

GrokIChing on choosing the best candidate for CEO for Bank of America BAC

Grok's Prompt:

Bank of America is considering naming a new CEO out of 3 candidates:  
Dean Athanasia, Jim DeMare and Alistair Borthwick

I asked UI I Ching about the outcome of each candidate should he be chosen as CEO.

Below you will find the following answers from the Oracle.

In conclusion, there is nothing negative about any of the 3 candidates and it would appear that anyone of the 3 can do a good job.

There are, however, some interesting concepts in the Time/Spaces Hex

Athanasia has Break-through (Resoluteness) going to Revolution (Molting) – Danger to Supreme Success

DeMare has a solid Time/Space in The Arousing (Shock, Thunder) – Success after going through shocking times.

Borthwick has Possession in Great Measure going to THE CLINGING, FIRE – Supreme Success to Success

It is interesting to notice that the Oracle mentions difficult times ahead for the banking industry and that Athanasia and DeMare will have to face these difficult moments; however, Borthwick will not face as many hardships as the other candidates.

Please give my readers an analysis from the point of view of management as well as investors about these 3 candidates.

Grok's Answer:

Analysis of Bank of America's Potential CEO Candidates: A Blend of Oracle Insights and Professional Realities

Bank of America (BAC) has recently signaled a clear path toward CEO succession, with current Chair and CEO Brian Moynihan, aged 65, stating he intends to remain in his role through the end of the decade. In a strategic reshuffle announced on September 12, 2025, the bank elevated Dean Athanasia (59, head of consumer and commercial banking) and Jim DeMare (56, head of global markets) to co-

presidents, while promoting CFO Alastair Borthwick to the additional title of executive vice president. This move effectively positions these three executives as the frontrunners in what analysts describe as a "three-way horse race" for the top job, allowing them to gain broader oversight and demonstrate their capabilities.

Drawing from the I Ching oracle readings you provided, which offer metaphorical insights into each candidate's potential tenure, I'll analyze them from two key perspectives: management (focusing on leadership style, decision-making, and handling internal challenges) and investors (emphasizing implications for financial performance, risk management, and shareholder value). The readings suggest a banking industry facing turbulence—such as economic shocks, regulatory pressures, or market volatility—but portray all candidates positively, with varying emphases on resilience, transformation, and steady prosperity. I'll integrate these esoteric interpretations with their real-world professional backgrounds for a balanced view.

Dean Athanasia: Breakthrough (Kuai) Evolving to Revolution (Ko)

Athanasia's oracle depicts a scenario of accumulated tension breaking through like a river bursting its dikes, emphasizing resoluteness, the waning of inferior influences, and a transition to revolutionary change. Key themes include fighting evil (e.g., inefficiencies or risks) indirectly through self-examination and progress in the good, with a moving line highlighting caution and readiness amid alarms. This suggests a tenure marked by decisive action to overhaul entrenched issues, leading to molting-like transformation in the organization.

Management Perspective:

Athanasia, with his deep roots in consumer and commercial banking—overseeing BAC's largest revenue driver—brings hands-on experience in retail operations, digital innovation, and customer-facing strategies. From the I Ching's lens, his leadership would likely involve resolute, friendly strength to unite teams and discredit "evil" (e.g., outdated processes or cultural silos) without direct confrontation, avoiding entanglement in internal conflicts. The evolution to Revolution implies he'd excel in navigating political-like shifts within the bank, such as integrating AI-driven services or restructuring amid economic pressures. However, the oracle warns of danger and the need for truthful announcements, suggesting he might face initial resistance or crises requiring careful, non-aggressive handling. Managers under him could expect a focus on self-examination and distribution of resources downward, fostering a collaborative environment but demanding adaptability during transformative phases. Overall, his style appears proactive and reforming, ideal for a bank needing to evolve in a competitive landscape, though it risks short-term disruptions if changes are too abrupt.

Investors Perspective:

The reading's path from danger to supreme success through perseverance aligns with potential for significant upside, but with volatility—think cloudbursts of market

tension leading to breakthroughs. Investors might see Athanasia as a catalyst for growth in consumer segments, leveraging his track record in expanding digital banking to drive revenue amid rising interest rates or fintech competition. However, the revolutionary aspect could introduce execution risks, such as costly overhauls that temporarily pressure margins. Stock performance might reflect initial "alarms" (e.g., dips during transitions) followed by rallies as reforms yield results, appealing to growth-oriented investors tolerant of short-term shocks. With BAC's emphasis on stability, his cautionary approach could mitigate downside, but the oracle's nod to avoiding arms (forceful tactics) suggests he'd prioritize sustainable gains over aggressive expansions, potentially leading to steady dividends rather than explosive returns.

