



Our Weekly Paid Newsletter

Richard Cluver Predicts

In our 34th year of service to the investing public of South Africa



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Looking back upon the year just passed, the Wall Street Journal reported this week that U.S. companies represented by the Standard & Poors 500 Index raised record high cash amounts from bond and equity markets which could set them on a spending binge in 2021.

Quoting Jefferies Global Research & Strategy which is a widely respected source of thought leadership across the financial markets, the WSJ reports that S&P 500 companies ended 2020 with record amounts of cash as a percentage of total assets which could unleash capital expenditure, dividends, share buybacks and M&A activity.

Meanwhile, Business Day reported this week that the bosses of two of SA's top investment banking houses, Investec and RMB, expect record low equity valuations and the global search for yield to embolden foreign investors to pursue deals such as mergers and acquisitions.

"If you look at the SA component [that has exposure to the local economy] of the JSE, despite the recent rise it does look relatively cheap," said RMB CEO James Formby.

"I think the search for yield is going to continue to divert money from low-yielding debt instruments into equity, and at some point, that will mean attention will come to undervalued SA assets."

Formby's comments were echoed by Eldad Friedman, co-head of Investec's investment banking division, who said "it won't be long" before foreigners become interested in potentially acquiring SA assets.

"Even though interest rates in the world's largest economies are beginning to normalise, they are expected to remain near zero for some time, putting pressure on bond yields and thrusting cheap assets in emerging markets into the spotlight.

"A few weeks ago, JP Morgan published a report analysing just how cheap SA Inc stocks — those with substantial exposure to the local economy — had become in relation to companies of a similar size in other parts of the world, and on a historical basis.

"For example, Nedbank is trading at nearly eight times trailing earnings, compared with about 13 times three years ago.

"Shoprite's price-earnings ratio has dropped by a quarter over the past three years, while Barloworld's valuation on the same basis has dropped from just over 20 times to 12 times, according to Bloomberg data.

"The view was corroborated by a research note put out by BNP Paribas on Wednesday.

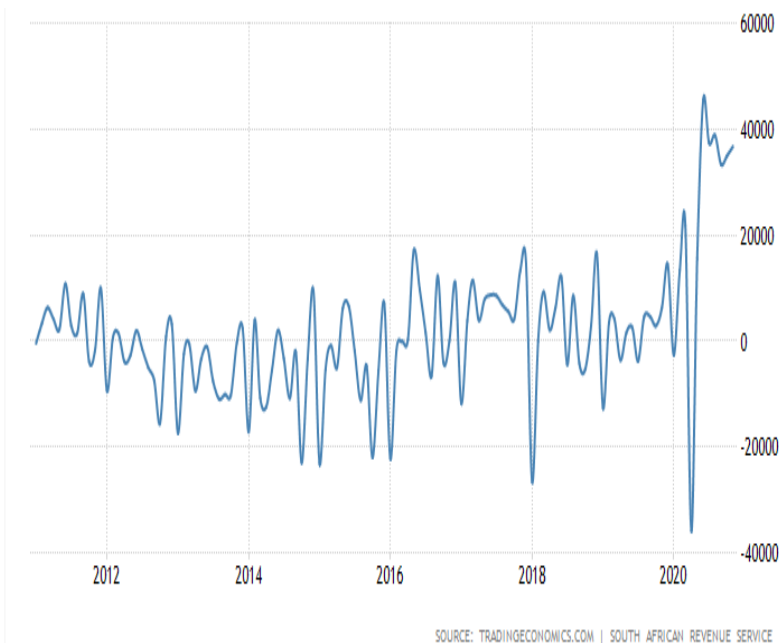
"A rebounding Chinese economy, abundant global liquidity, and a weaker dollar (propping up industrial and precious metals prices) and lower-for-longer domestic inflation and policy rates all lay the basis for further trade and current account surpluses, a well-supported bond market and a relatively favourable rand asset price performance in 2021," the French bank said.

Well, what does this mean for the South African market? Let's start by noting that the Chinese economic rebound has been good for us for many months now. According to SARS, South Africa's trade surplus rose to ZAR 36.7 billion in November of 2020 from a downwardly revised ZAR 34.9 billion in the previous month and beating market expectations of a ZAR 23 billion surplus.

Imports declined at a faster 9.7 percent to ZAR 102 billion, dragged down by reduced acquisitions in all categories, especially original equipment components (-39 percent) and precious metals & stones (-50 percent). At the same time, exports fell 6.2 percent to ZAR 138.7 billion, amid lower shipments of precious metals & stones (-18 percent); vegetable products (-26 percent) and vehicles & transport equipments (-8 percent). Sales rose mostly to China (11.6 percent), Germany (11.1 percent) and the US (8.5 percent), while purchases grew primarily from China (23.8 percent) and Germany (7.3 percent).

In fact, as the graph on the right makes clear, our balance of trade has mostly been favourable since early in 2016 but, with the exception of April has been climbing steeply during the past year.

In fact, were it not for government's excessive spending which is now eating up 65.6 percent of GDP and a deficit that is expected to grow to R370.5-billion in the current financial year, we might be described as enjoying a booming economy which, if we could dispense with items like BEE and the extreme difficulty that employers face when needing to fire employees who do not pull their weight, would make us very attractive to foreign investors.

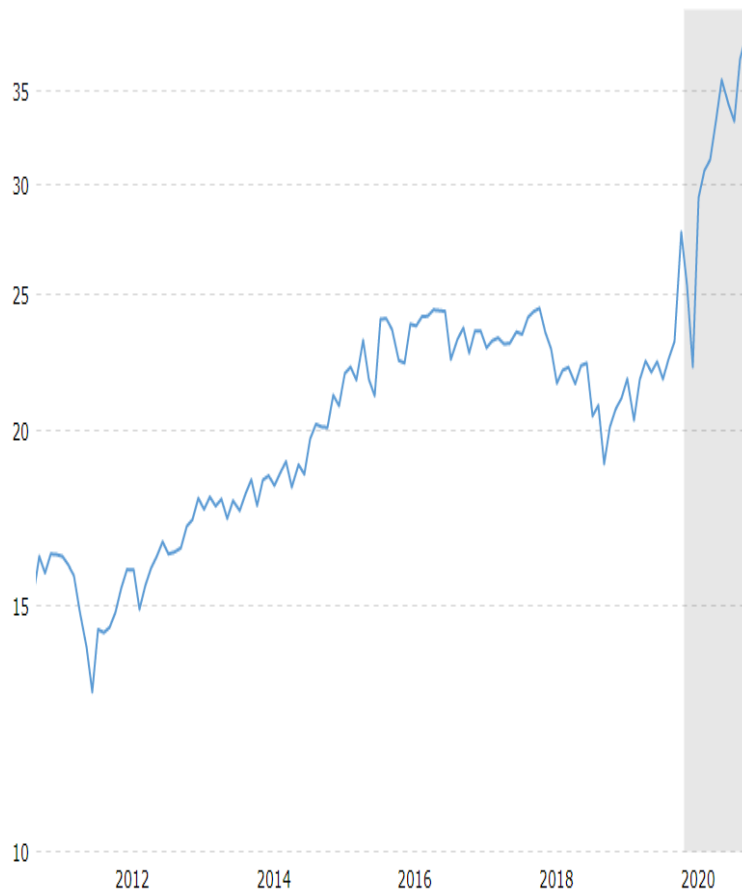


Such problems do not, of course, particularly concern foreigners seeking value in our share prices since they are not actually planning to set up business here. But the fact that the average JSE Blue Chip share is currently standing at a price earnings ratio of just 9.3 percent when the average of New York's Standard and Poors 500 Index shares is 34.34 clearly makes our market mouth wateringly cheap.

