same time next week?"

"At this rate, I'm not sure there will be a next week," muttered the Undecided Voter. "Doc, how do you deal with the pressure? How do you decide who to vote for?"

"Each one of us has to make his own decisions," the psychiatrist instructed. "But, in my case I get all the information I need from Fox News. Bill. Glen. Sean. Even that blonde lawyer, what's-her-name."

"Ann Coulter?"

"Right. I listen to their arguments, and then I do the opposite of whatever they say," the doctor said.

"That's all I need to do?"

"Well, you might also buy a fixed annuity/long-term-care insurance hybrid," suggested the psychiatrist. "It's like buying LTC with a big deductible. And if you never need nursing home care, you keep your money. Put a couple of hundred thousand into one of those babies and, I promise, you'll sleep like a tenured professor."

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