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CME Group

Ready for the 80s? How to Trade the Deepest Yield Curve Inversion in 40 Years

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GFM
ASSET MANAGEMENT

I ♥ 80's

Ready for the 80s?

Trading the deepest yield curve inversion in 40 years

by Tariq Dennison

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Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/wallpaper-music-colors-80-s-778185/>

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About Tariq Dennison TEP

- Independent Advisor Managing Accounts on the IBKR platform
 - US Advisor: GFM Asset Management LLC
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- In the market since 1998
 - Commerzbank (NY, London, Frankfurt)
 - Bear Stearns (NY)
 - J.P. Morgan (NY)
 - Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
 - Societe Generale (HK)
- Masters in Financial Engineering
 - University of California at Berkeley
- Lecturer at ESSEC Singapore
 - Fixed Income
 - Alternative Assets
- “Neither Standard Nor Poor”
- Author “Invest Outside the Box”



The Yield Curve Inversion

- 2022 vs 1982
 - Similarities
 - Differences
- What the curve means
 - Economy
 - Mortgage rates
 - Student loans
- Drivers of rates
 - Why rates may fall
 - Why rates may rise
 - Steepening / flattening

Strategies To Consider

- Micro yield futures
- Directional strategies
- Flatteners / steepeners
- “Big” bond futures & options
- Fed funds futures & options

2022 vs 1982: Yield Curve Inversion & Why It Matters

Similarities (explained here)

- Inflation surge
 - Oil prices
 - Gold flat or down
- Iran : Afghanistan
 - Soviet Union : China
 - Nuclear MAD¹
 - Carter : Biden
- Volker : Powell
 - See Fed Funds Futures

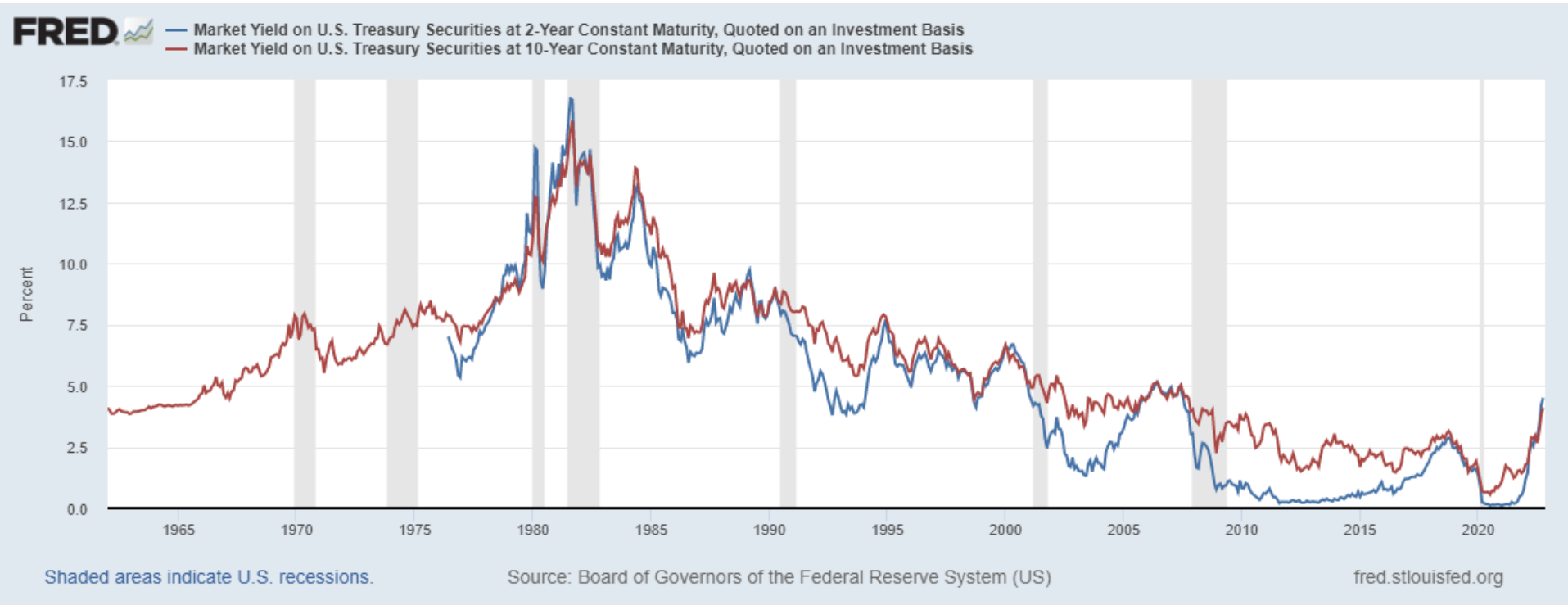
¹ Mutually Assured Destruction

Differences (graphed later)

- Demographics
- Debt levels
- Asset valuations
 - Stocks
 - Real estate

First, let's look at how the yield curve has evolved...

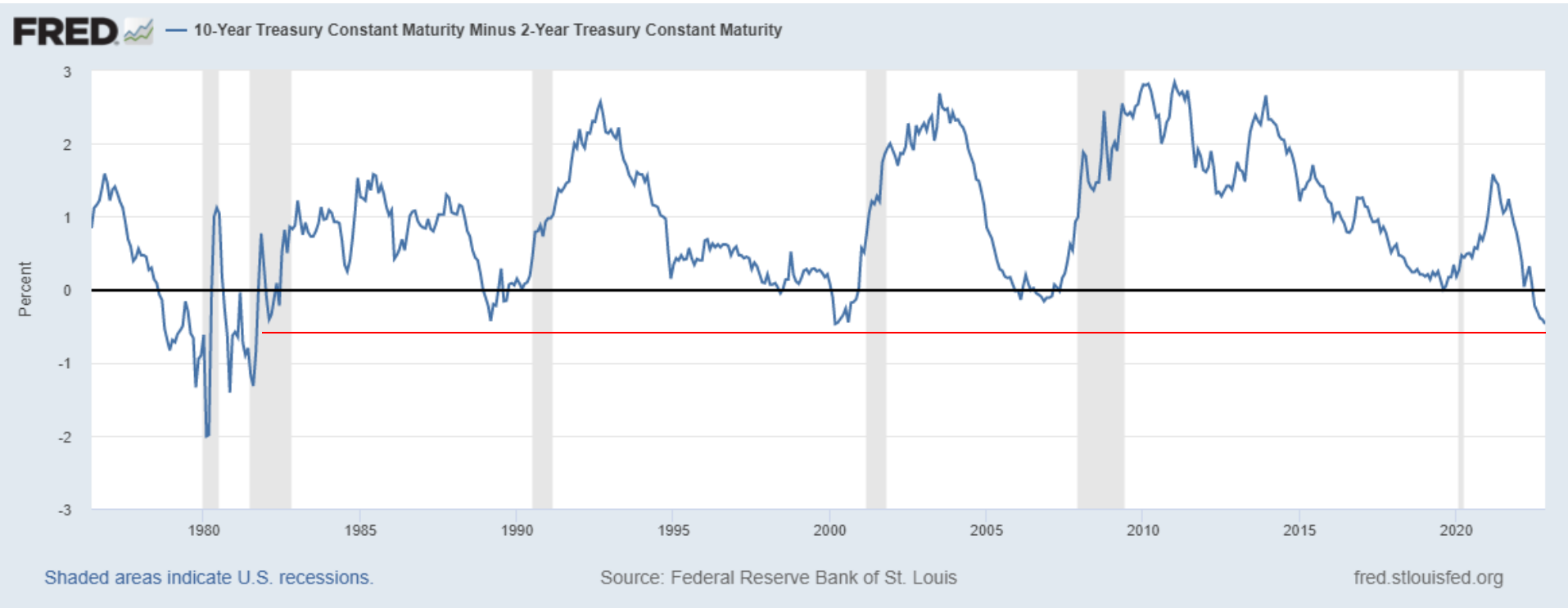
2-year vs 10-year US Treasury Yields, 1962-2022



Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

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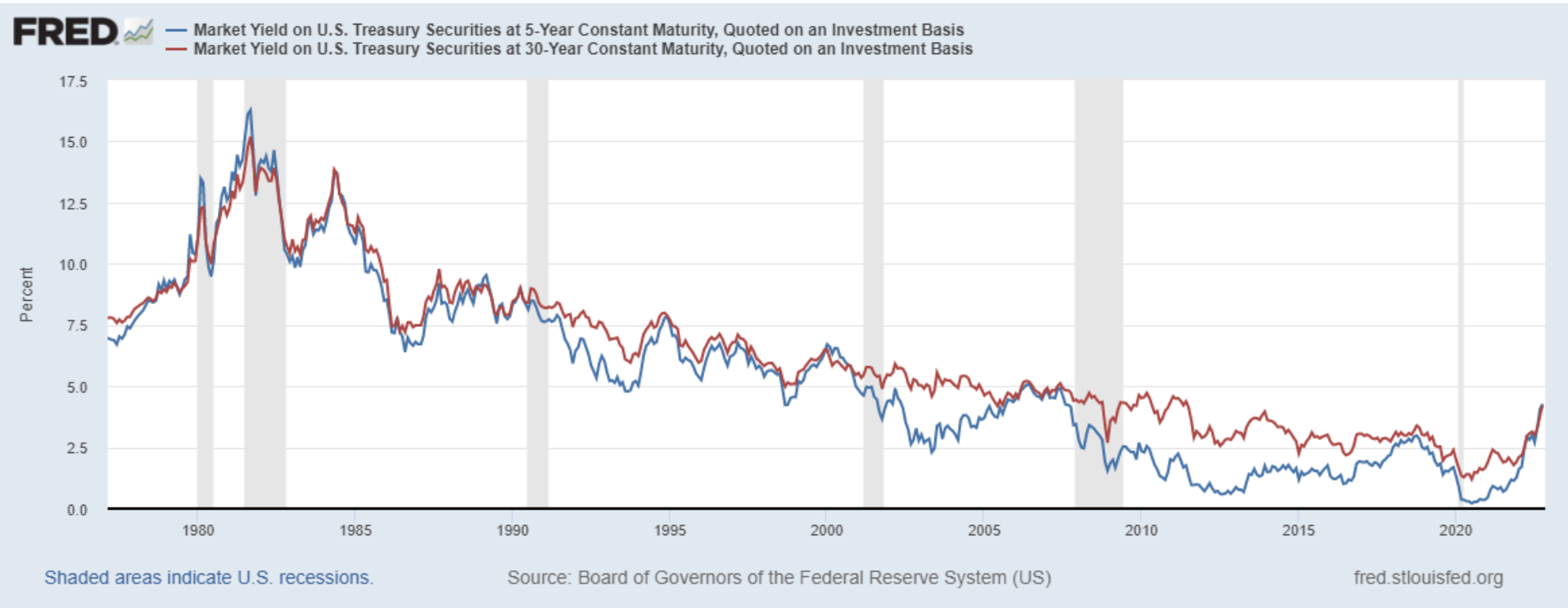
Focus on the “2s10s” spread



Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

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5yr vs 30 year yields, in prep for the next slide...

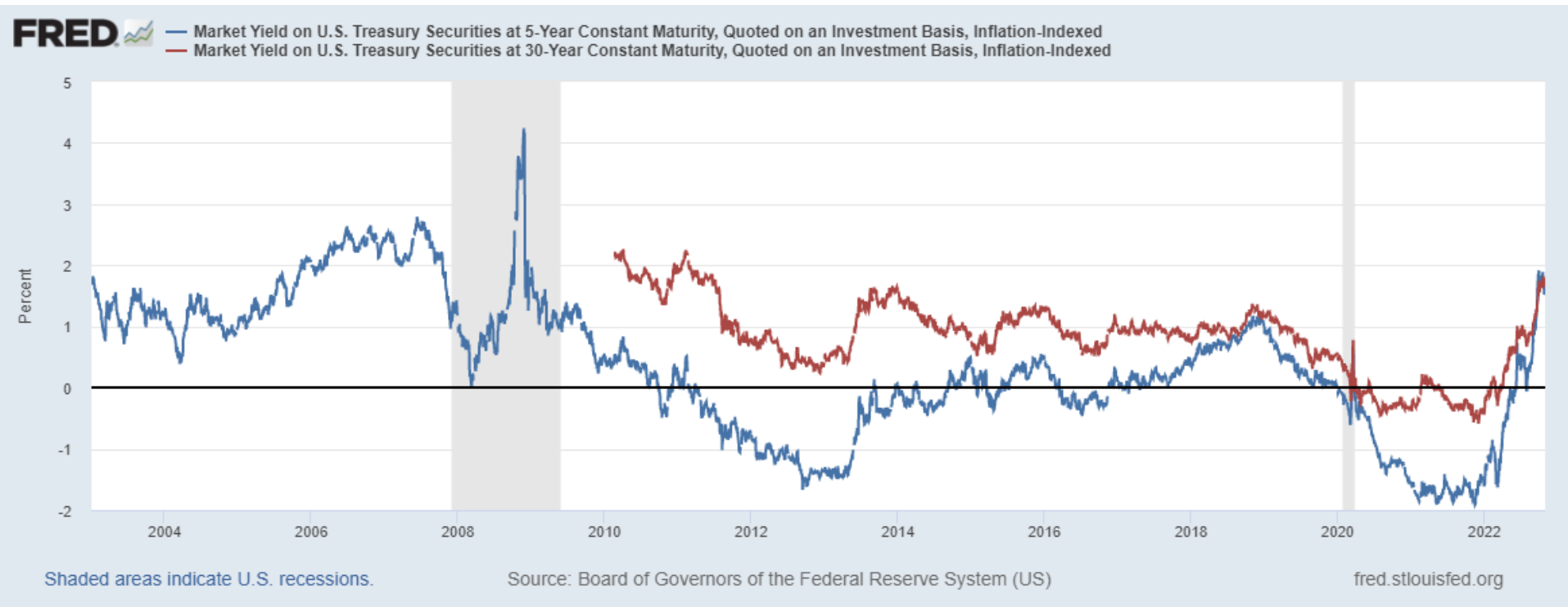


Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

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Perhaps more important: *Real* yields highest since GFC

The math: 4.2% nominal minus 1.8% real implies 2.4% inflation



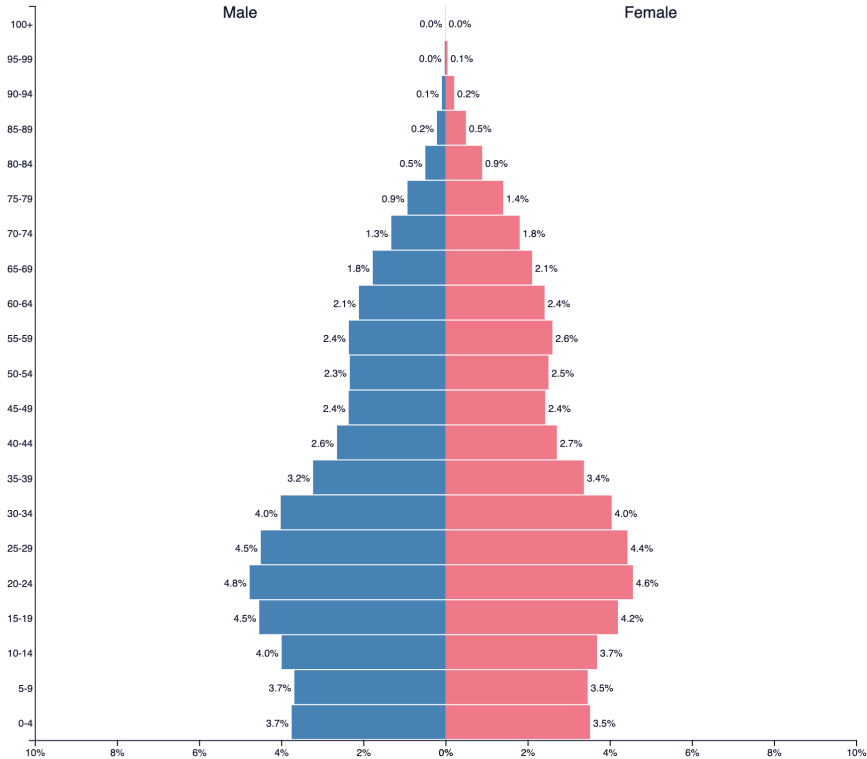
Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

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HUGE difference between now vs then: Demographics

