

Send Me All Your Money

HAVE BEFORE ME A VERY EXCITING OPPORTUNITY. I originally intended to send it as a blast Special Promotion to All Man-kind (SPAM) e-mail, but I felt the readers of *Contingencies* deserved the first chance at it. It's an opportunity that I, for reasons I'll explain, can't directly take advantage of myself.

But I know the readers of *Contingencies* magazine to be honest to a high degree and of the highest moral character, so I seek your help to our mutual advantage.

This is an opportunity I make available to *Contingencies* readers only and I ask, if you can't avail yourself of the opportunity so presented, that you respect the confidential nature of this presentation. Our mutual interest would be best served if you did not photocopy this communication or pass it on to non-*Contingencies* readers. As you'll see, your involvement in this venture, in order for it to come to a successful conclusion, requires your highest level of personal discretion.

Here's what I need your help on. I have a second cousin whose brother-in-law left the United States a few years ago in order to organize an independent relief agency in Mordor, a small country within New Zealand that, if you have seen the movie *Lord of the Rings*, you know to be a desolate place with highly impoverished people. In the course of setting up this agency in the far reaches of Mordor, the brother-in-law of my second cousin met a strange little man with a very remarkable story. This strange little man (I call him a man but you'd never know him as such)—his body has been wracked with disease and his bones twisted in unimaginable directions so that, if one can bear to look at him at all, one would have difficulty recognizing him as the man he claims to be.

Anyway, in the course of his travels, this strange little man has found a gold ring. He approached the brother-in-law of my second cousin as he was working to cover the roof of the relief agency's hospital building with new straw to keep the rain from falling on the sick children inside. The strange little twisted man proposed that he would offer the gold ring to the relief agency on consignment to sell and keep 80 percent of the proceeds to fund the relief agency's good deeds. He wanted to keep only 20 percent for him-



self to pay for transit out of Mordor to a sunny location where he'd been told the exposure to sunlight would help his twisted, deformed body produce vitamin D, which he needed to regain his health.

Now, it's obvious that the ring is quite valuable because many in Mordor would take by force and great harm what they cannot buy. You see, there's not enough cash in Mordor to adequately compensate the one who bears the ring, so selling the ring in Mordor isn't an option. That is why your discretion in this matter is required if no greater harm is to come to the strange little twisted man before a compassionate one among you can be found to offer his warm-hearted help to protect the sick children from the rain.

The brother-in-law of my second cousin would like to help the strange, poor, wretched, twisted man and help his relief agency as well, but the agency is registered as an NGO with the government of Mordor and isn't allowed to have financial dealings with foreign banks.

My second cousin was asked to help sell the ring using his contacts in this country, but he's still on parole from a prior conviction, and even a minor infraction, like the contravention of the laws of Mordor, could be considered a violation of that parole and could send him back to prison or even cause him to be extradited to Mordor.

I've offered to help, but even though my second cousin was adopted and we're not blood relatives, our family has a strict rule about having financial dealings within the family.

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All we ask in exchange for our placing our full trust in your kindness is that you make a small contribution to the relief agency my second cousin's brother-in-law has started in Mordor, which will, by the way, be fully tax deductible both in the United States and in Mordor.



This rule derives from an ugly incident many years ago when a nephew fed a slug into a parking meter and used the quarter he'd been given to buy a straw grass mat. His aunt was arrested and her car confiscated when the authorities discovered the deception. As a result of this incident, no one in the family has ever again trusted another blood relative with money.

So you see, we're left with only you, the gentle and kind-hearted readers of this magazine, to bring solace to the strange twisted little man and the sick children of Mordor. The brother-in-law of my second cousin has agreed to share 30 percent of the value of the ring with the first one of you who agrees to accept delivery of the ring and keep it safe outside of Mordor until he concludes the sale of the ring in the United States, which has already been arranged and is just waiting on delivery. You'll have no financial responsibility, and any expenses you incur in this endeavor will be fully compensated.

It's estimated that the ring is worth

well over 1 billion euros. In U.S. dollars at today's rate of exchange, that's more than \$1.2 billion. That would mean that the strange little twisted man would receive \$240 million, which he'll use in his worldwide search for vitamin D, my second cousin's brother-in-law would receive \$600 million to provide for the poor ravaged children of Mordor, and you would receive \$360 million for your own personal use as an expression of our thankfulness for your kindness.

All we ask in exchange for our placing our full trust in your kindness is that you make a small contribution to the relief agency my second cousin's brother-in-law has started in Mordor, which will, by the way, be fully tax deductible both in the United States and in Mordor. We ask that you consider only 1 percent of the moneys you will receive as your share of the sale of the ring. You can forward this \$3.6 million to me, and I will keep it safe until such time as you receive your share of the proceeds from the sale of the ring, which will be forwarded to you upon completion of the sale.

Please understand that should I perchance have any blood relatives among the readers of this magazine, for reasons noted above those relatives are not eligible to participate in this endeavor with me.

A Note on the Language of This Article

You may have noticed that the phraseology used in this article seems just a bit more awkward than what you've come to expect as normal from this writer. Well, the reason is that I felt the need to stick particularly close to the ancient Mordorian language used in my second cousin's letter to me, which explained all of the above. Not to have done so would have eliminated all the nuance and subtlety that are an essential part of this sad story of great suffering and need.

In the native language of Mordor, it takes many more words than we use in English to say things. This makes Mordorian a revered storytelling language. A more traditional interpretation of my second cousin's letter by a less appreciative author would have simply been: Send me all your money, and don't tell anybody about it.

And a Final Note

You're probably wondering how many readers of *Contingencies* magazine will actually send me \$3.6 million. To satisfy your curiosity, please send \$1 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. I'll send you a list of everyone who sends me \$3.6 million. If no one does, I will, of course, return your envelope.