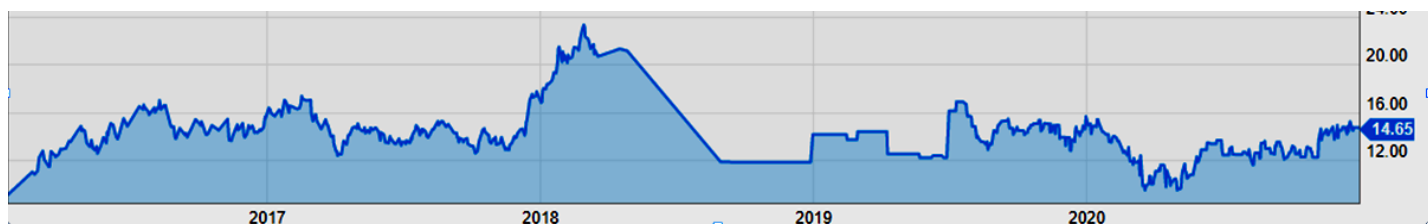
US investors are, furthermore, growing increasingly concerned that there is a bubble forming in their own market. The current S&P500 10-year P/E Ratio is 34.34. This is 72% above the modern-era market average of 19.6, putting the current P/E over 1 standard deviation above the modern-era average and clearly indicating that the market is overvalued.

I am sure most readers require no explanation, but I am going to give it to you anyway by explaining that in essence, the price-to-earnings ratio indicates the dollar amount a US investor needs to invest in a company in order to receive one dollar of that company's earnings....and ditto, of course, Rands to receive a Rand or Pounds to receive a Pound. This is why the P/E is sometimes referred to as the price multiple because it shows how much investors are willing to pay per dollar of earnings. If a company was currently trading at a P/E multiple of 20x, the interpretation is that an investor is willing to pay \$20 for \$1 of current earnings.

The chart on the right shows how the S&P500 average PE has risen steadily since its September 2011 low of 13.01 to its current second highest peak in recorded history; hardly surprising since the US Federal Reserve has in the past year allowed a 20 percent increase in the amount of dollars circulating in the world.



In stark contrast, the graph below tracks the JSE average PE ratio over the past five years during which time it has largely gone sideways:



Viewed simplistically, if you divide 34.34 by our Blue-Chip average of 9.3 you could conclude that Wall Street is currently 3.7 times costlier than the JSE and that, if international guidance researchers like Jefferies Global Research & Strategy are advising their clients to consider moving a defensive portion of their capital into Developing World investments, then our quality shares are surely in for a major boost in the coming months.

Meanwhile, respected US investment commentators have moved beyond simple warnings of a looming market bust. I have attached a column by respected former Wall Street trader Jared Dillian who I sometimes include in my free monthly '**Investor**', magazine. While it is clearly a marketing plug for the service he offers, the facts he offers cannot lightly be dismissed and they do paint an alarming picture of the US economy today and so I urge you to read it.

It, and many other advisory columns like it, are currently gravely unsettling millions of US investors who have already been shaken to the core by events like the storming of their Capitol and the mobilisation of the US National Guard in the firm expectation of further trouble. So you should not be surprised if the JSE soon starts to respond to foreign buying, reversing the outflow which, according to the most recent Reserve Bank figures released in September showed that during the quarter ended June last year non-residents disposed of bonds worth 41.7 billion rand in the second quarter and sold 13.1 billion rand in equities.

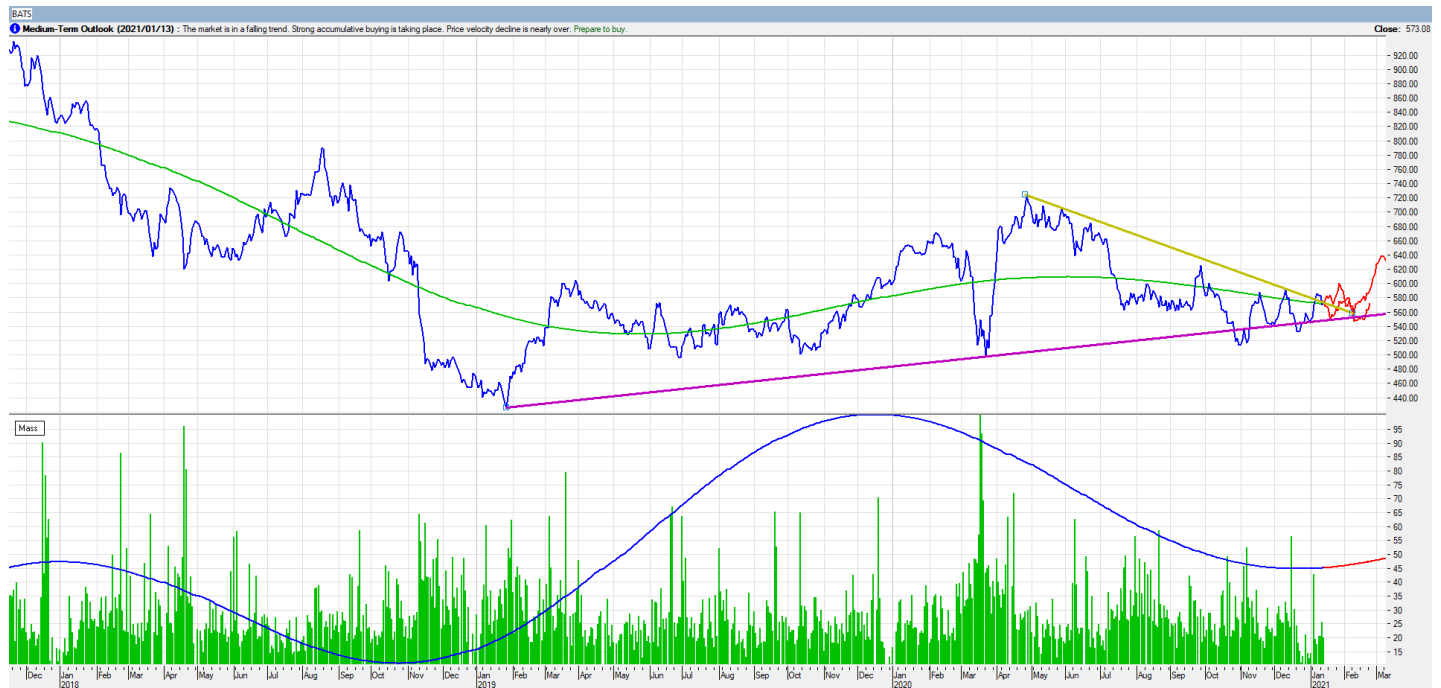
So which shares are cheap right now? In the first column of the table on the right you can see that steady dividend payers like British American Tobacco are cheap as chips right now.