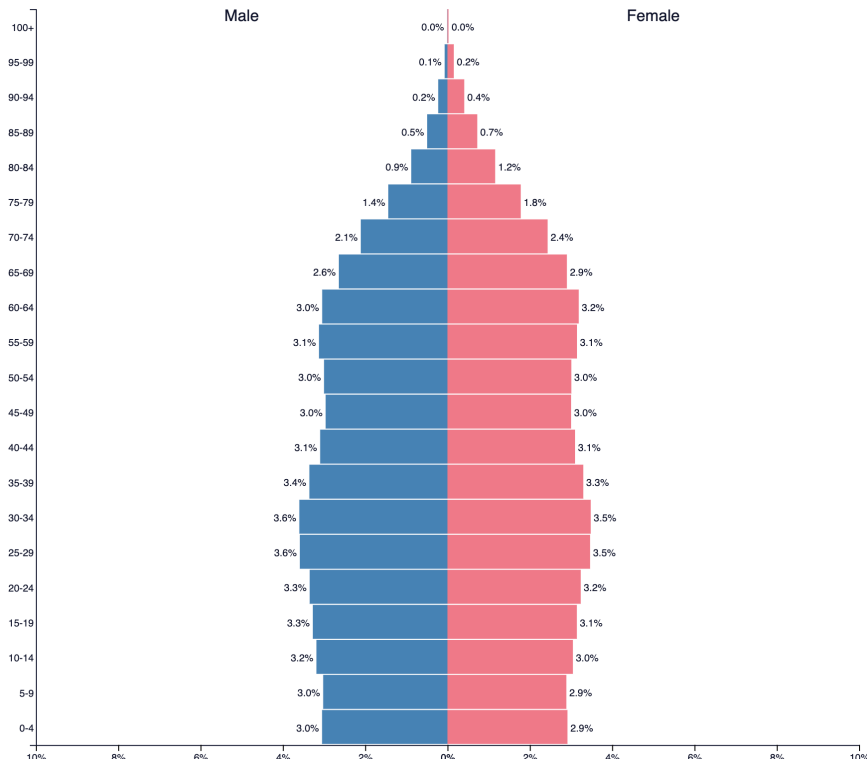
United States of America ▼
1982

Population: 233,821,851



United States of America ▼
2022

Population: 334,805,268



Source: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/united-states-of-america/1982/>

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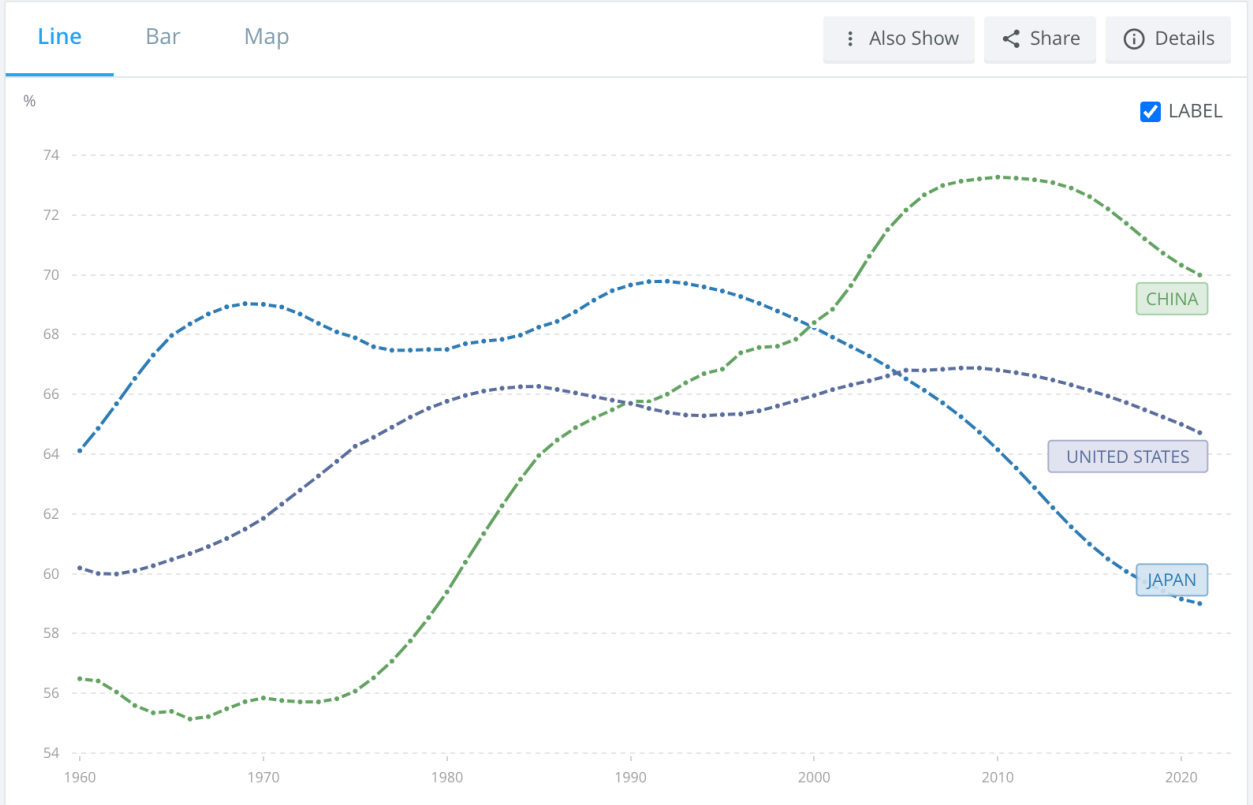


Key variable: Declining Working-Age Population

Population ages 15-64 (% of total population) - Japan, China, United States

World Bank staff estimates based on age/sex distributions of United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision.

License: CC BY-4.0

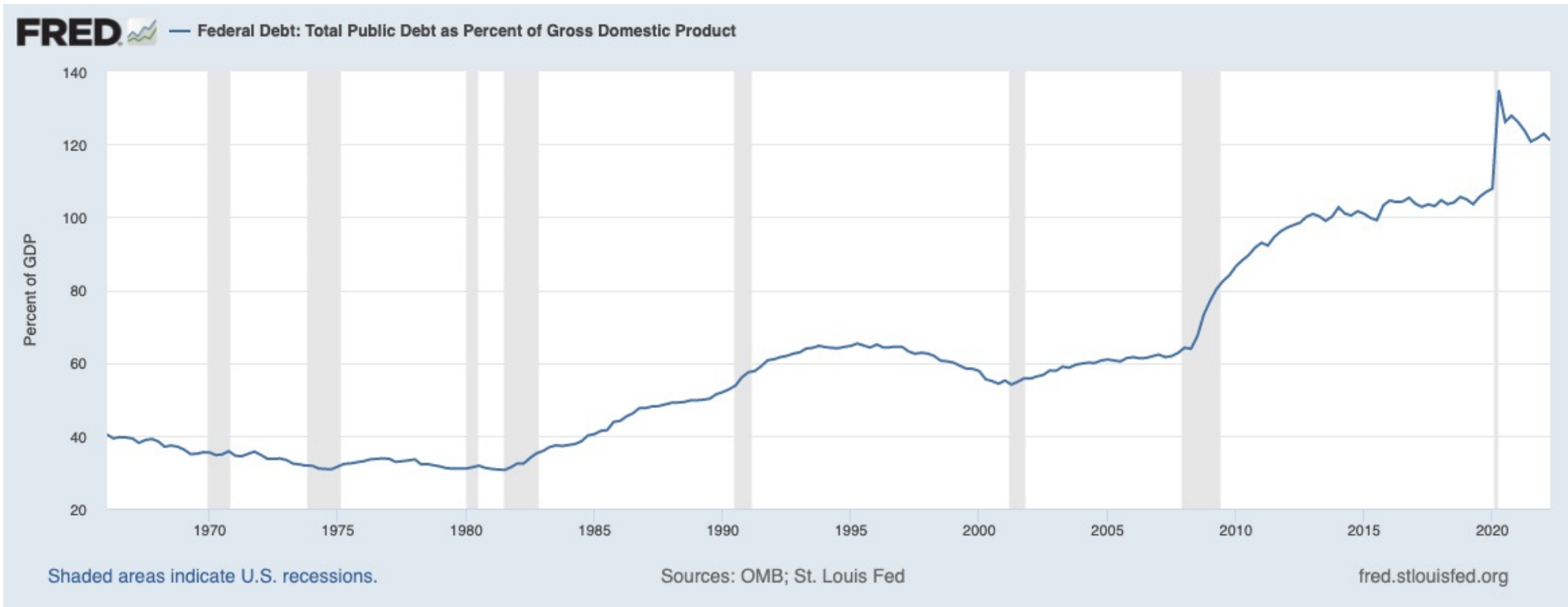


Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.1564.TO.ZS?locations=JP-CN-US>

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Another big difference: much more debt now

