

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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How About Those Oscars?

I bet you think I'm going to write about the big mix-up over Best Picture with La-La Land getting called instead of Moonlight. Nope. I've got bigger fish to fry (even though I think the "mix-up" was intentionally done by an individual based on his or her personal agenda).

My cellmate told me that at the OSCARS the popcorn is sprinkled with 24 carat gold dust and that chocolate OSCAR statuettes are made of chocolate and coated with 24 carat gold. People then eat these items and shit out the gold which is then flushed into the sewer system. Is this true? It sounds so bizarre. The following comments are premised on the belief that what he told me is true.

Are we in Tzarist Russia? The reason I ask is that the last time I heard about such decadent wasteful opulence was when I read about the 1917 Russian Revolution. The peasants were starving by the millions while the aristocrats lived lifestyles based on extravagance, waste and opulence.

According to the Wisconsin Poverty Report ([irp.wisc.edu/research/wipoverty.htm](http://irp.wisc.edu/research/wipoverty.htm)) issued in April 2015, child poverty in Wisconsin was rated at 11.8% to 24.4% depending on which poverty measure was used. Throughout Wisconsin (and the entire country) countless children are living below the poverty level. Often, these children don't have enough to eat, are poorly clothed and have no one to take care of them. These are the ones who most often grow up to become drug addicts and criminals.

I guess my perspective is different from that of people who attend OSCAR award ceremonies. I see the scarcity and the suffering it causes. All they see is the glitz and glamour of their lives. To them, the wanton waste of gold on something to be eaten and then excreted must appear glamorous. They are the ones at the top of the socio-economic ladder. Poor children going hungry means nothing to them - at least not as much as going all-out for the OSCARS.

Don't get me wrong, spending money on an extravaganza to celebrate the best in the movie industry is fine. But to simply throw away the money that gold represents rather than doing something worthwhile with it, seems morally wrong.