Furthermore, technical analysis suggests that its price decline in the face of the company being committed to buying back its own shares in considerable quantities, has created a chart pennant formation which is normally a pre-breakout signal and ShareFinder's artificial intelligence price projection system suggests the likelihood of a ten percent gain in the immediate future.

Beneath the pennant I have also reproduced our proprietary Mass indicator which makes it clear that dispersal selling has now reached a cyclic low and is accordingly poised to begin rising.

Name	PE	5YrEarn	10YrDiv
Averages:	13.1	136.19	23.03
Blue Chip Index Average:	9.3	215.82	23.03
Rising Star Index Average:	17.6	40.09	0.00
—Grand Old Favourites—			
Group Avg.	14.8	15.96	15.22
STANDARD BANK GROUP L...	9.2	6.13	9.15
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBA...	9.8	34.19	19.01
KAP INDUSTRIAL HLDG LTD	25.3	7.56	17.49
—Mid-Cap Companies—			
Group Avg.	27.6	967.71	56.22
HUDACO INDUSTRIES LTD	7.7	3,859.79	4.14
ZEDER INVESTMENTS LIM...	32.0	0.00	211.15
REUNERT ORD	32.2	3.48	4.89
EMIRA PROPERTY FUND LTD	38.5	7.57	4.70
—Tightly Held Mid-Cap Companies—			
Group Avg.	0.0	51.13	0.51
STEFANUTTI STOCKS HLD...	0.0	51.13	0.51
—Blue Chips—			
Group Avg.	6.4	132.74	19.82
NETWORK HEALTHCARE H...	-36...	20.60	13.34
MARSHALL MONTEAGLE PLC	-64.1	74.83	24.35
BARLOWORLD LTD	-34.8	0.03	31.13
LONDON FINANCE _INVEST...	-11.8	21.38	26.41
PSG GROUP LIMITED	-4.6	9.12	23.99
RMB HLDG LTD	0.4	7.95	17.01
SABVEST LTD	4.7	3,265.44	43.02
NEDCOR LTD	7.7	4.36	12.66
AFROCENTRIC INVESTMEN...	8.3	8.97	12.75
AECI LTD.	8.6	6.79	29.74
CLIENTELE LIMITED	8.8	5.97	12.21
AFRIMAT LTD.	11.7	22.20	14.22
ADVTECH LTD.	11.9	14.12	6.39
JSE LTD	12.8	4.12	20.89
GROWTHPOINT PROP LTD	15.0	1.33	6.74
MONDI PLC.	15.0	15.18	42.24
AVI LTD	15.5	6.30	27.92
FIRSTRAND LTD	16.2	7.92	21.72
ITALTILE LTD	17.3	12.01	54.31
THE SPAR GROUP LTD	17.4	8.13	11.14
REMGRO LTD	17.8	4.19	12.15
HOSKEN CONS INVEST LTD	18.4	7.00	8.36
THE FOSCHINI GROUP LTD	20.7	5.69	4.65
TIGER BRANDS LTD ORD	22.1	1.43	4.83
CLICKS GROUP LIMITED	35.0	14.90	20.00
CAPITEC BANK HLDGS LTD	39.9	19.74	21.43

So I don't expect fireworks in the immediate future; rather a slow warming up. However, do note that ShareFinder, in the small strategy report at the top of the graph, suggests it's time to buy:



It is important, meanwhile, to consider that foreign investors currently view South Africa with suspicion and correctly so. The ANC's mishandling of the economy has brought us to our lowest economic ebb since the era of the 1980s sovereign debt crisis and the Rubicon speech which took us into sovereign debt default. Repeated downgrades by the international ratings agencies have, furthermore, only served to confirm the growing foreign opinion that we might soon again go into default.

Surprisingly, however, the behavior of the Rand over the past year does not reflect that concern. While the yellow ultra-long-term trend line in the graph below indicates how the Rand has steadily lost value at a compound annual average rate of 5.9 percent throughout our years of "democracy" since the ANC came to power and the red trend line shows that the rate of loss was increasing since Cyril Ramaphosa ascended to the Presidency, between April 2020 and mid-December it began strengthening in a dramatic fashion, gaining at an annualised rate of 22 percent compound.

Sadly, those gains have dramatically reversed since the Rand reached its strongest value relative to the US dollar at R14.5172 on December 18 and, ShareFinder projects that it will continue weakening at least until the middle of February when the program predicts a value of R15.8248:



Sadly too, South Africa cannot claim any credit for the strengthening of the Rand for, as my last graph illustrates, precisely the same thing has been happening to the Australian dollar relative to the US dollar over the past decade. It has been losing value at a compound annual average rate of 4.4 percent compared with our loss rate of 5.9 percent and, from the end of March it also began strengthening dramatically. So, in truth, what we were seeing was neither our Rand nor the Aussie Dollar strengthening, but actually the US Dollar weakening!



Indeed, astute investors have for a long time been concerned about US indebtedness and my final graph shows that, Relative to the Swiss Franc, the US Dollar has been losing value since April 2019. However, as all three currency graphs make clear, the trend has begun to reverse and ShareFinder expects the US Dollar to regain strength for most of this year:



Do enjoy your weekend

The month ahead:

New York's SP500: I correctly predicted a Festive Season market downturn which I still see lasting until the end of January.

Nasdaq: I correctly predicted the Nasdaq would peak before New Year followed by declines at least until the first week of January followed by gains until June. Now the recovery has begun but I nevertheless expect further weakness until the 18th.

London's Footsie: I correctly warned of weakness ahead and I continue to expect that the market will continue on down until the third week of February albeit with a brief recovery from about January 25.

Germany's Dax: I correctly predicted short-term weakness which I now see lasting until January 14. Now I see the beginning of gains until early April.

France's Cac 40: I correctly predicted a slight weakening which I now see lasting until late February ahead of the next gain to mid-April.

Hong Kong's Hangsen: I correctly predicted an upward spike which has now very likely reached its peak and I now expect a very volatile declining trend until August.

Japan's Nikkei: I correctly predicted the beginning of the next up-phase which should last until late-March.

Australia's All Ordinaries: I correctly predicted the market was peaking ahead of a long decline which I expect to last until early March followed by a strong up-tick to mid-May and thereafter a fresh bear phase until mid-September.

JSE Top 40 Index: I correctly predicted an up-tick which is probably now over and likely to be followed by weakness until around January 22 after which I sense gains until early February and then it is likely to be down-hill until the end of August.

ShareFinder JSE Blue Chip Index: I correctly predicted a brief up-tick which should be ending now followed by a volatile decline until the end of September.

Gold Bullion: Though I failed to predict this week's sharp decline, I see it as only a blip in a continually rising trend until next October.

The Rand/US Dollar: I correctly predicted the onset of three months of weakness.... until at least mid-April.

Rand/Euro: I correctly predicted weakness. Now I see resumed gains until early September.

The Predicts accuracy rate on a running average basis since January 2001 has been 86.02 percent. For the past 12 months it has been 94.08 percent.

