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THE GRAND EXPERIMENT: NEW YORK IS RE-RUNNING A HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD FAILURE AND CALLING IT PROGRESS

THE GRAND EXPERIMENT: NEW YORK IS RE-RUNNING A HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD FAILURE AND CALLING IT PROGRESS — AND THE FAILURE IS THE FEATURE

I am a science teacher. So let me start with the one word in this entire disaster that made the hair on my arms stand up.

Experiment.

The mayor of New York City stood in front of a cheering crowd, gestured at a plan to build government-owned grocery stores with taxpayer money, and said — I am paraphrasing, but only barely — may the most affordable grocery store win. He called it a grand experiment. He looked at eight and a half million people and told them it was ABOUT TIME to run one.

Now. In my classroom, when a student proposes an experiment, the first thing I ask is not "how do you feel about it." The first thing I ask is "has anyone run this before, and what happened." Because science is not a mood. Science is a record. And the second thing I teach — right around the time the sophomores stop being shocked by it — is that you do not get to judge a system by what it CLAIMS to do. You judge it by what it consistently PRODUCES.

So let us judge.

Because here is the thing that should stop every single New Yorker cold before they clap for one more socialist ribbon-cutting. This experiment is not new. It is not bold. It is not visionary. It has been run — over and over and over, on four continents, across a full century — and it has produced the exact same

result every single time. Empty shelves. Empty wallets. And in the worst cases, empty graves stacked so high the people who ran the experiment stopped counting.

The mayor calls it a first. I call it a rerun. And I have seen this episode. I know how it ends.

Buckle up. This is going to take a minute. It has to.

--- WHAT HE ACTUALLY PROPOSED, IN HIS OWN NUMBERS ---

Let me lay out the actual plan, because the plan is somehow dumber than the headline.

Five city-owned grocery stores, one per borough. The city pays no rent. Owes no property taxes. Sells at wholesale to undercut every bodega and grocer on the block. The first store, in East Harlem, carries a price tag of THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS. For one store. Nine thousand square feet. That works out to more than THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS PER SQUARE FOOT.

For comparison — and I want you to actually sit with this — a full-size Aldi costs somewhere between one and a half and three million dollars to build, and opens its doors in about six weeks. Mamdani's single store will not open until the end of next year and costs nearly HALF of the entire seventy million dollars set aside for all five combined.

And here is the punchline, delivered by the mayor himself: the city is, in his own words, WORSE THAN BROKE. The comptroller — a Democrat — pegs the budget gap at roughly seven point three billion dollars over two years. Moody's cut the city's outlook from stable to negative. The credit agencies are flashing red. And the man's response to being worse than broke was to propose spending MORE.

So follow the logic, if you can find it. A city that cannot balance its books wants to open thirty-million-dollar grocery stores that pay no taxes, in order to compete against the private businesses that DO pay the taxes, at the exact moment those businesses are threatening to leave. That is not a grocery policy. That is a fiscal death spiral with a photo op stapled to the front of it. If that plan were any more upside down it would need a passport to visit the ground floor.

--- THE PART WHERE THEY ASKED THE ENEMY HOW TO WIN ---

Before the announcement, City Hall invited bodega owners in for a friendly little roundtable. And then hit them with a barrage of questions. How much profit do you make. What are your best-selling products. What do people keep coming back for. What are your margins on cigarettes and lottery tickets.

Read that again. The government sat down with the small business owners it intends to compete against and asked them for their playbook.

That is like asking your opponent on the battlefield how to defeat them, and then acting surprised when they figure out what you are doing. The president of one bodega association said his grandfather, who helped build that association, would be rolling in his grave. And the mayor's people wanted to know the profit margin on lottery tickets — for a store they SWORE would only carry a few healthy staples.

You do not ask about cigarettes and lottery margins if you are opening a glorified vegetable stand. You ask because you plan to sell those things. You plan to sell EVERYTHING. And I will come back to that, because "everything" is the whole game.

--- THIS EXPERIMENT ALREADY RAN — IN AMERICA, LAST YEAR ---

Let us start close to home, because the left loves to pretend the failures are always somewhere far away and long ago.

Kansas City, Missouri. The Sun Fresh Market. Opened in 2018 in a city-owned shopping center as the crown jewel of an east-side revitalization plan. Taxpayers poured somewhere between SEVENTEEN AND TWENTY-NINE MILLION DOLLARS into it over the years. And what did all that money buy? Empty shelves.