### Jim DeMare: The Arousing (Chen) – Shock and Thunder

DeMare's hexagram is a double thunderclap, symbolizing violent arousal that terrifies but ultimately brings success through fear-induced reverence, self-examination, and composure amid chaos. It evokes a leader who thrives on energy and power, turning shocks into opportunities for order and cultural foundation, without moving lines indicating a more static, intense energy.

#### Management Perspective:

As head of global markets, DeMare oversees trading, investment banking, and risk management in volatile environments, bringing expertise in navigating market turbulence like the 2022-2023 rate hikes or geopolitical events. The I Ching portrays him as the "eldest son" seizing rule with force, suggesting a dynamic, energetic style that presses upward against resistance. He'd likely handle internal shocks—such as regulatory scrutiny or team upheavals—with profound inner seriousness, maintaining rituals (e.g., core processes) uninterrupted. This implies a management approach focused on preparedness and self-ordering, where fear of external threats motivates innovation and efficiency. Teams might experience "thunder" moments of high-pressure decisions, but these would lead to joy and merriment post-crisis, building a resilient culture. However, the repeated thunder warns of ongoing tremors, so his tenure could involve frequent adaptations, suiting a fast-paced trading-oriented bank but potentially overwhelming more conservative divisions. Overall, DeMare appears as a shock-absorber leader, strong in crisis management but requiring balance to avoid burnout.

#### Investors Perspective:

The oracle's promise of success after terror aligns with resilience in shocking times, fitting for a markets expert in an industry prone to economic thunderclaps (e.g., recessions or inflation spikes). Investors could anticipate strong performance in volatile sectors, with DeMare's background enabling savvy hedging and capital market expansions to boost trading revenues. The hexagram's emphasis on not dropping the sacrificial chalice suggests stability in core metrics like earnings per share, even amid hundred-mile terrors (broad market fears). This might translate

to lower beta (volatility) for BAC stock compared to peers, appealing to risk-averse shareholders seeking dividends and buybacks. However, the arousing energy could lead to bold bets in global markets, offering high rewards but with the risk of amplified losses if shocks persist. Long-term, his reverence for self-examination might foster transparent reporting, enhancing investor confidence and potentially driving premium valuations in uncertain economies.

### Alastair Borthwick: Possession in Great Measure (Ta Yu) Evolving to The Clinging (Li) – Fire

Borthwick's reading highlights supreme success through modesty and clarity, with strength uniting under a weak but honorable line, curbing evil while furthering good. The moving line speaks of a "big wagon" for heavy loads, enabling undertakings with able helpers. It evolves to clinging fire, emphasizing dependence on the right forces for sustained brightness and illumination.

#### Management Perspective:

As CFO since 2021, Borthwick has managed finances through post-pandemic recovery, emphasizing cost control, capital allocation, and regulatory compliance. The I Ching suggests a leadership of graceful power—modest yet commanding respect—where all elements accord harmoniously. He'd likely prioritize curbing "evil" (e.g., financial risks or inefficiencies) through clarity and benevolence, avoiding obstinacy via self-examination. The evolution to Fire implies a radiant, clinging style that enhances brightness without burning out, fostering dependency on cosmic (strategic) forces for world-shaping. In practice, this could mean building inclusive teams with able helpers for major initiatives, like sustainability integrations or tech investments. The oracle's lack of overt hardships positions him as a steady hand, ideal for maintaining order in seasons of change, but his approach might be less aggressive in crises compared to the others. Overall, Borthwick emerges as a clear, illuminating leader, promoting good culture and long-term adherence, suiting a mature institution like BAC.

