



**WOODS:** Now, I know, because I've read so many interviews you've given, I've read a lot of your stuff over the years, that I can talk to you about just about anything and yet for some reason, I just think you're my "the world is going to hell in a handbasket" guy. Like when something like this virus is going around, I think, I wonder what's going through Doug Casey's head about this. So I have some specific questions, but maybe — let's see, we're recording this on March 30th, 2020, and it'll be released March 31st, 2020. So can you tell me just what are your overall impressions of what's happening in the world right now as of today?

**CASEY:** Well, perhaps we're reaching the grand climax of a downhill run that Western civilization's been on since the start of World War I. Technology has continued to advance and even accelerated at the rate of Moore's law, but all of the things that make for a civilization actually have been deteriorating for that period of time. So this isn't a discussion we're going to have about long-term historical trends. Let me put it this way, Tom. The financial crisis that started in 2008, view it as entering the leading edge of a gigantic hurricane. And we went through that leading edge, and you'll recall it was quite scary and unpleasant in 2008 and '09 and '10, and we've been in the eye of the storm since then. Big hurricane, big eye. But now we're entering the trailing edge of the storm, and it's going to be much longer lasting and much worse and much different than what we had back in 2008 and '09 and '10. I'm sorry that this is all going to be blamed on the current coronavirus hysteria, however, because that's just the accidental pin that broke the bubble, but I'm sure that this economic disaster that we're facing, financial disaster, economic disaster, political disaster — that's still on the cards — is going to be blamed on this random disease as opposed to the fundamentals which are really causing it.

**WOODS:** But okay, let me jump in, though, there, because somebody could legitimately say this is not some small matter. I mean, they're shutting down huge parts of the economy. They're arbitrarily deciding what's essential, what's non-essential. And just while you and I've been talking, I just got a text from a friend of mine who has an extremely successful business, I mean, just making money hand over fist, and he says, "I had to layoff 27 people last week. Gave a 30% pay cut to my remaining staff. More layoffs ahead. It's been painful." He wasn't going to do that if it hadn't been for what's going on.

**CASEY:** Right. What I'm saying is this, that over the last generation, we've had a lot's of virus scares. We had swine flu, we had bird flu, and there were several others. Okay, so a few hundred or a few thousand people die. Unfortunate, but that's the nature of life on this planet. I think it's wiser to go back to the last major pandemic or perhaps the first major pandemic in the modern world, which was the Spanish flu of 1918 and 1919. Now, adjusted for population — well, about 600,000 Americans died due to that. In today's terms, larger population, it would take about 1.8 million people to die. But still, as much of a disaster as it was, it didn't close down the economy. And there was a recession because it was the end of the war and there were all kinds of distortions during the war that had to be on. And life went on. And that's what should happen now, because we're not in a chaotic postwar environment now. So this is actually quite insane, this is hysteria that's going on.

My understanding is that the coronavirus — and of course, everybody's got an opinion on this based on almost nothing. But even people that are epidemiologists and virologists, people that know about this type of thing, it's hard to get really straight answers. It appears that this

virus is only dangerous to direct contact of people that are well over 60 or 70 or 80 and are in bad health anyway. That's who's dying. That's who's dying in Italy, for instance. It's just old people. They're on death's door anyway. So my view is it's a gigantic hysteria. This is the biggest hysteria, Tom, since the witch hysteria of the 17th century. Nothing comparable to it.

**WOODS:** Well, I don't want to make the episode entirely about the virus itself. I've been talking about that and writing about that, trying to get to the bottom of it. As you say, it's hard to really figure out what's going on. And then meanwhile, there are so many different examples of places where — I mean, look, how do you account for the fact that it's so much deadlier in Italy than it is in Germany? I mean, the Italians and the Germans, they're different, but they're not that different. And it seems to me, either they're recording the deaths differently in terms of what qualifies as a death from the virus. Something is screwy here that the death rate would be so dramatically different.

And then you have cases like Sweden, which despite overwhelming international pressure to shut down and do this and that, lock the country down like they've done in Denmark and Norway, they refuse to do it. They've taken some precautions, but they refuse to do it. They're having what seem to be comparable results. It's way too early to say, but they haven't done these things. And I personally think that the reason there's so much pressure being placed on them is that the so-called public health people locking all these countries down, they don't want there to be a control group that we can compare. They want to just to be: we shut everything down and that's what saved you stupid rubes. That's my view of it.

