WHERE IS JOHN GALT?

All readers of Ayn Rand's masterpiece, Atlas Shrugged, know its central question, "Who is John Galt?"

Written over half a century ago, it is clearly the greatest and most influential novel of the 20th century. Over six million copies have been sold, averaging 77,000 copies per year in the 1980s, 90,000 in the 1990s, 137,000 in the 00s - until recently.

200,000 copies were sold in 2008, and sales so far this year are at *triple* those of last year. This is because, according to the Ayn Rand Institute, "there are uncanny similarities between the plot-line of the book and the events of our day."

We discussed these similarities last December in Atlas In America.

Reading *Atlas* for the first time in 1966 was the single most intellectually thrilling experience of my life. And yet, there was something that bugged me. Asking *who* is John Galt presupposes there *is* a John Galt. As I witnessed the cultural destruction of America in the 1960s, I realized the terrible truth that there is no such person. He is a Platonic invention.

Today, the fascist nightmare that is destroying America is hideously similar to that described by Rand over fifty years ago. But if we ask today, not *who* is John Galt but *where* is John Galt, the question echoes in the wind with no answer.

Let's put the question another way. When is a corporate exec or mega-industrialist, one of Rand's "Atlases" who support the world on their shoulders, going to tell Zero, or even Barney Frank or Tiny Tim Geithner, to shove his orders, controls, rules, and demands up his nose?

The ghastly reality that Lenin knew, that Zero knows, but Ayn Rand could never admit, is that most all corporate businessmen are not heroic giants but cowardly pussies. Two words should suffice as proof: Rick Wagoner.

This is the guy at the absolute top of the corporate heap, the chairman and chief executive officer of the world's largest automaker, Generl Motors - and when some ignorant schmuck with absolutely no business expertise whatsoever - Zero - tells him to quit, he meekly complies and shuffles off into the night.

What's that? Wagoner is a real-life Jim Taggart, or any other of Rand's incompetent corporate weasels? He's the opposite of the self-made heroic entrepreneur that takes total risk, the typical corporate yes-man sycophant who got to the top by kissing everybody's tush?

Okay, agreed. But the question remains, an example needs to be provided: where is John

Galt? Or, where is Lawrence Hammond?

He is the manufacturer of the world's best automobiles, chairman of Hammond Motors, for Rand in *Atlas*. If there were a real-life Lawrence Hammond, he would laugh at Zero's demands to make cars the way the government wants. "I will make cars my customers want, not what you fascist clowns want," he would tell Congress.

Here's the plot of Atlas Shrugged:

Imagine America exactly as it is today, with a government of incompetent fascist goons. Now imagine that the economy, the greatest and richest and most productive the world has ever known, is dependent upon single individuals who run competent businesses.

The hero of the novel, John Galt, can't stand all the government fascism and vows to stop "the motor of the world" - the minds of competent men. So he goes to each of these "Atlases" and convinces them to "shrug," to abandon their business and withdraw their competence from the world.

They all do, and Fascist America collapses. It's a beautiful Platonic dream -because for all her praise of Aristotle, Rand was a Platonist at heart. She lived not in the real world (like Aristotle did), but in Plato's world of Forms, populated by ideal forms of humans like Dagny Taggart, Francisco D'Anconia, Hank Rearden, Midas Mulligan, Ellis Wyatt, and John Galt.

When you're a Platonist, you get apoplectically frustrated with the real world, and are outraged that it doesn't live up to your ideals. It drives you out of your mind that Republicans aren't noble knights of freedom, heroic champions of capitalism, courageously willing to sacrifice their lives attempting to slay the dragons of the Democrats.

And you dream of comic book superheroes coming to your rescue. The closest the world ever came to this actually happening was in 1776.

From the dawn of history, mankind has been plagued by voracious and vicious marauders sacking and burning and looting its wealth. Then the looters start calling themselves kings or pharaohs or brahmins or prophets (like Mohammad, a bandit chieftain), and claim the moral right to rule those they've conquered.

Almost always, for thousands of years and across the world today, the conquered submit and let the looters win. Just look at Mugabe's Zimbabwe, Chavez's Venezuela, or Kim's North Korea where people starve and surrender and submit and die, rather than fight.

At America's founding, there were so many John Galts they defeated the greatest military force in the world at the time, England.

Today, when we are facing the greatest fascist onslaught of our freedoms since Woodrow Wilson, there doesn't seem to be one single major business leader in America who has the guts to tell Zero to go to hell.

So, now I'll tell you where John Galt is.

He's inside you.

You are not a superhero, nor am I, nor are any of us. But you and each of us have the capacity to summon the courage within ourselves to fight government enslavement and tyranny - just as did our forefathers. They weren't superheroes either, but real live people, just like you and me.

Rand's Galt hid in the shadows, retreated from the world, and persuaded others to do the same. That may be the wisest choice for some, but it can't be for all, not to overthrow the Tyranny of Zero.

For his grasp for power, ever more power, is coming too fast to hide and wait. Does anyone with a three-digit IQ believe that the demonization of the AIG execs with bonuses won't morph into the demonization of any group of gun-owners ("militias"), then to *anyone* critical of His Zeroness?

We predicted OTO patriotism last December - that patriotism would be defined as Obedience to Obama. True patriotism will be civil disobedience, refusal to obey the dictates of Zero. It will be to use the Internet to join forces, to plan and organize, to participate in the American Tea Party Tax Revolt.

And it is to realize the greatest fact of freedom in America: that a country with 200 million guns in private hands cannot be defeated unless it wants to be.

Thus true patriotism begins with you. It begins with all of us. Ayn Rand was a monumental genius. She saw clearly the consequences of fascist anti-capitalist liberalism in the halcyon days of the 1950s. We are now in 2009 living in the world of *Atlas Shrugged* - but without John Galt.

Unless each of us takes responsibility for our own fate and chooses to be our own John Galt. Look inside yourself. That's where you'll find him.