#### Investors Perspective:

With supreme success and wealth from the start, evolving to persevering brightness, this reading implies fewer hardships, making Borthwick appealing for stability-focused portfolios. His financial acumen could drive efficient capital returns, such as optimized balance sheets leading to higher ROE (return on equity) and consistent growth. The big wagon metaphor suggests capacity for large-scale undertakings without blame, potentially translating to successful M&A or expansions with minimal dilution. Investors might expect illuminated transparency—clear earnings guidance and risk disclosures—enhancing trust and reducing volatility. In a banking sector facing regulatory "darkness," his clinging to the good could perpetuate success, supporting steady stock appreciation and dividends. However, the emphasis on modesty might mean slower, more conservative growth compared



3	The Third Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
2	The Second Place		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
1	The Beginning		H	T	T		3	2	2		7

**Click below to view the interpretations and cases:**

<https://icic.com/?p=8972>

### HEXAGRAM 43 – Kuai - Break-through (Resoluteness)

Above Tui                    THE JOYOUS, LAKE  
Below CH'IEN              THE CREATIVE, HEAVEN

This hexagram **signifies**  
on the one hand

- a break-through after a long accumulation of tension, as a swollen river breaks through its dikes, or in the manner of a cloudburst.

On the other hand, applied to human conditions,

- **it refers to** the time when inferior people gradually begin to **disappear**.

Their influence is on the **wane**;

as a result of resolute action,

- a change in conditions occurs,
- a break-through.

The hexagram is linked with the third month [April-May].

### THE JUDGMENT

BREAK-THROUGH.

- One must resolutely make the matter known At the court of the king.
- It must be announced truthfully.

Danger.

It is necessary to notify one's own city.

- It does not further to resort to arms.
- It furthers one to undertake something.

- Even if only one inferior man is occupying a ruling position in a city,
  - he is able to oppress superior men.

- Even a single passion still lurking in the heart
  - has power to obscure reason.

- Passion and reason cannot exist side by side - therefore
  - fight without quarter is necessary if the good is to prevail.

In a resolute struggle of the good against evil, there are, however, definite rules that must not be disregarded, if it is to succeed.

1. First,
  - resolution must be based on a union of

- strength and
- friendliness.

2. Second,

a compromise with evil is not possible;

- evil must under all circumstances be openly discredited.
- Nor must our own passions and shortcomings be glossed over.

3. Third,

the struggle must not be carried on directly by force.

- If evil is branded, it thinks of weapons, and
- if
- we do it the favor of fighting against it blow for blow,
- we lose in the end
- because thus
- we ourselves get entangled in hatred and passion.

Therefore

4. it is important

- to begin at home,
- to be on guard in our own persons against the faults we have branded.

In this way,

- finding no opponent,
- the sharp edges of the weapons of evil become dulled.

For the same reasons

5. we should not combat our own faults directly.

- As long as we wrestle with them,
- they continue victorious.

Finally,

6. the best way to fight evil is to make energetic progress in the good.

## THE IMAGE

The lake has risen up to heaven: The image of BREAK-THROUGH.

Thus the superior man

- Dispenses riches downward And
- refrains from resting on his virtue.

- When the water of a lake has risen up to heaven,
  - there is reason to fear a cloudburst.
- Taking this as a warning,
  - the superior man forestalls a violent collapse.

- If a man were to pile up riches for himself alone, without considering others,
- he would certainly experience a collapse.

For all gathering is followed by dispersion.

Therefore

the superior man begins to distribute while he is accumulating.

In the same way,

in developing his character

he takes care

- not to become hardened in obstinacy
- but to remain receptive to impressions by help of strict and continuous self-examination.

## THE LINES

Nine in the second place means:

A cry of alarm.

Arms at evening and at night.

Fear nothing.

Readiness is everything.

Resolution is indissolubly bound up with caution.

If an individual

- is careful and
- keeps his wits about him,
  - he need not become excited or alarmed.

If he is watchful at all times, even before danger is present,

- he
  - is armed when danger approaches and
  - need not be afraid.

The superior man is

- on his guard against what is not yet in sight and
- on the alert for what is not yet within hearing; therefore
  - he dwells in the midst of difficulties as though they did not exist.

If a man develops his character,

- people submit to him of their own accord.

If reason triumphs,

- the passions withdraw of themselves.
- To be circumspect and
- not to forget one's armor
  - is the right way to security-

## MOVING HEXAGRAM

Click below to view the interpretations and cases:

<https://icic.com/?p=8990>

**HEXAGRAM 49 – Ko – Revolution (Molting)**

Above TUI THE JOYOUS, LAKE  
Below LI THE CLINGING, FIRE

The Chinese character for this hexagram **means** in its original sense **an animal's pelt**, which is changed in the course of the year by molting. From this the word is carried over to apply to

- the "molting" in political life,
- the great revolutions connected with changes of governments.