**CASEY:** A very reasonable possibility, because it's all over the landscape as far as what these stupid governments are doing. Like in Nicaragua, a backward third-world country, they're purposely not doing anything at all. But there's no huge outbreak. In Japan, Korea, China itself, we don't really know. All we really know is what we hear in the news. And of course, I don't believe anything I hear on the news. So I'll go back to what I said. The virus itself: serious? Not very, or not serious. But that's not important. These things come and go. What's important are the second and third generation effects from it, the knock-on effects. People closing down their businesses, that's bad enough and kind of stupid, I think, that we should react the way we did during the Spanish flu 100 years ago. But much more important is what these governments are doing. They're passing new laws and new regulations, and they're going to put in new agencies, God knows what, that will cause permanent distortions in the economy, and they won't go away after the virus goes away. And it will go away. That's the nature of these things.

**WOODS:** I want to talk about money and investing, though, with you, because I want to know at a time like this, I want to know how Doug Casey thinks differently from other people. Like what are you looking at? What kinds of questions are you asking? What are you curious about? What do you want to pursue?

**CASEY:** Okay, well, let's look at the markets, because we don't want to lose the capital that we've accumulated. So, the stock market. It's been in a bubble for the last five or six or seven years, with artificially inflated earnings because corporations have been buying back trillions and trillions of dollars' worth of their stock, hyping it higher, I guess so executives, who are overpaid to start with, can exercise their options. I wouldn't buy the stock market, not to say that it won't have a really good dead cat bounce with this new wave of trillions of dollars that all these governments, including the Trumpites, are printing up. A lot of that's going to go right into the financial market. So I think the stock market likely has a long way to fall in real terms, but they'll probably have a good bounce in there.

The bond market is the real problem. I wouldn't touch a bond with a ten-foot pole, certainly not a government bond. It's actually insane that people are buying negative interest rate bonds in Europe, because bonds are a triple threat to your capital today. They're a fantastic short sale if you're daring enough to do that. Why? Why are they a triple threat? Because, first of all, is the interest rate risk. Interest rates can only go up here for lots of reasons. Second

thing is the currency risk. With these governments creating trillions and trillions of new currency units, the dollar is really going to lose value catastrophically. And the last is the default risk. All these governments are bankrupt. The banks are bankrupt. So yeah, these bonds can all be defaulted on, even before they're inflated out of existence.

So the only cheap place to be, to answer your question, the only thing cheap in the world today, are commodities, which are another risk set. But basically, I've been buying gold for many years. I've been buying it every month. Gold is where you should be. And if you want to speculate, I think a fantastically good speculation now, cyclically, are gold stocks. Crappy industry. Horrible, horrible business. But now, these companies are coining money, and fund managers are going to pile into them. So I think we're looking at a gold bull market, while the rest of — This is what happened during the 1930s, which was deflationary. I'm sorry to rap on like this, Tom.

**WOODS:** Well, I guess what I want to know is how you'd answer people who say: I've been down this "gold is going to do great" road before. I've heard this many times before. Then I buy gold, and nothing happens.

**CASEY:** Yeah, well, that's great. Look, I've been buying gold actually since 1971. So the fact that it was \$35 then and like 1650 or 1600, or whatever it is this morning, it's been okay. Sometimes it's a great speculative vehicle, but it's for savings. It's for prudence. It's for insurance. It's because it's the only financial asset that's not simultaneously somebody else's liability. That's why you should buy gold. And the person that sent that to you is probably the same kind of person that always buys stuff at the top, because they hear it the news. It draws their attention to it, usually after it's run up and it's established a good track record, which is absolutely the wrong reason to buy anything. They buy at the top, and it goes down and they're unhappy. So I'm not surprised.

**WOODS:** I think, by the way, some people bought Bitcoin, because it was in the news, because it seemed like it may —remember? I don't know if it was like a year and a half ago, it just seemed to be rising and rising and rising. And it seemed like it was inexorable that it would continue. And so people got into it who, three days ago, they had no idea what Bitcoin even was, and then suddenly they're buying it.

**CASEY:** Yeah, you're absolutely right. That bubble peaked in early January 2018, actually. I was a late adopter to Bitcoin couldn't figure out. And then I realized it's a transfer mechanism. That's the value real value of Bitcoin. It allows you to transfer money across borders without using banks, without using currencies. Most people don't realize that 75% of the people on this planet live in countries that have basically worthless currencies, block currencies like pulas and kwachas and dirhams, things that are worthless outside their own country. So yeah, Bitcoin is going to continue growing because it is a currency that is not in the state system.