Debt weighs down growth rates, limits government interest payment budget



Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

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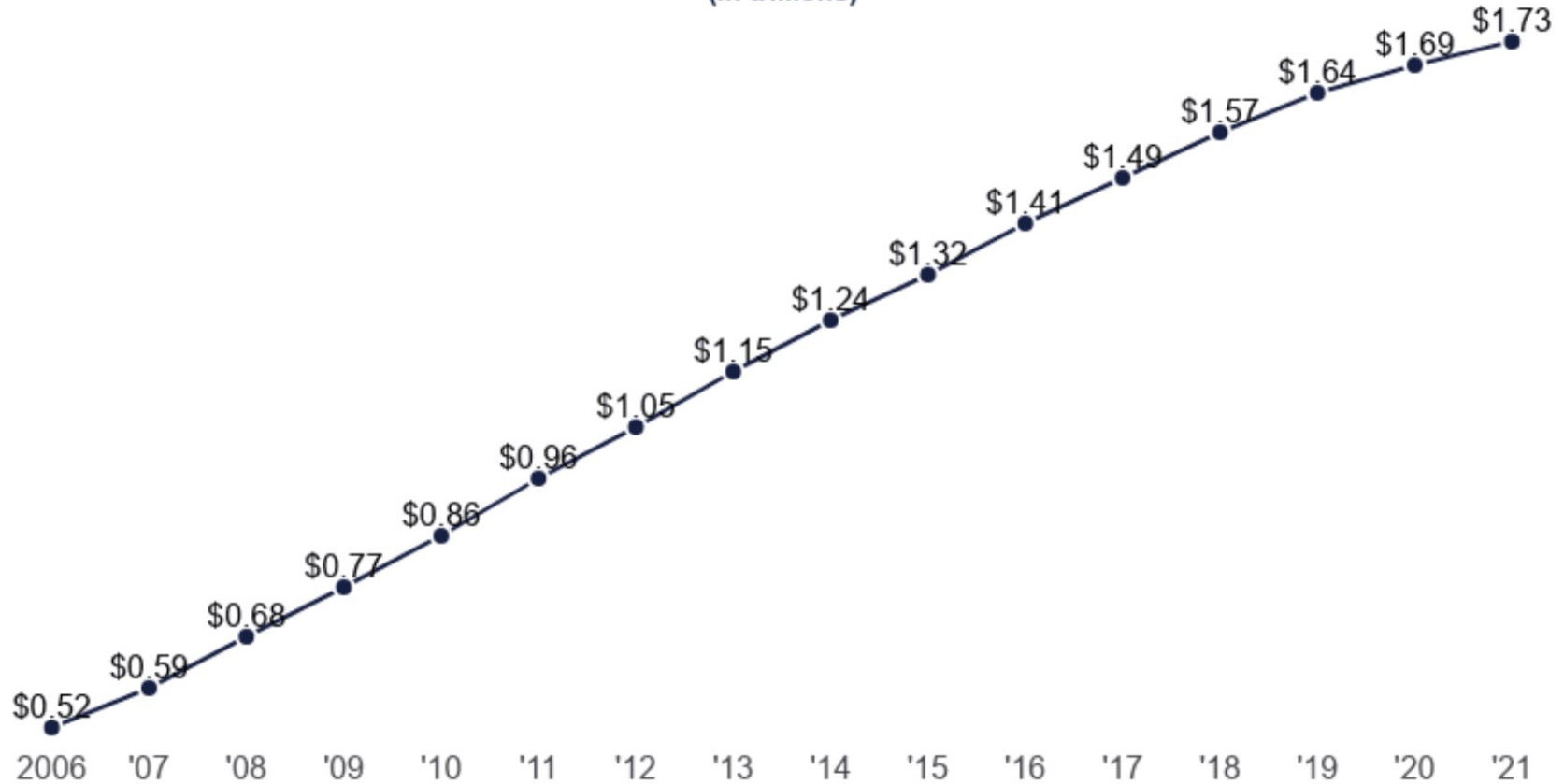


7% mortgage rates vs 3x student debt burden

Two factors hitting American millennials, not Japanese ones

Historic Total* National Student Loan Debt

(in trillions)



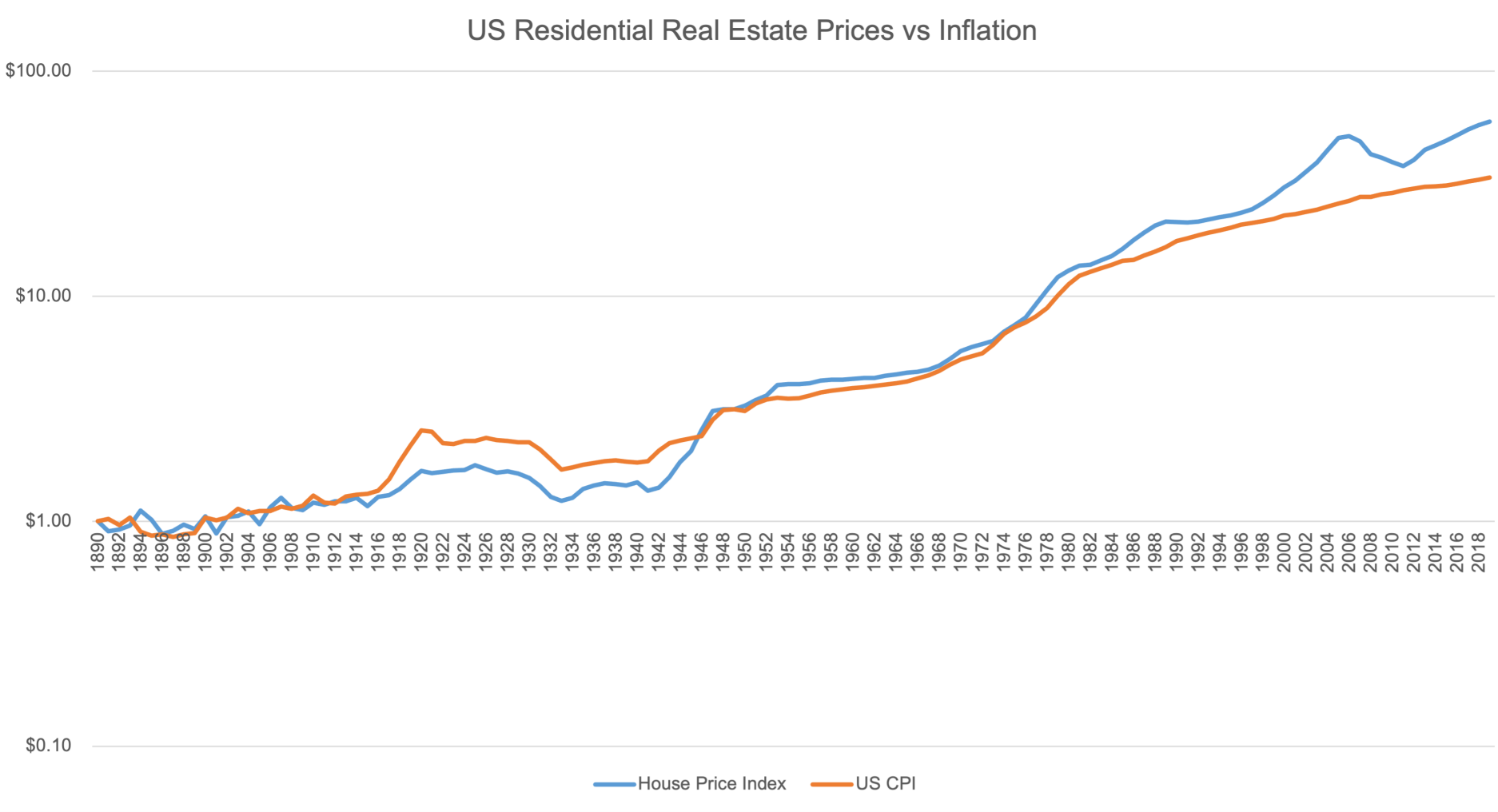
*Totals as of each year's fourth fiscal quarter.