Weekly customers cratered from around fourteen thousand to about four thousand. It lost eight hundred eighty-five thousand dollars in a single recent year. **And the crime and theft got so bad that employees reportedly carried TASERS to work.** An emergency injection of another seven hundred fifty thousand dollars could not save it. It closed for good in August of 2025, with a note blaming "unforeseen circumstances." Unforeseen. By everyone except every economist who has ever lived.

Erie, Kansas — a town of about a thousand people — bought its struggling grocery store in 2020 for around four hundred thousand dollars to stop a food desert. **It had exactly ONE profitable month in 2022 and lost a hundred thirty-two thousand dollars that year.** The mayor described the ongoing losses with one perfect word: "bleeding." They eventually leased it to a private operator, and it is STILL unviable, now scheduled to close.

Baldwin, Florida — city took over the last grocery store in 2019, put the staff on the municipal payroll, and aimed for break-even. Its lousy buying power meant HIGHER prices and empty stock. Losses of sixty-one thousand, then a hundred seventy-eight thousand. Closed March of 2024 after five years of failing.

Illinois launched a Fresh Food Fund and opened six grocery stores in food deserts. FOUR of the six closed. **Atlanta** poured three and a half million public dollars into a single store. We will see how that ages.

Now — in the interest of honesty, because I am a scientist and not a propagandist — there is ONE relative success in the whole American record. **St. Paul, Kansas**, a town of about six hundred people, runs a small municipal grocery that turns a razor-thin one-to-three-percent profit. But read the fine print, because the fine print is the whole point: **it works precisely because it has almost NO competition, the town mostly just oversees it instead of micromanaging, and it is roughly the size of a large convenience store serving six hundred souls.** That is your model, Mr. Mayor. **A six-hundred-person hamlet with no Walmart nearby.** Now go apply it to eight and a half MILLION New Yorkers competing against fifty thousand bodegas and a Costco on every horizon. Good luck. You are going to need a bigger taser budget.

The pattern is so consistent that even Wikipedia — not exactly a MAGA operation — notes that many of these government-subsidized stores close within a few years or never open at all. When the encyclopedia the left trusts is fact-checking the left's own homework and marking it wrong, you might be onto something.

And here is Jim Quinn's First Law of Liberalism, and I want you to keep it in your back pocket for the rest of this article: liberalism always generates the EXACT OPPOSITE of its stated intent. Always. The stated intent is affordable food. The produced result is a shuttered building and a hole in the budget. Every time. Set your watch by it.

--- THIS EXPERIMENT ALREADY RAN — IN THE SOVIET UNION ---

Now let us go a little further back. To the granddaddy of the government grocery store. The Soviet Union.

In 1989, a Soviet official named Boris Yeltsin — newly elected, powerful, connected, a true believer — visited a Randall's supermarket in Houston, Texas. Not a special one. An ordinary Tuesday. Free cheese samples. Aisles stacked with hundreds, thousands of products, just sitting there, waiting for customers.

He was overwhelmed. He could not believe it. This man — a member of the Politburo, one of the most powerful people in a nuclear superpower — could not, with all his intellect and all his connections, make a store like that happen in his own country. **He later wrote that when he saw those shelves, he felt sick with despair for the Soviet people.** That such a potentially super-rich country had been reduced to such poverty.

That is what the government grocery store produces. That is the actual, historical, documented result of the exact model Mamdani is calling a grand experiment. Bread lines. Empty shelves. Citizens standing for hours to buy nothing. A system so breathtakingly efficient at manufacturing scarcity that it became the cautionary tale taught in every economics class on the planet — except, apparently, the one that produced the current mayor of New York.

And it is not just the hardcore communists. India tried it too — Delhi's government-run Super Bazar, launched in 1966 as a price-control showpiece and once an actual landmark. It was even profitable at first. Then came the overstaffing, the mismanagement, the total inability to compete, the mounting losses. It closed in 2002. A government store that turned a profit for a while and then slowly strangled on its own bureaucracy is not the exception to the rule. It IS the rule. The profitable opening act is the bait. The closure is the show.

But this time it will be different. It is ALWAYS going to be different this time. That unshakeable, childlike certainty that THIS run of the experiment will finally work is the only thing socialism has reliably produced in a hundred and fifty years of trying. The porch light is on. Nobody's home. But by golly the light is ON.

--- THIS EXPERIMENT ALREADY RAN — AND PEOPLE STARVED TO DEATH ---

I debated whether to put this section in. And then I decided that leaving it out would be a lie of omission, and I do not lie to my students.