So I got into it late. I did sell at the top. I'm better at selling at the top than anything else, I guess. But I think it's okay to own and buy Bitcoin, because these currencies are going to be destroyed. These governments are going to destroy all the world's currencies. And we can talk about why that is. But listen, I couldn't be more gloomy about what's going to happen to the economy, Tom. Really, it's very, very serious what's going on, having nothing to do with the coronavirus itself. That's just an accidental pin.

**WOODS:** I want to get your thoughts on a couple things, because I've just read articles by you about them. And it has to do with something you just said about people very often buy things at the top, because they didn't know about the things until they got to the top. Then they find out about them in the paper. They decide they want to put their money in it, and then it turns out that's not the best time. How do people spot tops and bottoms just in the market in general?

**CASEY:** Well, you've got to look at these grim dot indicators, book value and price earnings ratios and dividend yield, things of this nature. That's critically important. But to answer your question directly, it's all a matter of psychology. And this is Warren Buffett, who is an idiot savant. I mean, he's a total genius when it comes to money and investing, but everything else he says is garbage as far as I'm concerned. But what he says is quite correct. You have to be brave when others are fearful and fearful when others are brave.

Okay, now, people were excessively brave just a few months ago. They thought that the bubble economy was going to double again. Well, it broke, and I don't think it's going to be reinflated. So they're fearful now. But they still think — I'm in the newsletter business, okay? So I see what people are buying and what kind of advice they like, and people are still way too bullish. They're still looking for stocks to buy. They expect this is going to blow over. I don't think it will. I hope I'm dead wrong, Tom. Listen, if you're in the investment markets, you've got to get used to being dead wrong a lot. I just try not to be too wrong for too long. But this is really, really serious. The public is still too bullish. I think this is going to go on for years. You've got to remember, the famous bubble in 1929 broke, not nearly as serious a bubble as this one, not nearly, it was four years before the market reached its bottom in 1933. So this is going to be similar, I think.

**WOODS:** A lot of times when I talk to you the subject turns to parts of the world where there are opportunities, and you have been sometimes recommending parts of the world that are, shall we say, rather out of the way, that would not be people's first choice to live in. And I wonder since we've spoken last the extent to which that's changed, or are there parts of the world that you're still relatively bullish on compared to other parts?

**CASEY:** Yeah, well listen, for years, I've been suggesting to people that if they're young, they should go to Africa. If I was 30 and wanted to make some money, I would definitely go to Africa, even today. And people say that is insane. So yeah, you're right. Perhaps it's my basic psychological makeup. I'm a bit of an adventurer and freebooter down deep. But yeah, in fact, right now, I'm talking to you from a farm I own in Uruguay. I'm here not far from the beach, incidentally, but I'm in the middle of 1,000 acres, surrounded by horses and cows and things like that. I wouldn't even know that this hysteria is going on in the rest of the world unless I read about it on the internet.

Well, where should you go? Look, the US is on a real slippery slope. The politicians in the US are using this crisis. They're not going to let it go to waste, to quote that moron from Chicago, Rahm Emanuel, the guy that was Obama's butter boy until he became the mayor. They're not going to let it go to waste, and the new laws that they're going to pass aren't going to be undone. So I feel pretty good right now about being in a quiet, backward, peaceful, little country in the middle of nowhere as opposed to in the US, where I might be perceived as being an enemy of the state.

So yeah, I still look around the world for things. But unfortunately, the whole world has been going in the wrong direction. I mean, democracy is the real virus that seems to have infected the world, where the common man actually thinks that the government works for him. And they idealize these worthless politicians, who, what do they do all day when they're in Congress or parliament? They pass more laws. And the more laws they pass, they've got to pass more taxes to enforce the laws. And so the trend in the world for the last hundred years has been negative in all ways, except for technology and science.

So, yeah, but you've got to be diversified politically. You've got to be diversified geographically. Must, must, must. It's critical, because your main threat to your investments is not the markets, as dangerous as they are; it's your government that's your main threat. So you've got to be able to be diversified that way.

**WOODS:** Well, that leads to another question I've been getting, which is sometimes I hear Peter Schiff, or even more so, you say that the United States may be, as you say, if you're an ambitious young person, might not be the place for you. Maybe it's Africa, maybe it's

someplace else, for various reasons. But then the question that arises is, whatever it is the US is doing wrong in terms of government policy, as you're indicating now, the whole world is going down the wrong path. Why isn't the United States the healthiest horse in the glue factory at least?