Education Data Initiative source: U.S. Federal Reserve

Source: <https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-statistics>

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Debt vs Real Estate Valuations



Source: <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>

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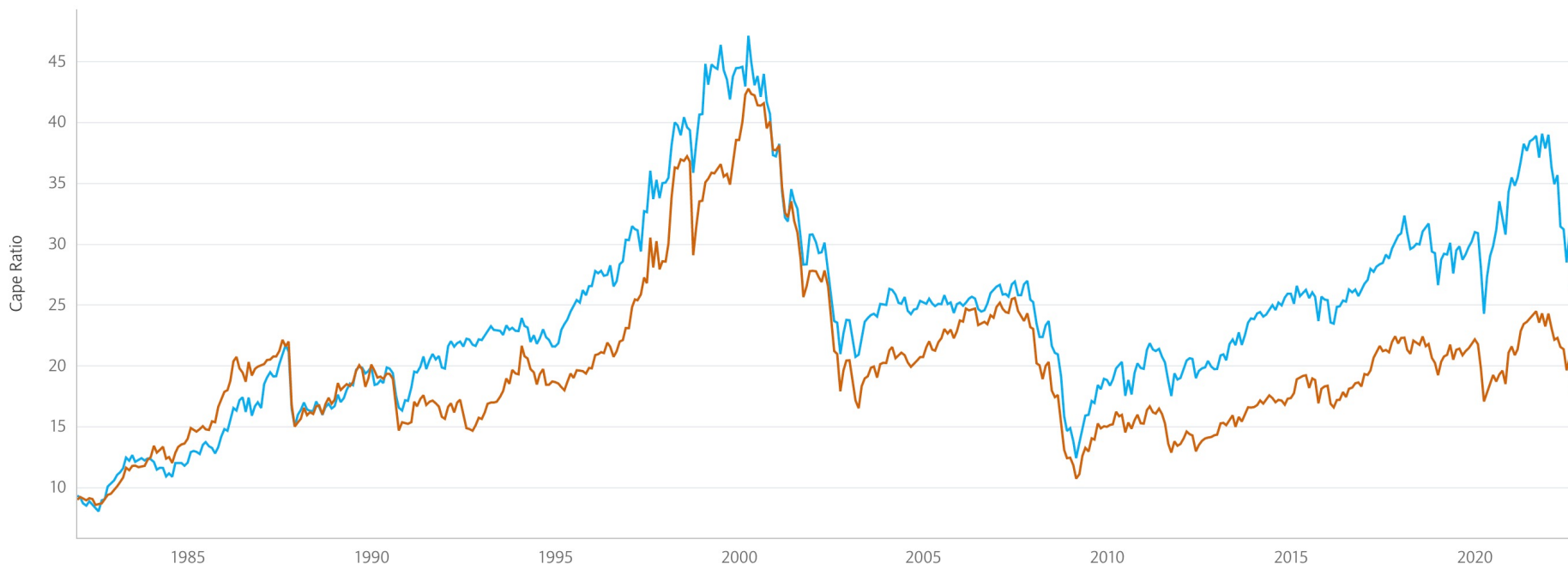
Like Real Estate, Stocks Also Pricier Now Than Then

US CAPE ~26.5 and Europe ~18, vs ~9 in 1982

Historic CAPE[®] Ratio by country

View the historic CAPE[®] ratios for some of the largest economies in the world

Select a country in the chart below to compare historic CAPE[®] ratios over time.

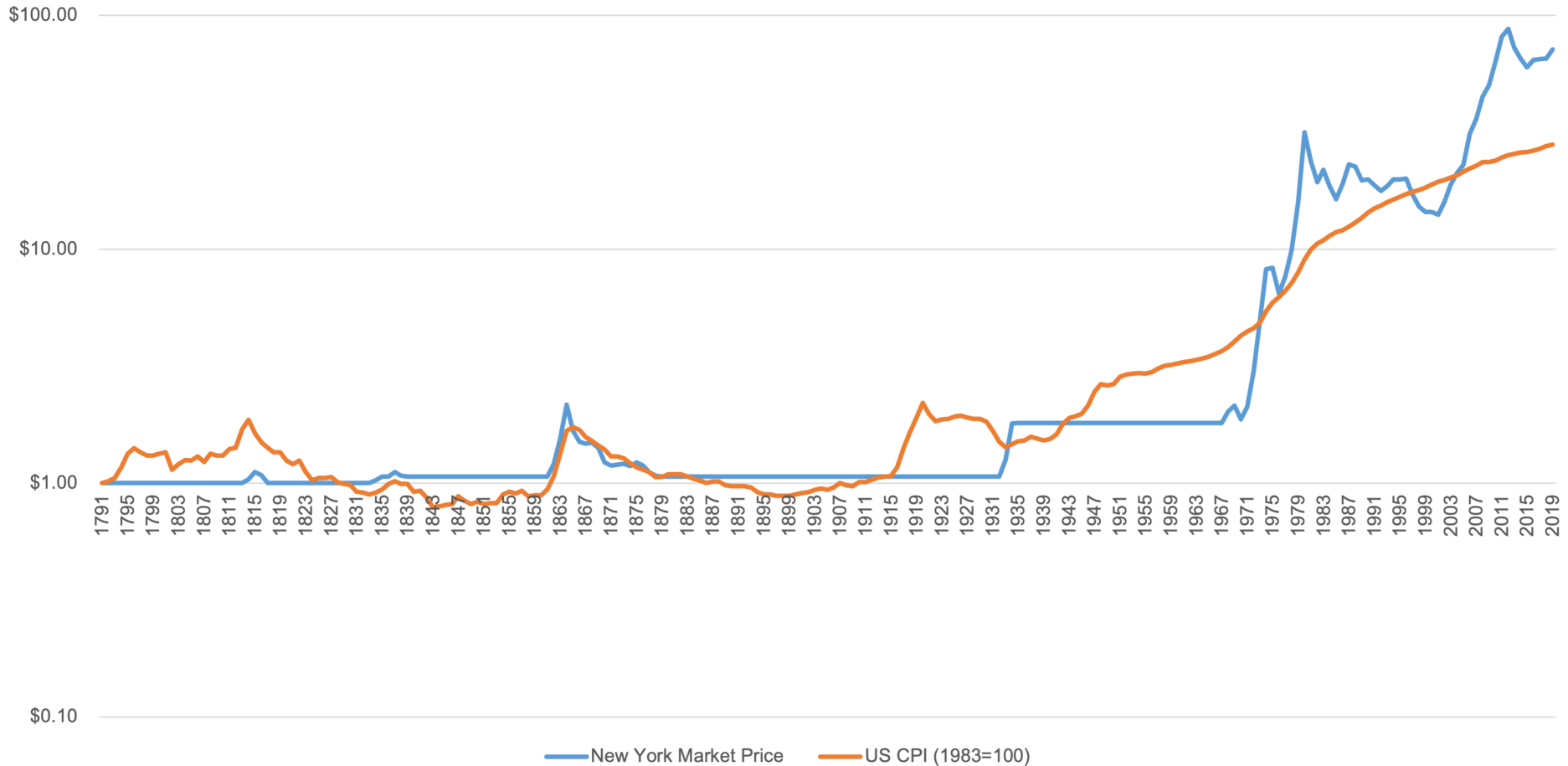


Source: <https://indices.cib.barclays/IM/21/en/indices/static/historic-cape.app>

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What about gold? That's more like 1982