When you make the government the grocer, you make the government the decider of who eats. And history has a very clear record of what happens next.

Ukraine, the early 1930s. The Holodomor. Stalin collectivized agriculture — made the state the owner and distributor of all food — and roughly four million people starved to death. Not from a bad harvest. From CONFISCATION. A survivor's words: **the famine was the result of the state taking everything the peasants had.** There is a passage, written by a dedicated Communist Party member who was there, describing Soviet butter being shipped abroad during the famine while children with skeleton limbs and balloon bellies died in the fields. And in London and Paris, he imagined people buying that butter and saying, here, friends, is the proof of socialism in action.

Proof of socialism in action. Hold that phrase.

China, 1958 to 1962. Mao's Great Leap Forward. They abolished the family kitchen. Confiscated the stoves, the pots, the pans, the food, the firewood. Herded everyone into communal kitchens where the state fed you — or did not. Some places would not even let you light a chimney outside the communal kitchen. Households lost the ability to boil their own water. The result was the worst famine in human history — somewhere between thirty-six and fifty million dead. In some villages there was cannibalism. This is documented, in the Communist Party's own archives, by Chinese journalists who dug through the records.

I am not saying Zohran Mamdani wants anyone to starve. I want to be crystal clear about that. He does not. **What I am saying is that the MECHANISM he is reaching for — the government as the food authority, undercutting and replacing the private network that actually feeds a city — is a mechanism with a body count.** And the mechanism does not care about your intentions. The road to those communal kitchens was paved with people who were absolutely certain they were the good guys.

--- THIS EXPERIMENT ALREADY RAN — IN THIS CENTURY ---

Do not want to go back to the 1930s? Fine. Let us go to a country that still exists, with people who are still fleeing it.

Venezuela. Under Hugo Chavez, the government nationalized supermarkets in 2010. It was one of his more popular moves — cheap food, subsidized by oil money, poor and working-class shoppers flocking to the government stores. It worked. In the short term. It ALWAYS works in the short term. That is the trap.

Then the oil price fell. And the government-run supermarkets could not import food. And Venezuela — **one of the most oil-rich nations on Earth — had citizens eating out of garbage bags and losing twenty to thirty pounds involuntarily.** Nine million people, roughly a third of the country, fled. The largest refugee crisis in the hemisphere.

And here is the tell, the one nobody on the left ever addresses. **Not a single American is fleeing TO Venezuela.** Every Venezuelan with options is fleeing FROM it. The people who lived the experiment voted with their feet, and they all ran the same direction — away.

--- THE RENT FREEZE: SAME EXPERIMENT, DIFFERENT LAB ---

While we are here, let us look at the mayor's OTHER grand experiment, because it is the same disease wearing a different coat.

The rent freeze. Zero percent on roughly a million apartments. The tenants danced in the street. The board voted seven to one — and the one pro-landlord member resigned in protest that very morning, writing that the decision had already been baked before the data was ever read. An NYU economist on the board — the lone no vote — warned that the city had seen this movie before, in the 1970s, when the Bronx was literally burning and a hundred thousand apartments fell out of private hands because the buildings could not pay their own taxes.

Freezing rent does not freeze the landlord's costs. Insurance up more than ten percent in a year. Fuel up eleven. Property taxes climbing. Water rates up six percent. So the mayor froze what comes IN while everything going OUT kept marching upward.

Meet Ebony Hannibal. Four apartments in Brooklyn. Not a hedge fund — a woman with a thirty-eight-hundred-dollar mortgage and tenants who owe her close to a hundred thousand in back rent she will likely never see. The freeze was the last straw. She is selling.

And when small owners sell under those conditions, the buildings go for pennies. **One building a block from Central Park sold for a forty-two percent loss.** One in East Harlem changed hands for a NINETY-SEVEN PERCENT discount from what it was once worth. A nonprofit lender whose entire mission is affordable housing — not the real estate lobby, the AFFORDABLE HOUSING people — ran the numbers and found that if the rent is frozen every year of the mayor's term, the average stabilized building's income after expenses falls from forty-five hundred dollars a unit to twenty-nine hundred. And in the Bronx, the borough with the most rent-stabilized apartments in the city, it crosses ZERO — from positive two hundred sixty-six dollars a unit to NEGATIVE thirteen hundred thirteen. Before a single mortgage payment.

You want to know how this ends? It already ended, somewhere else, recently. **Argentina tried rent control in 2020. Rental prices soared over one hundred forty percent.** Availability dropped forty-five percent. In 2023 the new president repealed it — and prices fell forty percent while availability soared two hundred twelve percent.

