

Twitter: A night with the bears

Sprott, Roubini and others offer advice to investors

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On Tuesday night, we tried a little experiment — use Twitter to cover A Night With The Bears at Toronto's Elgin Theatre.

Put on by Sprott Asset Management, the event put four of the world's most pessimistic market watchers — Eric Sprott, Meredith Whitney of Meredith Whitney Advisory Group, Nouriel Roubini of New York University and Ian Gordon, author of The Long Wave Analyst newsletters — in the same room to share their views on the economy and the markets.

For those not familiar with Twitter, it's a website that allows you to broadcast your thoughts 140 characters at a time. Anyone can create an account at www.twitter.com, and create a list of friends and colleagues to follow.

Here are the tweets (the term for each update) that ensued, taken directly from my Twitter account ([@ladurantaye](https://twitter.com/ladurantaye)).

- Heading out with ace reporter Brian Milner. Not depressed yet!
- Fancy elevator worked by hand at Elgin Theatre, woo!
- Bar service to reporters sitting in their chairs?! Oo la la.
- Press conference delayed, they must be busy bearing things up.
- No statements, bears right into questions.
- Roubini: No growth in economy for two years. Really easing into the gloom.
- Roubini: world has converged on my worst case numbers.
- Whitney: Not fair to ask about BofA CEO. He's a good CEO basically. Too disruptive to fire him.
- Freelancer congratulates bears on their 'good' calls over last year.
- Roubini: Zombie banks!
- Whitney: Mortgage relationships are monogamous.. I don't know what that means, but sounds important.
- Roubini: recovery will be weak and shallow. PS, CDN economy fundamentals are strong.
- Reporter asks if Roubini is ever happy with life in general. He says yes, and then glares at reporter.
- Sprott sees economy bottoming in 10 to 20 years. Now THAT is bearish!
- Press conference ends, panellists ready to freak out 1,500 audience members.
- As a complete aside, this is one well-dressed and attractive crowd.
- From Milner: everyone received a ticket on arriving.. Gold, silver, black. Tells you where to sit (and what Sprott thinks of you?)
- Sprott: bears more correct, logical and brave.
- Another aside, Eric Sprott is really, really tall.
- Whitney: banking system sounded fabulous when she started career. But, not so much now.
- Whitney: shadow banks! Trillions in loans! And that's saying nothing about credit cards. To get out - break market share of 5 big lenders.
- For a bear, Whitney says 'fabulous' an awful lot. Ps - "none of you know financials like we do," she says.
- Whitney: you will see credit ripped out of people's wallets. 10 million more will lose homes.
- Whitney: Credit card \$4.2 trillion outstanding. If you cut credit, it is a pay cut. Everyone this room will have credit reduced. Bearish!

- Can't decide if the guffawing is gallows humour or a result of open bar. Uh oh, here comes Roubini. Laugh time is over!
- Roubini: forget v recovery. Maybe a U. Or an L. Only thing certain - optimists are knuckleheads (I'm paraphrasing)
- Roubini: USA looks bad, rest of world looks worse. Guffawing has tapered off. Also calls it a possible near recession.
- Roubini: only thing not collapsing is govt spending.
- Roubini: use quantitative easing. Do fiscal stimulus. Take radical action on banks and homes. When insolvent, fold. Start over.
- Roubini: this a bear market rally. Market has predicted six of the last zero recoveries, he says. Guffaws are back!
- Roubini: half of hedge funds go bust by next year.
- Roubini leaves on high note, jokes about light at end of tunnel... And hopefully it is not the train (har har)
- Whitney and Roubini done. Lots of people leave ahead of Gordon and Sprott.
- Gordon: starts with chart. Explains theory. My neighbours look confused. Everyone waits for his trademark 'Dow will hit 1000' line.
- Gordon: I saw this coming a lonnnnnnnng time ago. What's more, It was eassssssy to predict. Also, this will be worse than depression.
- Gordon: Depression! Depression! Also, this is a depression.
- Gordon has called for so many things to collapse, 140 characters seems woefully inadequate. Summary: everything will collapse. Everything!
- There we go: Gordon calls for Dow 1000, says to buy gold.
- Sprott: I don't know if I can take any more of this. His good news: after QA, bar will be open.
- Sprott: if someone offered me bce place for a dollar, I would not buy it because it would bankrupt me.
- Sprott: capital ratios aren't worth anything. Ignore that noise. It is not a depression, it is a collapse.
- Sprott: derivatives will melt the system.
- Sprott: how to survive. Short market. Buy bullion. Look at agriculture.
- Roubini would buy china etf. Gordon buy japan. Sprott south africa. Whitney says any mineral rich, politically stable country.
- First questioner from audience takes opportunity at mic to compliment BNN host/mc Kim Parlee (I'm your biggest fan!!)
- That's a good place to end, Twitterland. Bonne nuit - bonne nuit to you all.
- Parting gifts: Sprott sales literature, Sprott pamphlet, Sprott chocolate wrapped in gold (with a sprott logo).