THE FREE MONEY MYTH

Former Wall Street trader Jared Dillian reveals the dangerous trend sabotaging your savings and investment returns today...

And how you can protect yourself from it.



Jared Dillian,
Former head of ETFs at Lehman Brothers.

Dear Reader,

Through no fault of your own...

And perhaps without you even realizing it...

A dangerous financial trend has been affecting your money—your savings *and* your investments.

Already, you've likely lost anywhere from hundreds to *thousands* of dollars because of it...

(You'll see how in a moment)

And that's just the start.

Because as one source reported, it could end up costing you tens of thousands of dollars—*annually*—in retirement.

That's why it's critical you pay *close* attention to this short message...

So you can understand what this trend is...

How it's affecting your money...

And most importantly, what you can do to *protect your money*—and even use this trend as an opportunity to *profit*—like I and other in-the-know investors are doing.

With that said...

[Let me show you exactly what's happening...](#)

Starting with the document you can see here.



What you're looking at is the [CARES Act](#), signed into law on March 27, 2020, in response to the pandemic.

This \$2.2 trillion stimulus package was the largest in *history*:

- Businesses received \$500 billion in handouts...
- And millions of Americans were sent \$1,200 checks.

Sounds like a good thing, right?

But where did all this money come from?

How could a country with a *trillion-dollar* deficit... pay out an extra *\$2 trillion*?

The answer is simple:

The Federal Reserve, with only a few mouse clicks, can create new dollars—essentially printing money—which then gets injected into the commercial banking system.

And that's what it did—hurtling the country toward a \$3.3 trillion annual deficit, the largest since 1945.

But the Fed wasn't done yet...

Because meanwhile, the stock market was in freefall...



And so, it continued printing *even more* money just to prop the economy up.

Today, we're *already* experiencing the consequences of this reckless money printing...

Which is why, as I mentioned...

Your money is *already* being affected.

How can I be so sure?

Just take a look at your last grocery bill.

As you may have noticed...

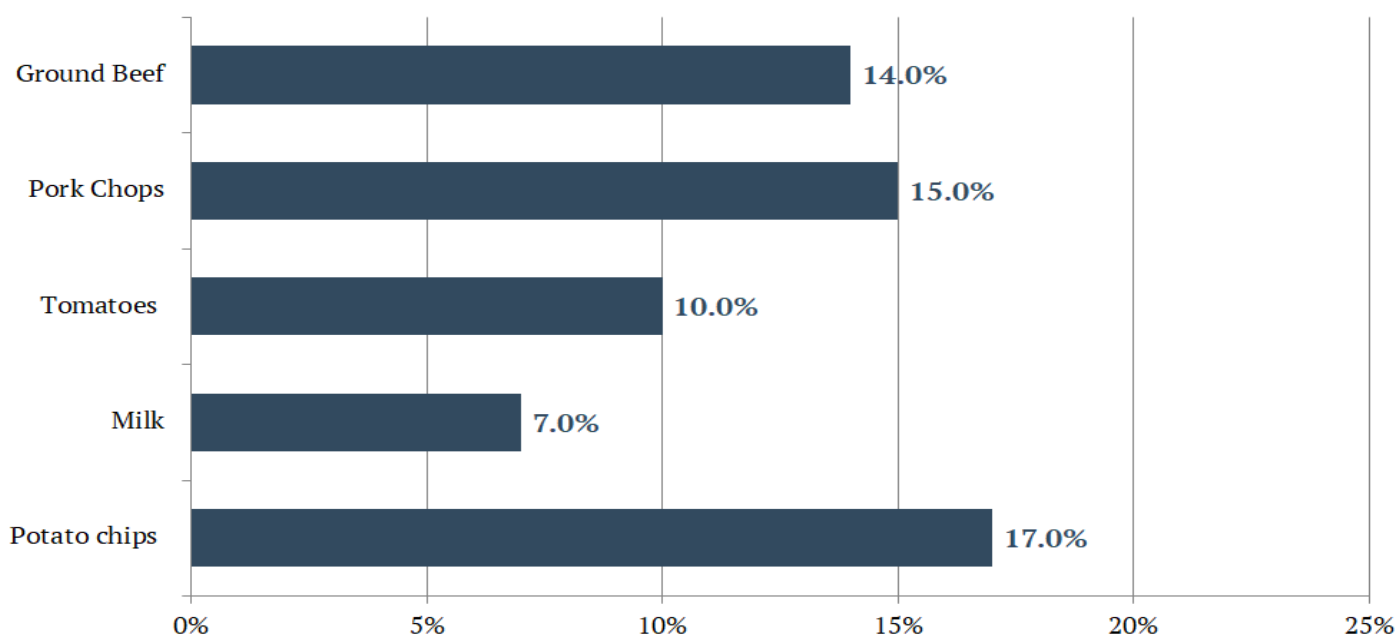
The prices of groceries have been skyrocketing lately.

From only July 2019 to July 2020:

- Ground beef has gone up 14%...
- Pork chops spiked 15%...
- Tomatoes jumped 10%...
- Milk rose 7%...
- And potato chips shot up 17%.