The freeze does not create one new apartment. It just decides who gives up first. Quinn's First Law, again, right on schedule: the policy sold as keeping you in your home is the policy that changes who owns it and then hands you an eviction notice. The elevator does not reach the top floor on this one, folks.

--- THE TAX-THE-RICH SUICIDE NOTE ---

Now, how does the mayor pay for the grand experiments? He taxes the rich. Of course he does.

He stood outside a private citizen's home — **Ken Griffin, founder of Citadel** — pointed at a penthouse, and made a campaign ad out of it. And Citadel, one of the largest firms on Earth, responded by noting it had paid two point three billion dollars in city and state taxes, and that its Park Avenue redevelopment was set to create six thousand construction jobs and more than fifteen thousand permanent ones. And now that project may walk. To Florida. To Texas. Where the welcome mat does not have a tax bill printed on it.

Here is what I keep noticing. I keep seeing these Democratic socialists scream TAX THE RICH — while writing themselves eighteen-point-two percent raises, while sitting on boards, while knowing every loophole in the code because their own party carved them. So I have a standing offer to every one of them. Before you lecture me about fair share, lead by example. Voluntarily pay DOUBLE what the IRS says you owe, with no deductions beyond the standard one, no itemizing, no clever accountant. Write that check first. Then — and only then — I might listen to the sermon. Until you do, spare me. You are not fighting the rich. You are auditioning to replace them.

And the behavioral response is not a mystery. Every tax has one. You tax the second homes of the wealthy, and the wealthy — who build the buildings that employ the union electricians and pay the property taxes and take nothing from the city's services because they are not even there — simply stop building. You do not close the gap. You widen it. And the checkout clerk, the doorman, the construction crew — they do not have a soft landing in Palm Beach. The billionaire does. He said so himself: thank God we have other businesses.

--- THE THIRTY-DOLLAR LADDER THEY KICK OVER ---

Then there is the thirty-dollar minimum wage, because of course there is.

Here is a revolutionary concept the socialists cannot seem to grasp: **wages are set by voluntary agreement between an employer and an employee.** A person agrees to a wage a business is willing to pay. If nobody accepts the wage, the business raises it to attract better workers. That is market dynamics. It is not exploitation. It is arithmetic.

The entry-level job is not supposed to feed a family of five. It is a stepping stone. McDonald's — which already pays well over minimum wage — knows the crew job is the rung, and the manager job is the career. Walmart, again above minimum, will let you climb to store manager making six figures without a dime of college debt, out-earning plenty of people with a master's degree. That is the LADDER. And when you mandate a thirty-dollar minimum in a city graduating kids with five-to-ten-dollars-an-hour worth of marketable skills, you do not lift them up. You saw off the bottom rung and wonder why nobody can climb. You trap the exact people you claim to help in permanent unemployment, with no resume, no experience, and no way in. And a person with no way to earn is a person who becomes dependent on you.

Which — and this is not a coincidence — is the entire point.

--- FIRST THE GROCERIES. THEN EVERYTHING. ---

Remember the bodega owners getting grilled about cigarettes and lottery tickets? Here is where that goes.

It starts with the grocery stores. But the grocery store is only phase one. Because once the government store — tax-free, rent-free, funded by the taxes squeezed out of everyone else — undercuts the private grocer into bankruptcy, the demand does not stop at bread. **The voters who were promised free groceries start asking for free clothing stores. Free hardware stores. Free electronics.** Every business set up to fail, so that eventually everyone has to crawl to the government to get a t-shirt, a toothbrush, an oil change, a vegetable.

And THAT is total control. Not because it works — it never works — but because when you are the only one who can feed, clothe, and house a population, you own that population. A man who can earn his own bread can tell you no. A man whose bread comes from your ration card will do what you require. That is not a safety net. A net catches you so you can stand back up. This is a leash.

This is the ballgame. Scarcity creates dependency. Dependency creates control. Control keeps the machine in power. And a party that actually SOLVED these problems would campaign itself out of a job in a single generation. So the problems never get solved. They get managed. Sustained. Farmed.

--- THE 1963 WARNING NOBODY READ ---

I do not traffic in conspiracy. I traffic in the Congressional Record.

On January 10, 1963, Congressman Albert S. Herlong Jr. of Florida read forty-five Communist Goals for America into the official Congressional Record — drawn from a book by a former FBI agent. I am not asking you to believe in a smoke-filled room. I am asking you to read two of them and check the outcome.