NY Gold Price vs Inflation, indexed to 1791 = US\$1.00



Source: <https://www.measuringworth.com/datasets/gold/result.php>

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What Drives 2Y Yields

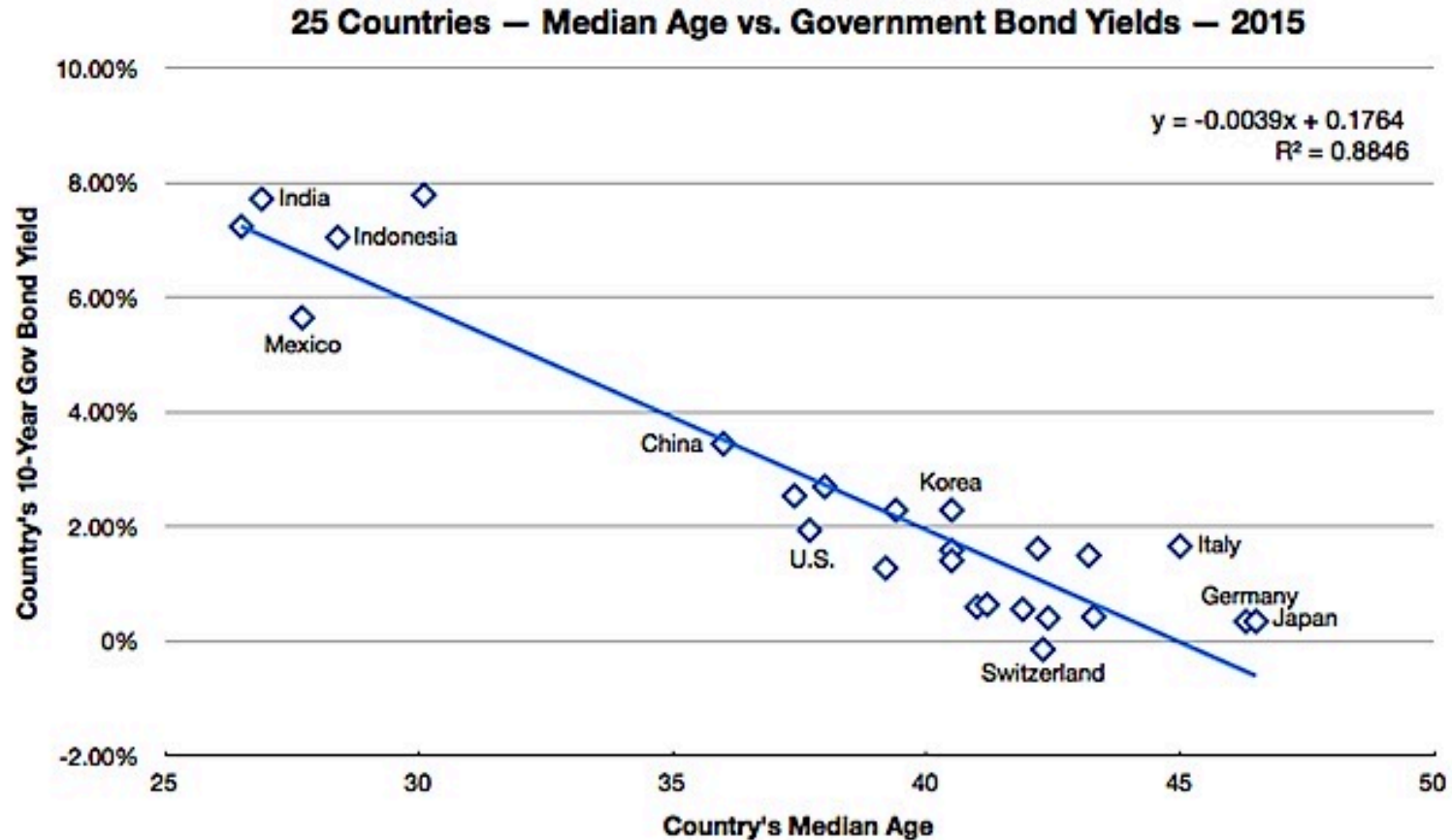
- FED POLICY
 - Exp¹ hikes 👍 2Y Yields
 - Exp cuts 👎 2Y Yields
- Fed hikes when:
 - Inflation worrying, AND
 - Employment robust
- Fed cuts when employment is weak, and investment can stimulate
- Powell vs Volker?

¹ Exp = Expected

What Drives 10-30Y Yields

- Longer-term nominal growth expectations
- Demographics – Older populations mean:
 - More pension assets
 - Less demand to borrow
 - Slower growth
 - Resistance to inflation
- Compare US vs Japan

Demographics may cap rate rises?



Source: <https://www.bogleheads.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=158040>

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Actionable Strategies To Consider

All of today's futures, at a glance

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT		LAST	BD SZ	BID	ASK	ASK SZ	FUT OI	VLM
2YY ∞ Nov30'22 @ECBOT	◆	4.513	1	4.510	4.520	6	754	37
5YY ∞ Nov30'22 @ECBOT	◆	4.238	5	4.256	4.266	5	9	4
10Y ∞ Nov30'22 @ECBOT	◆	4.041	1	4.040	4.048	3	2.52K	272
30Y ∞ Nov30'22 @ECBOT	◆	4.124	5	4.115	4.123	5	392	13
2YY Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	c4.468	1	4.463	4.545	6	1	1
5YY Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	c4.275	5	4.166	4.365	5		
10Y Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	4.045	1	4.045	4.067	3	3	2
30Y Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	c4.163	5	4.064	4.198	5		
ZT ∞ Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	102'042	325	102'041	102'042	61	2.23M	73.7K
ZF ∞ Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	106'185	270	106'185	106'187	94	4.13M	124K
ZN ∞ Dec20'22 @ECBOT	◆	110'205	146	110'205	110'210	759	3.94M	205K
ZB ∞ Dec20'22 @ECBOT	◆	121'040	146	121'030	121'040	74	1.19M	31.1K
ZQ ∞ Nov30'22 @ECBOT	◆	96.2150	25,027	96.2150	96.2175	15,691	382K	19.0K
ZQ Dec30'22 @ECBOT	◆	95.825	1,593	95.825	95.830	1,544	174K	2.15K