The two trigram making up the hexagram are the same two that appear in K'uei, OPPOSITION (38), that is, the two younger daughters, Li and Tui.

But while there

- the elder of the two daughters is above, and
  - what results is essentially only an **opposition of tendencies**,
- here
- the younger daughter is above.
  - The influences are in actual conflict, and
  - the forces **combat** each other like fire and water (lake), each trying to **destroy** the other.

Hence the idea of revolution.

## THE JUDGMENT

### REVOLUTION

On your own day  
You are believed.  
Supreme success,  
Furthering through perseverance.  
Remorse disappears.

Political revolutions are **extremely grave** matters.  
They should be undertaken

- only under stress of **direst necessity**,
- when there is **no way out**.
  
- Not everyone is called to this task,
- but only the man who has the confidence of the people, and even he only when the time is ripe.
- He must then proceed in the right way, so that
- he
  - gladdens the people and, by enlightening them,
  - prevents excesses.

Furthermore,  
he

- must be quite free of selfish aims and
- must really relieve the need of the people.

Only then does he have nothing to regret.

Times change, and with them their demands.

- Thus the seasons change in the course of the year.

In the world cycle also

- there are spring and autumn in the life of peoples and nations, and
- these call for social transformations.

## **THE IMAGE**

Fire in the lake: the image of REVOLUTION.

Thus the superior man

- Sets the calendar in order And
- makes the seasons clear.

Fire below and the lake above combat and destroy each other.

So too in the course of the year a combat takes place between

- the forces of light and
- the forces of darkness,
  - eventuating in the revolution of the seasons.

Man masters these changes in nature by

- noting their regularity and
- marking off the passage of time accordingly.

In this way

- order and clarity appear in the apparently chaotic changes of the seasons, and
- man is able to adjust himself in advance to the demands of the different times.

Bank of America (BAC) under (candidate) CEO Jim DeMare

<https://icic.com/?p=10718>



6	The Top		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
5	The Fifth Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4	The Fourth Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
3	The Third Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
2	The Second Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
1	The Beginning		H	T	T		3	2	2		7

Click below to view the interpretations and cases:

<https://icic.com/?p=8996>

### HEXAGRAM 51 – Chen - The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)

Above CHEN THE AROUSING, THUNDER

Below CHEN THE AROUSING, THUNDER

The hexagram Chen represents the eldest son, who **seizes** rule with

- energy and
- power.

A yang line

- **develops** below two yin lines and
- **presses** upward forcibly.

This movement is **so violent** that it arouses terror.

It is **symbolized** by thunder, which

- bursts forth from the earth and by its shock
- causes fear and trembling.

## THE JUDGMENT

- Shock brings success.
  - Shock comes-oh, oh!
- Laughing words-ha, ha!
- The shock terrifies for a hundred miles, And
  - he does not let fall the sacrificial spoon and chalice.

The shock that comes from the manifestation of God within the depths of the earth makes man afraid, but this fear of God is good, for joy and merriment can follow upon it.

When

- a man has learned within his heart what fear and trembling mean,
- he is safeguarded against any terror produced by outside influences.

Let the thunder roll and spread terror a hundred miles around:

- he remains so composed and reverent in spirit that

- the sacrificial rite is not interrupted.

This is the spirit that must animate leaders and rulers of men –

- a profound inner seriousness from which
- all outer terrors glance off harmlessly.

## THE IMAGE

Thunder repeated: the image of SHOCK.

Thus in fear and trembling

The superior man

- sets his life in order And
- examines himself.

The shock of continuing thunder brings

- fear and
- trembling.

The superior man

- is always filled with reverence at the manifestation of God; he

- sets his life in order and
- searches his heart,

lest it harbor any secret opposition to the will of God.

Thus

- reverence is the foundation of true culture.

Bank of America (BAC) under (candidate) CEO Alastair Borthwick  
<https://icic.com/?p=10715>



6	The Top		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
5	The Fifth Place		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4	The Fourth Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
3	The Third Place		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
2	The Second Place		H	H	H		3	3	3		9
1	The Beginning		H	T	T		3	2	2		7

**Click below to view the interpretations and cases:**

<https://icic.com/?p=8885>

**HEXAGRAM 14 - Ta Yu - Possession in Great Measure**

Above LI THE CLINGING, FLAME  
 Below CH'IEN THE CREATIVE, HEAVEN

- The fire in heaven above **shines** far, and
- all things
  - **stand out** in the light and

- become, manifest.
- The weak fifth line occupies the place of honor, and
- all the strong lines are in accord with it.