Price increase of groceries: July 2019 - July 2020

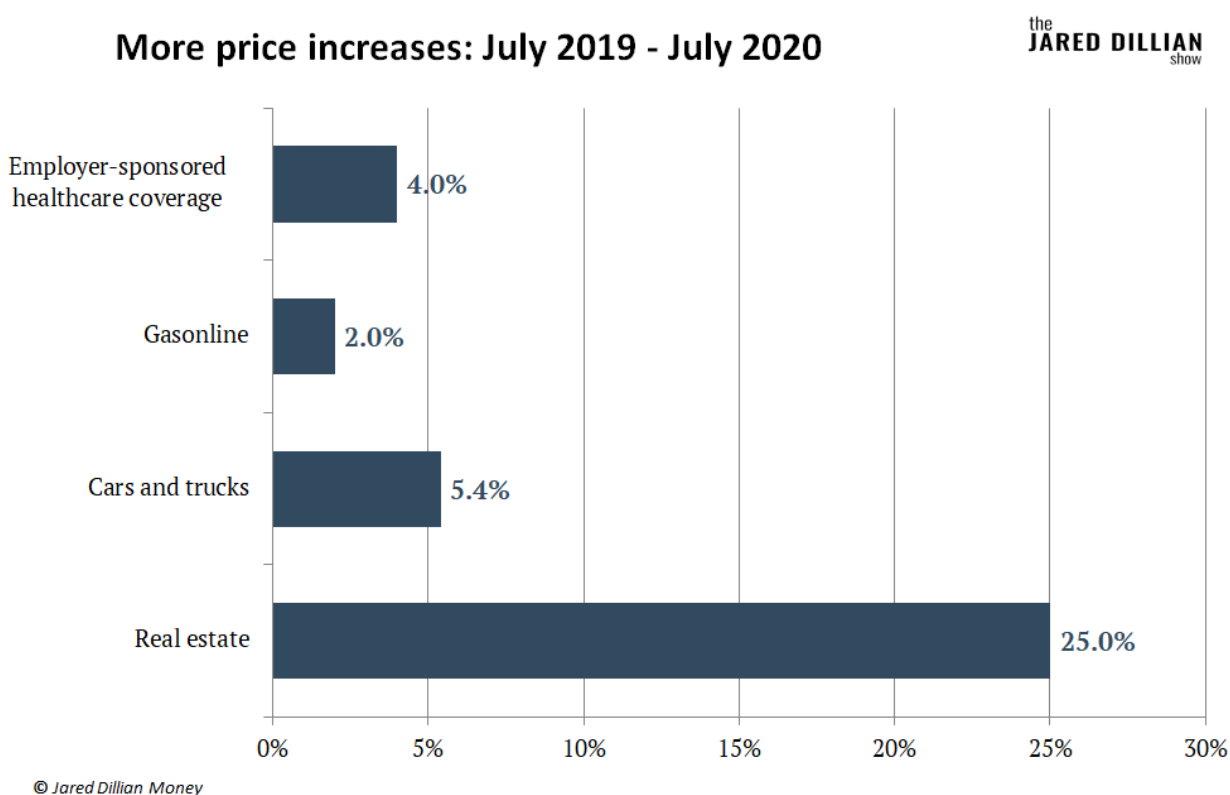
the
JARED DILLIAN
show



© Jared Dillian Money

And it's not just groceries:

- Employer-sponsored healthcare coverage is now 4% more expensive...
- Gasoline jumped 2%...
- The cost of used cars and trucks surged 5.4%...
- And the price of real estate has soared across the country, rocketing as high as 25% in some states, like California.



What in the world is happening?

In a word:

Inflation.

You see, as the Federal Reserve increases the money supply by printing more and more dollars...

The less valuable each of those dollars becomes.

In other words, they lose their purchasing power—which is exactly what's happening to the dollars in your bank account... and your wallet.

This means:

1. **Not only is the stuff you buy every day becoming more and more expensive...**
2. **Your investments will have to perform that much better if you want to keep your retirement projections on track—and have the ability to put your kids through college without going into massive amounts of debt.**

We currently have an inflation rate of 1.2%, according to the most recent US Labor Department data.

But as you may have read recently on *The Motley Fool*, even an inflation rate of 2.5% could:



That's a hell of a lot of money, isn't it?

But as I said before, I'm going to show you how I and other investors are not only protecting our money from inflation but taking advantage of it to *profit*.

First though, I want to quickly explain why...

America's inflation will only *soar* from here.

That's right—despite the fact even an inflation rate of 2.5% could cost you tens of thousands of dollars in retirement if you're not prepared...

The way things are shaping up, I wouldn't be surprised if we saw inflation hit *10%* over the coming years.

There are a few reasons for that.

First...

The Fed *wants* higher inflation.

You see, its long-term goal is to have inflation hover around 2%...

But because we had a long period of low inflation, it now wants inflation of 3% to 4%, with the idea that things will shake out to 2% on average.

But do you *really* believe the Fed can goose inflation up to 4%... and then simply snap its fingers to stop it?

Not a chance...

Especially when you factor in...

Today's unprecedented monetary stimulus.



As you know, the first round of stimulus saw the Fed print an astronomical \$2.2 trillion, pushing America into a \$3.3 trillion deficit.

You've already experienced the effects of that, in the form of higher prices.

But that was only the beginning.

On December 29, 2020, the Treasury Department began sending out the *second* round of stimulus...

And Biden has already promised a third.

Will we see a fourth round? And a fifth?

As this money gets spent, it will result in one thing:

More dollars chasing the same goods.

And when that happens, the prices of the things you buy are going to skyrocket even more.

This is going to be compounded by a simple fact:

When people are free from the constraints of COVID, they're going to spend like *crazy*.

Millions of Americans are going to rush to go on vacations...

Eat out at restaurants...

And spend money in shops, on gym memberships, and on transport to visit family.

In short, we're going to feel the full brunt of trillions of extra dollars sloshing around the system.

That's why it's so important you make the right moves with your money *now*...

And why I want to show you how...

You can protect yourself from inflation—and profit.

Now, I know that idea might seem strange at first.

Most people have *no clue* how to protect themselves from inflation, let alone profit from it.

But the truth is, **profiting from inflation is one of the few ways you can protect yourself from it.**

You see, inflation is impossible to escape—bar moving your family to another country, or shifting your money to a foreign market.

You can't stop it affecting your dollars and your investment returns.

That's why, it's absolutely critical you understand how to *profit* from it instead.

Again, most people don't have the faintest idea how to do this...

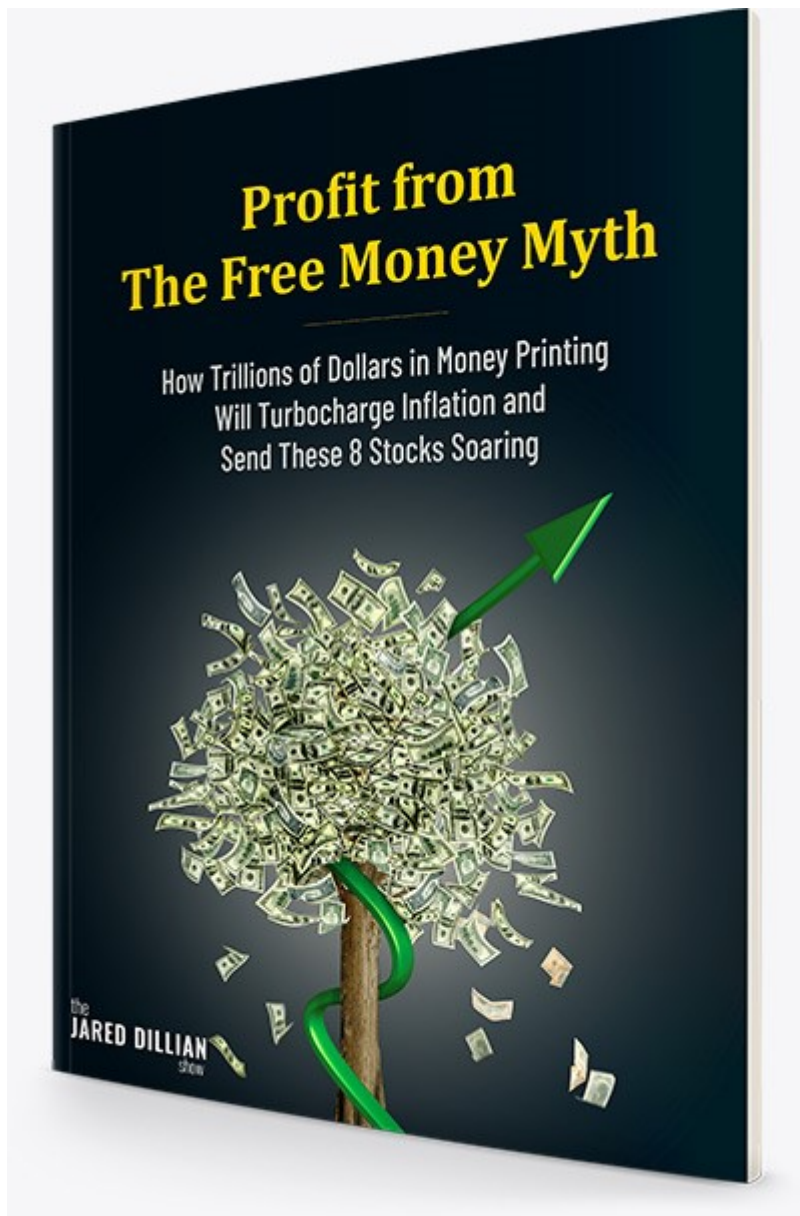
Which is why 99% of folks are going to do one of two things:

1. Put their money in the entirely wrong places. Or...
2. Sit on their hands and do *nothing*.

Personally, I can't bear the thought of this happening to you, which is why my team and I have been hard at work these past few months, putting together a plan to help you *profit* from inflation, and not get ruined by it.