Source: IBKR TWS, 2 Nov 2022 11:45am CET

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Part 1: Micro Yield Futures

10Y Micro Yield Futures, Specs and Chart

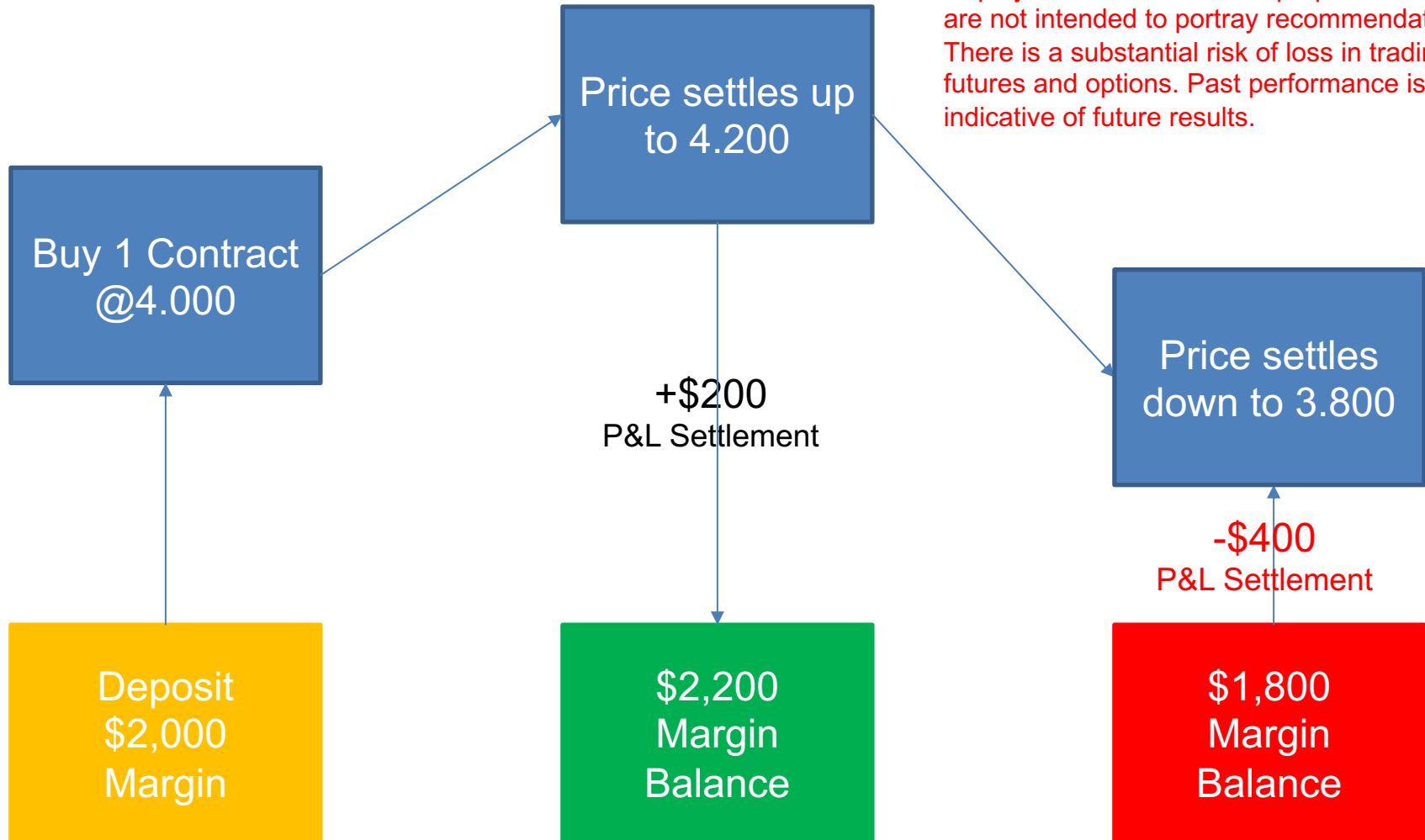


Source: IBKR TWS, 2 Nov 2022 11:45am CET

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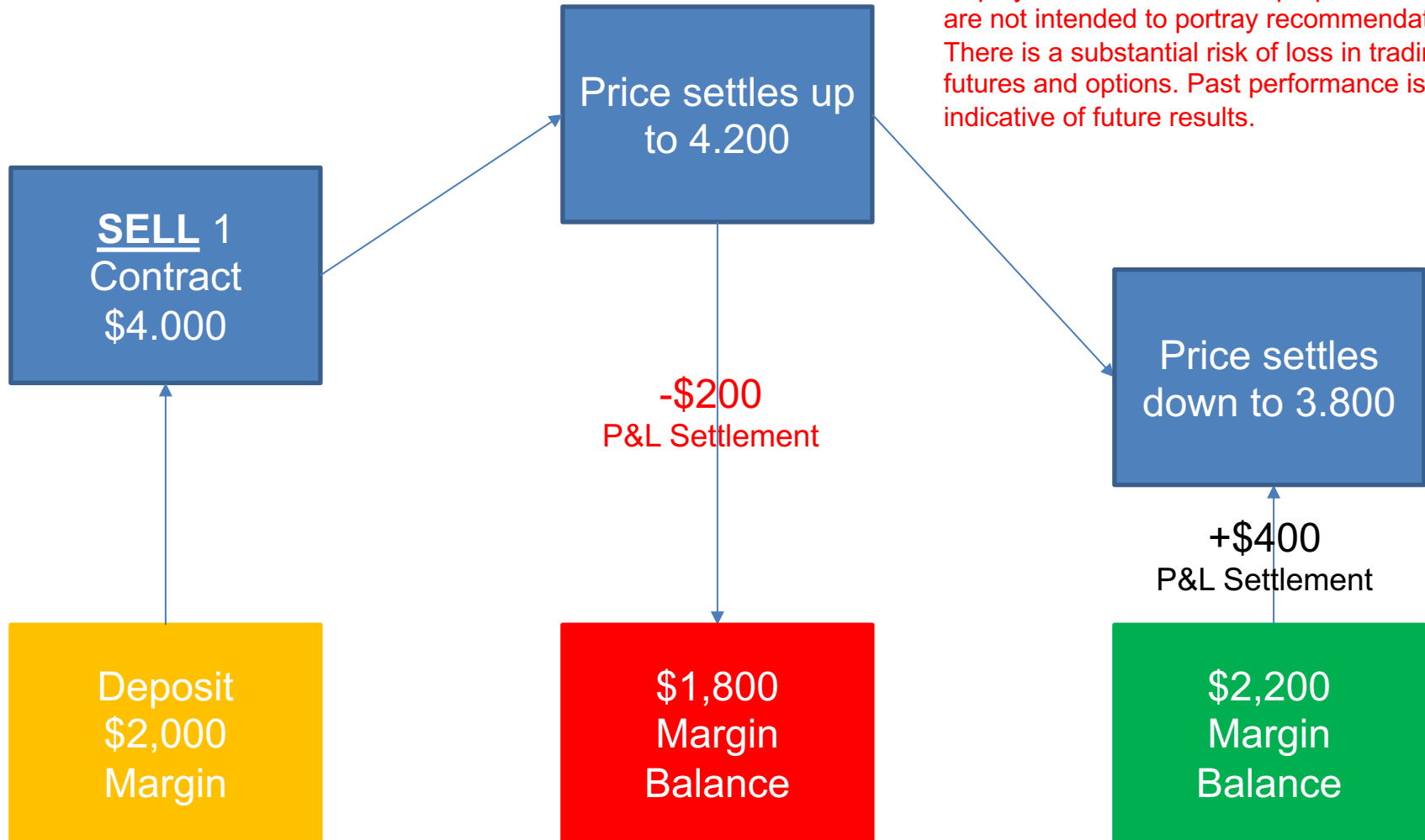
Quick recap: how micro yield futures trades work

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Sell these futures to profit from falling rates

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¹ Micro EURO STOXX 50, €1 per point

Sample “steepener”: Buy 1x 10Y, Sell 1x 2YY

This trade expects the inversion to reverse, whether overall yields rise or fall

2YY \ 10Y	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0
5.5	\$ (2,000)	\$ (1,800)	\$ (1,600)	\$ (1,400)	\$ (1,200)	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0
5.3	\$ (1,800)	\$ (1,600)	\$ (1,400)	\$ (1,200)	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200
5.1	\$ (1,600)	\$ (1,400)	\$ (1,200)	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400
4.9	\$ (1,400)	\$ (1,200)	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600
4.7	\$ (1,200)	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800
4.5	\$ (1,000)	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000
4.3	\$ (800)	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200
4.1	\$ (600)	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,400
3.9	\$ (400)	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
3.7	\$ (200)	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,800
3.5	\$ 0	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,000

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Source: Author's calculation



Part 2: "Bigger" Bond Futures & Options

Specs and chart of ZN, the 10-year note future

DESCRIPTION File Configure

Stock Description

10 Year US Treasury Note

Security Type	FUT
Underlying	ZN IND
Contract Month	DEC22
Expiration Date	DEC 20 '22
Last Trading Date	DEC 20 '22 12:01 CST
Currency	USD
Multiplier	1000
Exchange	ECBOT
Trading Class	ZN
Symbol	ZN DEC 22
Product Type	Fixed Income
Settlement Method	Physical Delivery
Physical Delivery	Not permitted at Interactive

Trading Schedule: November 2, 2022 [Calendar](#)

Regular Trading Session	08:30 - 16:00 (21:30 - 05:00 y)
Total Available Hours	17:00* - 16:00 (06:00 - 05:00 y)
Exchange Time Zone	US/Central

** Times in italics are on the calendar date preceding trade date*

Margin Information

Margin Requirements Per Contract [More](#)

Initial	2805.89 USD
Maintenance	2244.71 USD

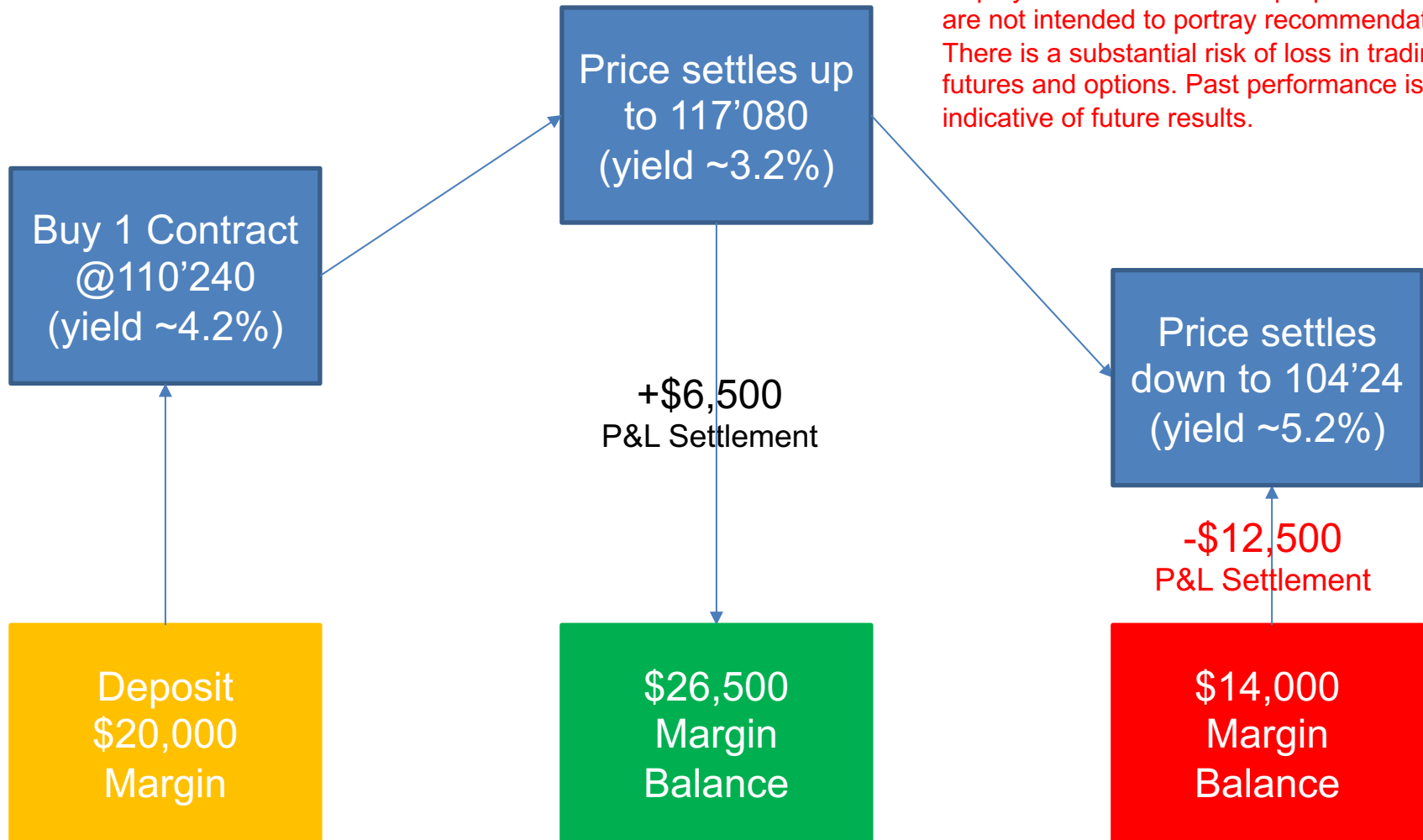


Source: IBKR TWS, 2 Nov 2022 11:45am CET

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The size of these contracts, in perspective

