

The Taxing Tales

By Robert W. Wood

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Wood waxes poetic, Chaucer style.

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Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* consists of a prologue and 24 tales by a miscellany of pilgrims, ranging from the bawdy to the reverential. With considerably less ambition, here are *The Taxing Tales*, so far consisting of the "Prologue," "The Commissioner's Tale," and "The Slick Taxpayer's Tale."

Prologue

When April comes along, with her gentle showers
so sweet,
The drought of March will end, abruptly like a
tweet.
Spring bathes every plant, almost bottled-water
pure.
Tax folk have our own rebirth, a strong and primal
lure.
While others strut and fret, even hating to pay tax,
We tax folk hope we're needed, and sorely, to the
max.
As most common souls are quaking, loathing tax
returns,
For us not being needed, that's what truly burns.
We crave endless calls and meetings, e-mails, even
Twitter,
They calm our minds and hearts, which otherwise
would flitter.
Once again we'll gravitate like vampires at the
dawn,
To IRS-run dungeons, toward Service Centers, we
spawn.
"Call them 'Campuses'," we're told, but we stick to
what we know,
For tax lore and tradition, they cast a golden glow.

The code is always changing, regs and rulings too,
It's a scholar's calling, true religion for we few.
Much is classic ritual, technology be damned!
With programs, tricks, e-filing, new fangled laws so
canned.

Through tax lore we will travel, in lock step moving
fast,

To feel the thrill anew, as in filing seasons past.
We hearken back like lemmings toward a cliff we
know is there,

For tax time is sublime, it's our nicest gift to share.
There's little time for trifles, hardly time to snooze;
Our yearly tax-time pilgrimage is better than a
cruise.

And when the deadlines pass, we sigh, we stretch,
we mumble;

We lucky few, we brothers, never did we stumble.
Tax lawyers and accountants and even EAs too,
Our quest, a noble calling. And surely when we're
through,

The IRS will listen, perhaps admit we're good!
We stand, we help the system, as solid comrades
should.

And if perchance we miss it, that filing season glow,
At 1111 Constitution we'll find all we need to know.

The Commissioner's Tale

I'm IRS commissioner, though some will call me
czar.

For I'm in charge of taxes, whether near or far.

No mere bureaucrat, I'm far more tax aware,

I make sure our fisc will never be threadbare.

I marshal all the troops in the IRS reserve.

My job sure takes some steel, and quite a bit of
nerve.

I must have vim and vigor, my schedule never slow,
For revenue we gather; money, it must flow.

Our mission is to tax you, but fairly and in sync.

We tax you true and plainly, with no slyness or cute
wink.

My office in D.C. is my home away from home,

The center of all tax, so nowhere need I roam.

For my IRS command is the core of Father Fisc,

And my tentacles reach out, like a recurring 1099-
MISC.

Our tax system is complex, of that I will admit,

I oversee it justly, for I am no nitwit.

Above politics and rancor, we won't audit based on
spite,

But methodically and slowly, working day and
night.

We administer tax fairly, no creed or race is best.
We treat religion squarely, even Scientologist.
Walk our hallowed hallways, peruse our tax forms too.
Our many public servants are loyal through and through.
Our website for all things tax disseminates so fast;
A tax meal that is meaty, a healthy tax repast.
We now also make movies; yes, YouTube comes in tax.
But videos on tax are better with sweet snacks.
The movies may be boring; no action movies these.
James Cameron should direct them, waiving all his fees.
Yet Cameron refused us; he acted like a nut.
Maybe if we audit him, he'll make a director's cut.
And when my term is over, for all good things must end,
Back to private practice, to a big law firm I'll append.

The Slick Taxpayer's Tale

Listen up, you pilgrims, for my story is a beaut;
I may hate paying taxes, but I am not a brute.
My tale is very common, and one you need to hear,
For I am nearly every man, like clients far and near.
Taxes, they don't scare me; I simply have no fear.
I'll someday have to pay them, when they are in arrear.
But right now I just skate along, paying nearly none.

I am no protester, but tax is sure no fun.
Learned Hand's my hero, a rare and good guy judge;
He makes me feel above reproach, even when I fudge.
It's true I claim deductions, sometimes credits too.
My taxes must be small, the dollars very few.
I do believe in shelters; they never are a scam.
I only claim what's honest, plus maybe some flim-flam.
I claim some big deductions, of many types galore;
I even claim some extras for children I have bore.
I have some Swiss accounts; disclosure is a joke!
I'll claim all my losses if my Swiss bank should go broke.
I love to buy tax shelters; I'm sure they're legal too.
I just bought a new one that I saw on pay-per-view.
I always get opinions — "more likely," maybe not,
I don't care what they say, just so the shelter's hot.
Tim Geithner is my hero, his tax defense well known.
If ever I am caught, I'll use the ruse he's shown.
"TurboTax screwed up," that's surely what I'll say,
"How was I to know? Me guilty? Hey, no way!"
But audit rates are low, of that I'm very glad.
And if I'm ever audited, then I'll be plenty mad.
Someone else should pay, but surely just not me!
Perhaps I'll start a church for a tax-free reverie.
Church of Tax Deductions is sure a catchy name,
And soon I'll be on TV, getting lots of fame.

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