We've carefully detailed this plan and condensed it into a special report called:

Profit from the Free Money Myth



And I know in my heart, this will be the most important document you ever read.

Now, as I mentioned...

I'm already profiting from inflation.

I just recently made this comment while discussing inflation on a call with a couple of fellow investors:

“[This is] the kind of environment I do really well in. I’ve already made gross amounts of money, and we’re still very early in this.”

And I'm not the only one taking steps to profit from it.

US news outlet *Axios* reported on August 3rd, 2020:



How is this possible?

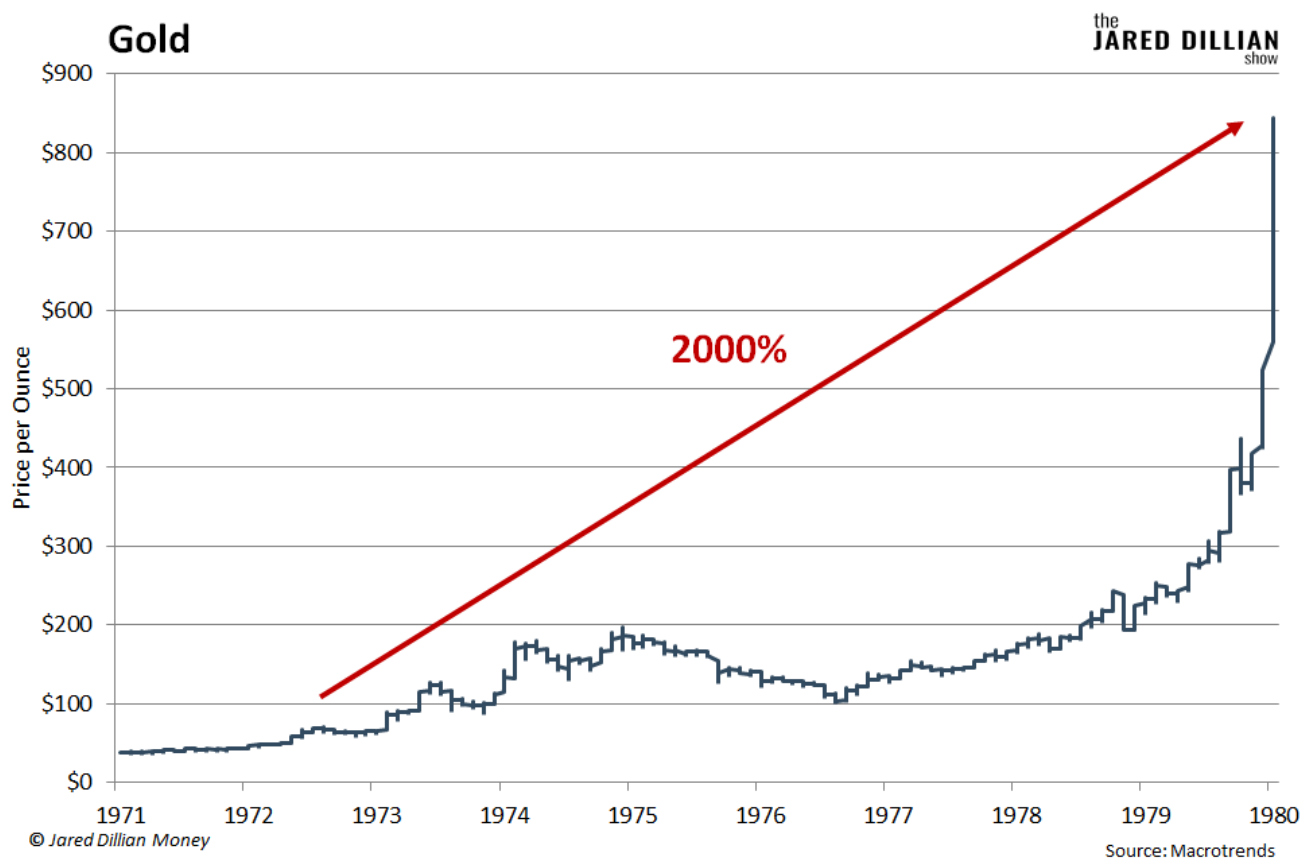
The answer is simple:

In times of high inflation, there are always certain assets that do extremely well.

Gold, for example.

People buy gold when they're afraid their dollars will be worth less in the future.

That's why, when inflation reached as high as 14% in America in the 1970s, gold skyrocketed over 2,000%:



That's enough to turn every \$5,000 invested into \$105,000.

Incredible, right?

And get this...

Inflation doesn't even have to happen for you to make money from it...

You can still rake in huge profits even if all we get is the *fear* of inflation.