**CASEY:** Well, I think it is, actually. For instance, in the case of Africa, if foreign aid and foreign investment were withdrawn from that continent, there's a good chance — and I've been all over Africa. I'm reasonably familiar with it — I think the place could slide back into the Stone Age for all kinds of ways that I could name. The reason when I suggest oddball places like that is that you personally don't want to be on a level playing field. You want to be on an unlevel playing field, where you have a high ground. And that's why you go backward places like that. So that's my argument in a nutshell for it. And sure, the standard of living in the US is much better, and everything's better in the US right now. But within the context of what I said, yeah, I like to be in backward places.

**WOODS:** Well, let me ask you this: what are you doing differently today as compared to three months ago? Anything?

**CASEY:** What am I doing differently?

**WOODS:** Like, are you looking at the world and saying, people are panic selling X, Y, and Z, and I know that there are buying opportunities here?

**CASEY:** Oh, well, yes, of course. But my view, unless you're a trader — and I'm not a trader, and I don't think most people should try to be traders — what we're looking at is a situation where if you buy now, I think you're trying to catch a falling safe. Not a good idea. It's better to wait until it smashes open on the sidewalk, and then you can pick and choose what was in the safe. Don't try to catch it on the way down. And that's where we are now. The market has only been going down now for a month or six weeks. This is way too early, considering how serious the financial, economic, and soon political and social consequences of this scenario are going to be. This is the biggest bubble in world history that's just broken, and they're not going to be able to reinflate it by creating trillions of worthless new currency units.

**WOODS:** Do you think there are particular sectors that will — I mean, well, obviously some sectors will weather it better than others, but do you have a sense of what those might be?

**CASEY:** Well, as I said earlier, the only thing that's really, really cheap in the world right now are commodities. I don't think there's a single commodity — well, I'm sure there is. I can't think of it right now — where the producers are making money. Farmers are losing money at current prices. Cattle, hogs, people that are making these things are all losing money everywhere on the world. Copper miners can't make money at current prices. The only commodity that is where the producers can make money is gold, because people are piling into gold on a retail level. Gold miners are going to be coining money, and fund managers who don't own and don't like and don't understand gold stocks are going to be buying them too.

So listen, if we talk again in six months or a year, I expect to have made a lot of money on gold stocks. If I don't, I'm going to be disappointed and poor, but this is one of those times that comes up once or twice in a decade when you ought to buy gold stocks. Most the time, it's a terrible crappy business. Now is the time to buy gold stocks.

**WOODS:** All right, a couple more things. How do you feel about Eastern Europe?

**CASEY:** I like Eastern Europe, actually, certainly as an alternative to Western Europe. Eastern Europe is not burdened by the kind of debt the West is. It's not burdened by the kind of welfare systems that the West is. It has much lower costs. The bad habits of the Soviet era have been largely washed away. Actually, surprisingly, these people have kind of learned a lesson from it, which is the opposite of what's happened in the West. In fact, some of the cheapest and best stocks in the world can be found in Russia and Ukraine right now, things like Gazprom, for instance. All kinds of interesting stocks there. So yeah, I'm a big fan of the

Eastern Europe at this point. And I don't like Putin, for all of the problems that he has. I mean, he is a politician. He's not the *bête noir*. He's not the devil incarnate that the Western media would have you believe.

**WOODS:** How about Argentina, where you've been living for a while? What can you tell us about what's been going on there, and are you still satisfied there?

**CASEY:** Well, look, if you look at Argentina, I'd say it's about one cycle ahead of the US. Since Person, starting in the early '50s, really, this place has been going down and down and down from one of the most prosperous and richest countries in the world before World War I. It's still a wonderful place to live. It's very inexpensive. It's very pleasant. I like it a lot. But their last president, Mauricio Macri, was actually a decent human being, just too weak. He did too little too late. Free-market-oriented business kind of guy. And now what did these idiotic Argentine voters? So they reelected Christina Kirchner Fernandez, with another Fernandez who's the actual president. And everything they're doing is not only the wrong thing, but the exact opposite of the right thing. So Argentina's just in a world of trouble. It's too bad, because I really like the country. So a problem. But listen, if you're a bottom fisher, you can buy a million acres of worthless land in Argentina for about a million bucks. That's pretty cheap.

**WOODS:** Looking back on your book *Crisis Investing* all the way back in 1979, if you had to do that again, if you were to update that, is there anything you'd change about it?

