

JAMIE DIMON: A \$50,000 ATM IS A BIG RISK

Jamie Dimon's got his whine on again (or should I say "still"), wishing we all could just move on from the catastrophe Dimon and his buddy banksters caused.

Dimon's strategy here is rather amusing. He twice suggests that the media and the banks are both unfairly denigrated, as a "class."

You've criticized others for an ongoing vilification of Wall Street and bankers?

I would say it differently. This indiscriminate scapegoating and finger-pointing. I don't think it's a good thing if you do it to banks or media. The point is there is some decent media and not decent; some good businesspeople and some not so good. My belief is this indiscriminate blame of both classes denigrates our society, destroys confidence – it certainly can't boost it – and damages us.

Is it surprising that people lash out after such a severe recession in which we've seen these polars of wealth creation and destruction?

I can give you all the reasons why. But whenever anyone says to me, "All media," I turn it off. "All politicians." I turn it off. I don't think it's the right way to have discourse. Abe Lincoln didn't do it. George Washington didn't do it. It shouldn't be done.

You don't justify it because you've had a tough time. As a matter of fact, in a tough time, the best people stand tallest. They're the ones who discriminate between the right and wrong. They're the ones who stick to the true blue. ... Not the ones who out of

convenience scapegoat and finger-point.

And, having appealed to the journalist's sense of common angst and suggested those seeking precisely to distinguish between right and wrong are "fingerpointing," Dimon gets a piece that focuses on the number of people Chase has hired locally rather than his patently false claim that none of Chase's foreclosures were improper and "we don't know of any where the actual information in the affidavit about the foreclosure itself is wrong."

Where Dimon's latest whine says something new, however, is where he tries to suggest that the people who deposit their money with Chase—effectively loan Chase their money—are just freeloading.

Let's talk about fees. We've seen some fees like the debit charge go away at the same time others are surfacing. Has it gone too far?

More than 80 percent don't pay the monthly fee (on checking). Here's the issue: It costs \$300 to give you a checking account. What's the cost of that? Branches, ATMs, online bill pay, Smart systems, checking account, a debit card. Any business has a cost. If you want a customer, you care, but you have to make a fair profit to survive.

But even after the debit fee went away, banks were still profitable.

Very often people will see us as having a profit, and I'm saying it's really suboptimal results. Because we're big and have a lot of capital, it sounds like a lot. But these are huge services and huge risks these banks take. We want to be fairly paid for services we provide. Just like a newspaper or anybody else.

Is the issue one of degree? For

instance, that \$5 ATM fee you were testing?

If you're a client, we don't charge you for ATMs. We charge nonclients. I think we charge \$2 now. It costs us \$50,000 a year to have an ATM. It's not a gift. It's for our clients. [my underline]

Right. The \$50,000 ATM is a big risk. Dumping loads of money into derivatives? That's apparently not where Chase's big risk lies. Rather, it's in replacing human tellers with machines that require relatively little maintenance, no health benefits, and no days off to give customers a reason—convenience—to loan Chase their money.

Or maybe now that Chase has made billions in the casino, they expect their \$50,000 ATMs to be just as profitable. So Dimon will call a simple computer, an ATM, a huge risk, and demand exorbitant fees. Because banks shouldn't have to pay the cost of doing business anymore, I guess. Asking them to do so is treating them unfairly as a class.