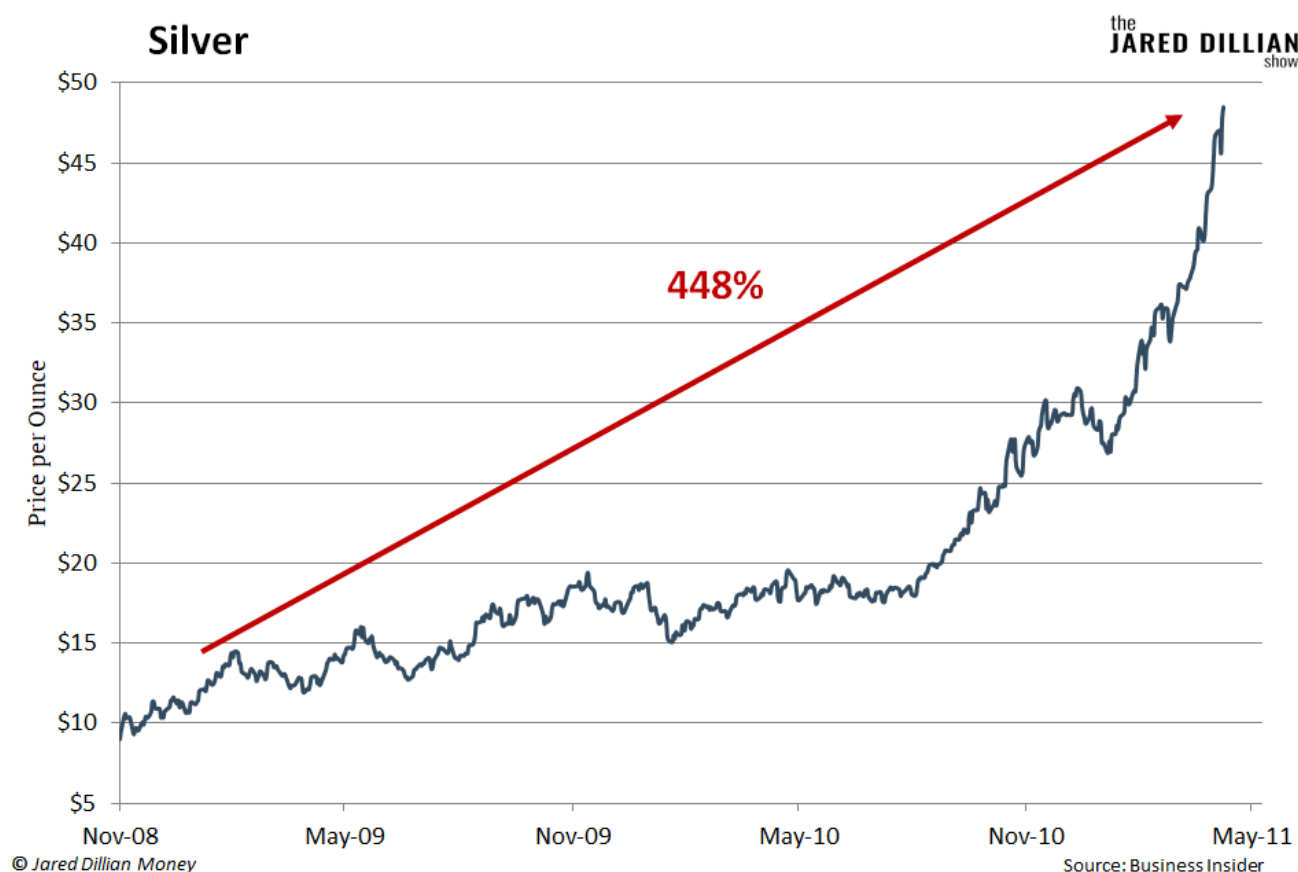
Like in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, for example.

The Fed had cut interest rates to near zero...

Causing investors—worried about inflation—to pour their money into silver.

The inflation never materialized...

But that didn't stop silver from spiking 448% in less than three years:



Turning every \$5,000 into \$27,400.

Now, you might be wondering...

Do I recommend you put your money in gold and silver?

It *would* be a much better move than most investors are making...

(In fact, you'll discover the best ways to buy—and how *not* to buy—gold and silver in ***Profit from the Free Money Myth.***)

But there are far better options available to you.

Gold mining stocks, for example, typically outperform the base metal by as much as *three times*.

Surely you wouldn't want to leave that kind of money on the table.

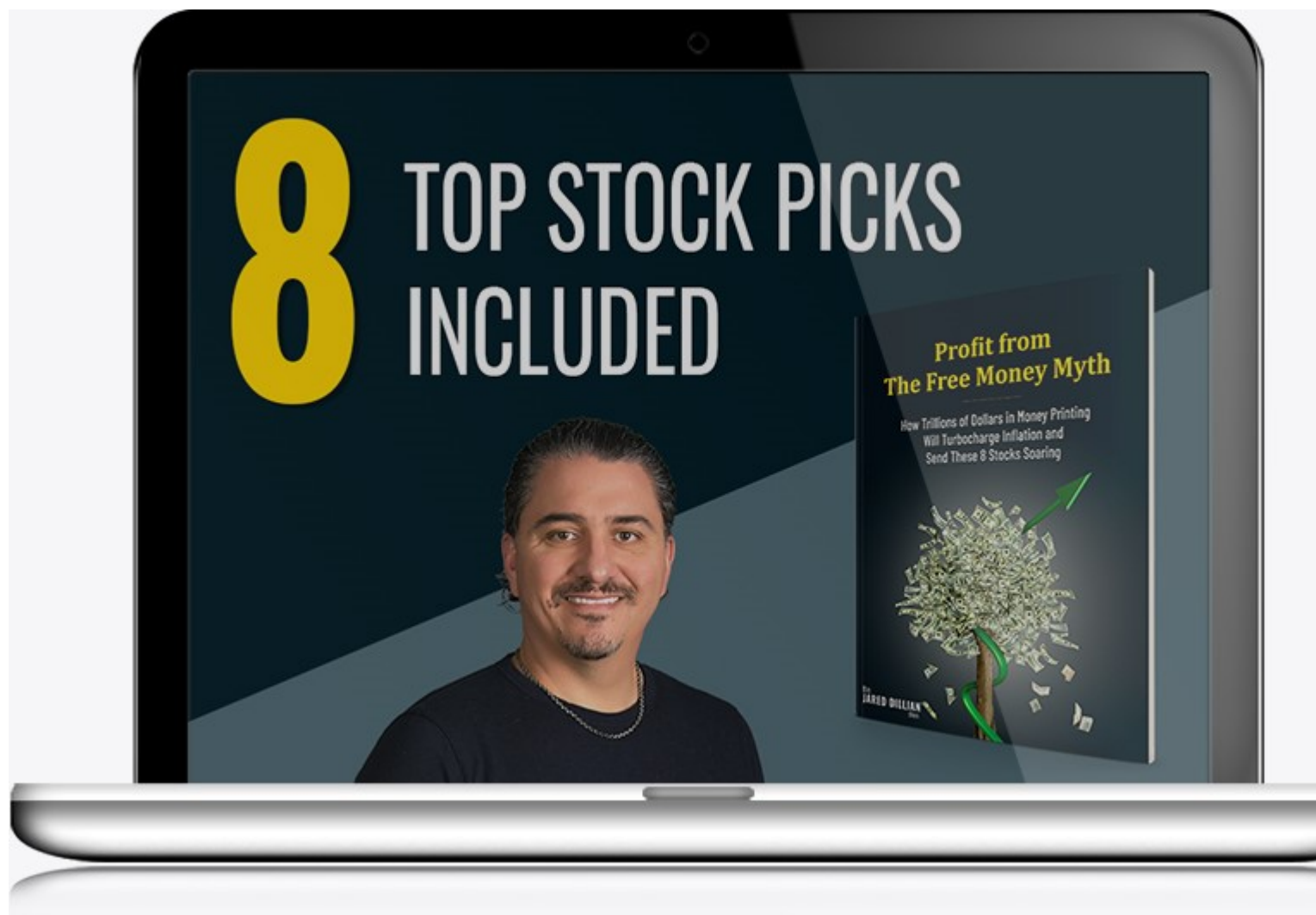
That's why, as soon as you claim your special report...

- **You'll discover my favorite precious metals miner right now, which I'm projecting could *quadruple* your money.**

And that's just the start.

You'll also discover:

- My prediction for the top-performing sector of the next 5 to 10 years...
- How the Free Money Myth is propelling the US toward higher inflation...
- Why it only takes the fear of inflation for your inflation trades to work...
- **The ticker symbols of *seven more* stocks set to skyrocket as inflation heats up—I'm talking potential triple-digit winners.**



Together, that's *eight* of my top picks you'll be getting...