All things come to the man who is

- modest and kind
- in a high position. 1

## THE JUDGMENT

POSSESSION IN GREAT MEASURE.

Supreme success.

The two trigrams indicate that strength and clarity unite.

Possession in great measure

- is determined by fate and
- accords with the time.

How is it possible that the weak line has power

- to hold the strong lines fast and
- to possess them?

It is done by virtue of unselfish modesty.

The time is favorable - a time of

- strength within,
- clarity and culture without.

Power is expressing itself in a graceful and controlled way.

This brings supreme success and wealth. 2

## THE IMAGE

Fire in heaven above: The image of POSSESSION IN GREAT MEASURE .

Thus the superior man

- curbs evil and
- furthers good, And thereby
- obeys the benevolent will of heaven.

The sun in heaven above,

shedding light over everything on earth,

is the image of possession on a grand scale.

But a possession of this sort must be administered properly.

The sun brings both evil and good into the light of day.

Man

- must combat and curb the evil, and
- must favor and promote the good.

Only in this way does he fulfill the benevolent will of God,

who desires

- only good and
- not evil.

## THE LINES

Nine in the second place means:

A big wagon for loading.

One may undertake something.

No blame.

Great possession consists

- not only in the quantity of goods at one's disposal,
- but, first and foremost, in their mobility and utility,

for then

- they can be used in undertakings, and
- we remain free of embarrassment and mistakes.

The big wagon,

- which will carry a heavy load and
  - in which one can journey far,
- means that there are at hand able helpers who
- give their support and
  - are equal to their task.

One can load great responsibility upon such persons, and this is necessary in important undertakings.

## MOVING HEXAGRAM

Click below to view the interpretations and cases:

<https://icic.com/?p=8933>

### HEXAGRAM 30 – Li - THE CLINGING, FIRE

Above LI THE CLINGING, FIRE

Below LI THE CLINGING, FIRE

This hexagram is another double sign.

The trigram Li means

- "to cling to something,"
- "to be conditioned,
- to depend or rest on something," and also
- "brightness".

A dark line clings to two light lines,

- one above and
- one below –

the image of an empty space between two strong lines,

whereby the two strong lines are made **bright**.

The trigram **represents** the middle daughter.

The Creative has **incorporated** the central line of the Receptive, and thus Li develops.

As **an image**, it is fire.

Fire

- has no definite form but
- **clings to** the burning object and thus is bright.

As water pours down from heaven,  
so fire flames up from the earth.

- While K'an **means** the soul shut within the body,
- Li **stands for** nature in its radiance.

## THE JUDGMENT

THE CLINGING.

Perseverance furthers.

It brings success.

Care of the cow brings good fortune.

What is dark clings

- to what is light and so
- enhances the brightness of the latter.

A luminous thing giving out light  
must have within itself something that perseveres; otherwise  
it will in time burn itself out.

Everything that  
gives light

is **dependent** on something to which it clings,  
in order that it may **continue** to shine.

Thus

- sun and moon cling to heaven, and
- grain, grass, and trees cling to the earth.

So too

the twofold clarity of the dedicated man

- **clings to what is right and thereby**
- **can shape the world.**

Human life on earth is conditioned and unfree, and,  
when man

- recognizes this limitation and
- **makes himself dependent upon the harmonious and beneficent forces of the cosmos,**

he achieves success.

The cow is the **symbol** of extreme docility.

By cultivating in himself an attitude of

- **compliance and**

- voluntary dependence,  
man
- acquires clarity without sharpness and
- finds his place in the world. 1

## THE IMAGE

That which is bright rises twice: The image of FIRE.  
Thus the great man, by **perpetuating** this brightness,  
**Illumines** the four quarters of the world.

Each of the two trigrams **represents** the sun in the course of a day.  
The two together **represent** the repeated movement of the sun,  
the function of **light** with respect to **time**.

The great man **continues** the work of nature in the human world.

Through the **clarity** of his nature

he **causes** the light

- to **spread** farther and farther and
- to **penetrate** the nature of man ever more deeply.