Goal 15: capture one or both of the political parties in the United States. When a party's mayor of its largest city is an avowed Democratic socialist, endorsing candidates who want to eliminate prisons and abolish ICE, while a Gallup poll finds sixty-six percent of Democrats view socialism favorably — you may ask whether Goal 15 has earned a check mark.

Goal 32: support any socialist movement to give centralized control over any part of the culture — education, social agencies, welfare programs. Government grocery stores. Government-owned housing the mayor now threatens to seize from private landlords. Centralized control over how a city eats and where it lives. I did not write Goal 32 sixty-two years ago. I am just reading it back to you while it happens on live television.

You do not need a coordinated conspiracy when you have a coordinated IDEOLOGY. You just need the right people in the right institutions, and then you wait. It has been sixty-two years. Look around.

--- FETTERMAN'S FIELD TRIP ---

Here is the part that should sting, because it comes from inside the house.

Senator John Fetterman — a Democrat, not a Fox News host — was visiting a former communist nation. He told the locals that some of the "lefties" in his own party were talking up socialism now. What did they think?

Their answer; that is the worst thing ever; You are going to need a reality check if you ever adopt any of those things; You are MORONS;

Morons. That was the word. From people who actually lived it. Who stood in the bread lines. Who watched the government claim the economy was thriving while their own eyes said otherwise. They heard American Democrats were warming to socialism and their reaction was not curiosity — it was bewilderment and contempt. They said thank God we are freed from that, and they could not understand why America was even having the conversation.

It takes a special kind of missing-a-few-crayons-from-the-box to look at a hundred years of mass graves, bread lines, and refugee columns and conclude the real problem was that America simply has not tried it yet. When the people who SURVIVED the experiment are begging you not to run it again, the intelligent move is to LISTEN — not to go build a thirty-million-dollar grocery store and call it a first.

--- WHY THE FAILURE IS THE FEATURE ---

Now here is the thesis. The uncomfortable one. The one they do not want you to reach.

I spent a long time assuming this was all just incompetence. That these were well-meaning people who were simply, spectacularly bad at arithmetic. A few fries short of a Happy Meal, running on dial-up in a fiber-optic world.

But I am a scientist. And when an experiment produces the same result every single time, across a century and four continents, you have to stop calling it a malfunction. **At some point, the consistent output IS the design.**

Democratic socialism does not fail by accident. **It fails by DESIGN — because the failure is what produces the dependency, and the dependency is what produces the power.** The grocery stores are not supposed to make groceries cheap. They are supposed to make the private grocer disappear. The rent freeze is not supposed to house people. It is supposed to transfer the buildings. The minimum wage is not supposed to lift the poor. It is supposed to keep them out of the workforce and on the rolls. Every policy sold as compassion is engineered scarcity, and engineered scarcity is a leash the politician holds.

This is not governance. It is a franchise operation with human suffering as the product. And New York City just signed a multi-year contract to be the flagship store.

--- WHERE THE MONEY ACTUALLY GOES ---

One more thing, because it tells you exactly who this machine serves.

New York can find seventy million dollars for grocery stores it will never turn a profit on. It found fifteen million for gender-affirming care and floated twenty-three billion in new taxes — in a city its own mayor calls worse than broke. The money is always there for the ideology.

--- THE CONCLUSION THEY DO NOT WANT YOU TO REACH ---

In science, when your results contradict your hypothesis, you reject the hypothesis. You do not double down. You do not blame the equipment. You do not hold a rally and call the smoking crater a success.

The hypothesis was: government control of food and housing will make food and housing affordable.

The observed results, spanning a hundred years: bread lines in Moscow, garbage-bag dinners in Caracas, mass graves in Ukraine and China, shuttered stores in Kansas City, a ninety-seven-percent loss on an East Harlem building, and a mayor announcing a thirty-million-dollar grocery store in a city he himself says is worse than broke.

The data is in. It has been in for a century. Zohran Mamdani is doubling down. He is holding the rally. He is calling the crater progress. And he called it a grand experiment because that is exactly what it is — the same experiment, run one more time, on eight and a half million people who were never asked to be the lab rats.

New York is not the future. New York is the FORESHADOWING. And the whole country is watching the beaker start to smoke.

But what do I know. I am only a science teacher who has spent a career explaining to teenagers that when an experiment produces the same catastrophe every single time you run it, the problem is not the universe. The problem is that you keep running the experiment.

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