And each one has the potential to generate incredible returns.

Now, you might be wondering...

*How much does **Profit from the Free Money Myth** cost?*

Well, I originally wanted to charge \$499...

An extraordinary value considering you could quadruple your money with just *one* of the stocks inside.

But the thing is...

This crisis is *already* affecting your money...

And if you don't prepare now, you could lose so much more.

That's why I've decided to make it as easy as possible for you to say "Yes" today.

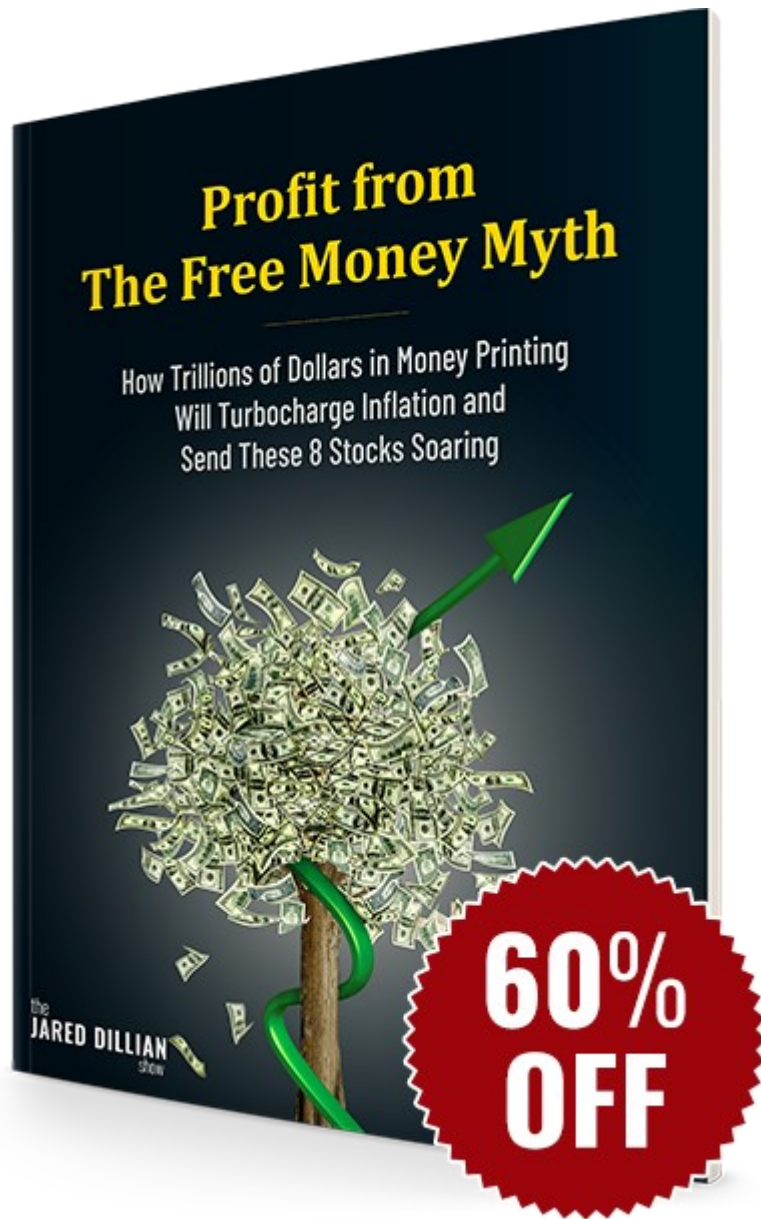
If you claim your special report now, you won't pay \$499.

You won't even pay \$450.

Instead, I'm going to give you an incredible **60% discount**.

That means, with only a small **\$199 investment**, it's all yours.

Now it's up to you.



By creating ***Profit from the Free Money Myth***—and slashing the price in half for you—I’ve done all I can to prepare you for what’s unfolding in our country.

But it’s your decision whether you’ll take me up on my offer or not.

The way I see it, you’ve got two choices.

Will you:

1. Continue to let America’s rising inflation eat into your savings? Or...

2. Use it as an opportunity to collect huge profits—like I and other in-the-know investors are doing?

If you chose option #2, *Congratulations.*

All you have to do is claim your copy of *Profit from the Free Money Myth*—with your 60% savings—by filling out the simple form below.

I have absolute confidence this will be the most life-changing financial move you ever make.

Account Access Already have an account? [Log in](#)

Business Leadership SA's Busi Mavuso tackles government's vaccine strategy in a scathing letter

By Ed Stoddard

Busi Mavuso, the CEO of Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA), has joined the rising chorus of criticism over the government's mishandling of the vaccine roll-out — the most important initiative to save both lives and the economy.

"Despite South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare having secured a contract to make 300 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the government had ordered none. Unlike many other developed and developing countries, South Africa had not negotiated any 'advance market commitments' with manufacturers to buy vaccines conditional on their successful approval following trials," she wrote in [her weekly letter](#).

This does seem inexplicable, especially when one considers the command economy and control freaks who run departments such as trade and industry. How could they have not insisted on a local quota?

"By the first week of January, the embarrassing lack of vaccine strategy had become clear, and both government and the private sector were shocked into action," she wrote. Noting that 1.5 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine have since been procured from Indian producers, Mavuso pointed out that "it is far from enough".

"Some have suggested our slow development of a vaccine strategy is because it is unaffordable. This is obviously wrong. The cost to the economy of not vaccinating is what is unaffordable. Government tax revenue in the current financial year (to February 2021) is projected to be R300-billion lower than it had budgeted for originally. That is because of the pandemic. Every day we lose in bringing this to an end means substantial costs to the country. A full vaccine programme has been projected to cost around R12-billion, including the logistics of distribution. That is a straightforward investment with a high positive yield."

That is the key point. There is no better investment in the face of the pandemic, and it is frankly not much more than the R10.5-billion the government is going to throw down the drain in what is likely to be another fruitless bid to prop up South African Airways. The return on the investment includes thousands or more lives saved with the added bonus of a return to normality, giving the economy a chance to grow and generate jobs again.

As Mavuso further noted: "The real problem here is a management one. Our whole response to the pandemic has been fundamentally short-termist. That is understandable — we have been firefighting. But we seem to have ignored that while we are confronting the urgent and immediate challenges in dealing with the pandemic, we must simultaneously be applying ourselves to the medium- and long-term implications. A vaccine strategy should have been worked out six months ago."

That is a searing indictment. Powerful ministers zeroed in on pet peeves such as smoking, while missing the SOS smoke signals rising from the economic wreckage of lockdown, which screamed for longer-term, well-crafted solutions, not the blunt instruments of nanny-state social control. It goes without saying that the ANC owns this mess.

The private sector could also have done more — Mavuso pointedly said that it was also “shocked into action”. But the government has piloted much of the response to the pandemic and many critics would say it should allow the private sector more space to take its own initiatives.

BLSA’s voice matters because its members are leaders from many of South Africa’s biggest and most well-known businesses, including all the major banks and several of the big mining companies. It has basically said the government has dropped the ball on one of, if not, the most pressing issues facing the country. **BM**