**CASEY:** No. That book was absolutely, if you don't mind my blowing my own horn, it was spot on. Oddly enough, it didn't become a number-one bestseller until like late 1980, early '81, by which time gold had already run up. You know, this is the way it is in the publishing business. Actually, as a book, I like my *Strategic Investing* and *Crisis Investing for the '90s* even more, but no, I think I was pretty well right in that book. I'll have to read it over again. And now in a new unit of time, I can be objective about it, but I'm pretty happy with it still. And I'm still happy with my first book, *The International Man*, which was a guidebook to making the most of your personal freedom and financial opportunity around the world. I wrote that book in 1977. That seems like the Dark Ages now, it was so long ago.

**WOODS:** You know, your whole approach to the world, your personality, there's nobody quite like Doug Casey, and I guess I want to know, I don't go for these mindset — people sell mindset courses like, \$497, you'll have a better mindset. I think, if I had to pay \$497 to improve my mindset, I would feel pretty bad about my mindset. But you clearly look at the world differently. There's something about you and the kinds of risks you're willing to take. What do you think is the fundamental difference between Doug Casey and the guy on the street?

**CASEY:** Well, look, I think the situation is hopeless, on the one hand, but on the other hand, it's not really serious. Most of the time, that — I mean, I read the paper and this type of thing. I have to in the financial business. But most of my time, I listen to lectures, and I take courses on science. I just finished one on astrophysics, for instance. And I'm doing one now on organic chemistry. And this is the kind of stuff that's important and really interests me. I'm trying to put things in cosmic perspective.

The fact that, do you know that science — and of course, for all I know, for anybody knows — since I'm a solipsist, Tom, I think that most of reality, for all I know, for all any of us know, we could be living in the Matrix. It could be in creation of our own minds. So the universe is supposed to be about 13.5 billion years old. Okay, seems pretty old. But in another 2 billion years, the Earth is going to have been subsumed by the sun, and it's all over in this solar system. But the universe itself is going to go on for trillions of trillions — not trillions *and* trillions, but trillions of trillions years more. So we're actually just the beginning of the universe. But then again, maybe there are thousands or an infinite number of other universes. I mean, I'm trying to keep things in perspective. And perhaps a little bit too big-picture to be of any value to you to say, but I think it's interesting to put the thought out there.

**WOODS:** How do people follow you? I know InternationalMan.com is a prime source of Doug Casey material. Is that where they should go?

**CASEY:** Yeah, go to InternationalMan.com, and I would urge people to pick up a copy of the first and second novels in my seven-novel series, reforming unjustly besmirched occupations. The first is *Speculator*; the second is *Drug Lord*. Don't fall behind, because in July, *Assassin* will be out, where our hero is going to reform the occupation of political assassin, or where we explore the morality and the history of the techniques of it before he ramps it up further and becomes a terrorist in the next novel after that, and a warlord in the next novel after that. And then it gets really, really weird, where I show that a terrorist and a warlord can be good things too. So that's where I am. That's where people should go. They're on Amazon or HighGroundBooks.com, either one.

**WOODS:** Well, I will link to those on our show notes page for today, TomWoods.com/1623 for Episode 1623. I'll have International Man, and I'll have the books linked there. So if you want plenty of Doug Casey material that is the place to go, TomWoods.com/1623. Well, I'm glad to hear from you, glad you're hanging in there, doing well, and sharing some wisdom with the folks out here. We appreciate it very much, Doug. Thanks.

**CASEY:** Well, it's a pleasure to be here with you, Tom. And it'll be fascinating if we touch base again in six months or even a year to see how the world has evolved. I hope I'm dead wrong about my gloomy predictions, but we'll see.

**WOODS:** I just hope I can resume — I've been traveling a lot. I haven't been traveling to some of the exotic locations where you've been, but I've been traveling a lot more than I have in the rest of my life. I probably went to 16 places that involved flying, not for business, just for pleasure in 2019. And that's now been shut down, because yeah, I could fly if I wanted to, but there's nothing to do once I get there, so what's the point? So I just want to be able to live again. This is choking me off. I get all these people saying, "Oh, well, my life is pretty much I work and I go home anyway, so it's no big change for me." All right, speak for yourself. Some of us want to get out there and do things, and it's just horrifying.

**CASEY:** Yeah, that's right. I mean, we're only granted, at least in this lifetime, I don't know if there are others, roughly 70 to 80 years, and it's a shame to see them wasted the way they're currently being. Life is precious.

**WOODS:** So meanwhile, I'll just tell you, projects around the house are getting done. This place is going to be a palace by the time I emerge [laughing]. I could at least say that. All right, thanks again. I will talk to you again in six months, how about that?

**CASEY:** I look forward to it, Tom. Thank you very much.