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Micro Yield Futures

- \$1,000 per point of yield
- Small and simple
 - Steepeners / flatteners use equal # contracts
- Cash settled
- Easier curve trades
- No options

Bond Futures

- \$1,000¹ x bond price
 - Must consider duration
- Big and liquid
 - Steepeners / flatteners must be duration-weighted
- Physically settled / CTD²
- Easy to hedge physical bonds
- Options available

¹ \$2,000 for 2 year note futures

² CTD = Cheapest to deliver

About those ZN futures options, a sample chain:

ZN Dec20'22 @ECBOT PUT/CALLS (Side by Side) 110'210 +0'025 (+0.07%)

DEC / MAR'23 OZN 1000 51 DAYS | JAN'23 / MAR'23 OZN 1000 86 DAYS | FEB'23 / MAR'23 OZN 1000 114 DAYS | MAR'23 / JUN'23 OZN 1000 142 DAYS | MORE

TABBED VIEW PUT/CALL 21 STRIKES ECBOT TRADING CLASS 1000 IV: 8.7%

CALLS							PUTS							
OPTN O...	VOLUME	BID	ASK	DELTA	IMPLD	ASK SIZE	STRIKE	OPTN O...	VOLUME	BID	ASK	DELTA	IMPLD	ASK SIZE
3		51	5 33/64 x 5 35/64	0.817	9.5%	1	106	1.26K	158	39/64 x 40/64		-0.186	9.5%	2,969
26		51	5 7/64 x 5 9/64	0.795	9.4%	26	106.5	125	7,162	44/64 x 46/64		-0.209	9.4%	4,518
27		26	4 46/64 x 4 48/64	0.770	9.2%	51	107	667	359	51/64 x 52/64		-0.234	9.3%	38
1		1	4 22/64 x 4 24/64	0.743	9.2%	56	107.5	17.1K	355	58/64 x 60/64		-0.261	9.2%	4,880
1		26	3 62/64 x 4	0.714	9.1%	56	108	3.98K	3,420	1 2/64 x 1 4/64		-0.290	9.1%	3,431
30		56	3 39/64 x 3 41/64	0.685	9%	1	108.5	1.59K	3,323	1 11/64 x 1 13/64		-0.320	9%	1,710
56		26	3 18/64 x 3 20/64	0.652	8.9%	56	109	2.23K	3,286	1 21/64 x 1 23/64		-0.352	9%	795
155		62	2 61/64 x 2 63/64	0.619	8.8%	26	109.5	345	1	1 33/64 x 1 34/64		-0.386	8.9%	420
1.04K		26	2 42/64 x 2 44/64	0.583	8.8%	212	110	9.23K	26	1 45/64 x 1 47/64		-0.422	8.8%	2,978
604		26	2 24/64 x 2 26/64	0.547	8.7%	321	110.5	442	887	1 58/64 x 1 60/64		-0.458	8.7%	514
3.15K		419	2 7/64 x 2 9/64	0.510	8.7%	611	111	3.88K	23	2 9/64 x 2 11/64		-0.495	8.7%	537
220	1,141		1 55/64 x 1 57/64	0.473	8.6%	531	111.5	967	38	2 25/64 x 2 27/64		-0.533	8.6%	347
5.30K	38	500	1 41/64 x 1 43/64	0.436	8.6%	1,117	112	384	1	2 43/64 x 2 44/64		-0.570	8.6%	1
446	1,036		1 28/64 x 1 30/64	0.400	8.5%	2,127	112.5	21	1	2 61/64 x 2 63/64		-0.607	8.6%	71
1.80K		1	1 17/64 x 1 18/64	0.364	8.6%	438	113	252	26	3 17/64 x 3 19/64		-0.643	8.6%	56
28		995	1 6/64 x 1 8/64	0.329	8.5%	4,877	113.5	1	26	3 38/64 x 3 40/64		-0.678	8.6%	26
577	26	65	61/64 x 62/64	0.297	8.7%	189	114	700	26	3 61/64 x 3 63/64		-0.711	8.5%	62
1.30K		38	53/64 x 54/64	0.266	8.6%	1,240	114.5	4	1	4 20/64 x 4 22/64		-0.743	8.5%	26
5.71K	55	4,490	45/64 x 47/64	0.239	8.7%	5,222	115	600	26	4 45/64 x 4 47/64		-0.770	8.6%	51
293		2,752	39/64 x 41/64	0.211	8.7%	8,057	115.5	27	51	5 6/64 x 5 8/64		-0.799	8.6%	26
		76	34/64 x 35/64	0.188	8.7%	4,348	116	2	51	5 32/64 x 5 35/64		-0.823	8.6%	51

Source: IBKR TWS, 2 Nov 2022 11:45am CET

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Part 3: Fed Funds Futures & Options

Fed Funds Futures: Fueling the “FedWatch” Tool

CME FedWatch Tool

Stay up-to-date with the latest probabilities of FOMC rate moves.

Select your language ▾

The next FOMC meeting is in:

06
HRS

04
MIN

19
SEC

What is the likelihood that the Fed will change the Federal target rate at upcoming FOMC meetings, according to interest rate traders? Analyze the probabilities of changes to the Fed rate and U.S. monetary policy, as implied by 30-Day Fed Funds futures pricing data.

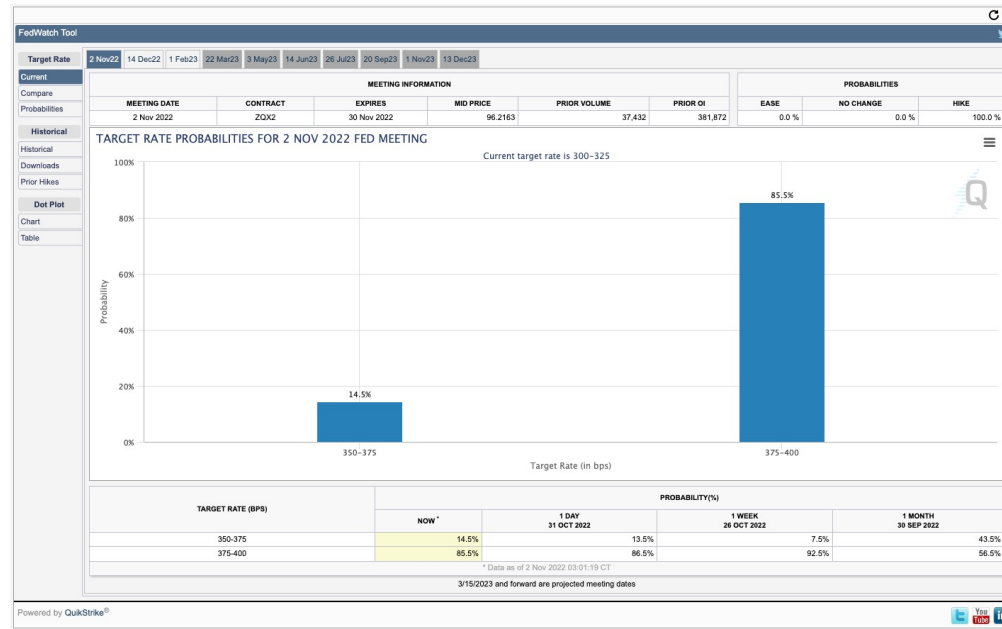
MEDIA: Please attribute rate probabilities used in your reporting to “CME FedWatch Tool.”

QUICKLINKS

[Methodology](#)

[User Guide](#)

[Video Demo](#)



Source: <https://www.cmegroup.com/markets/interest-rates/cme-fedwatch-tool.html?redirect=/trading/interest-rates/countdown-to-fomc.html>, 2 Nov 2022 12:55am CET

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Specs and chart of ZN, the 10-year note future

DESCRIPTION File Configure

Stock Description

30 Day Fed Funds

Product	ZQ
Security Type	FUT
Underlying	FF IND
Contract Month	NOV22
Expiration Date	DEC 01 '22
Last Trading Date	NOV 30 '22 16:00 CST
Currency	USD
Multiplier	4167
Exchange	ECBOT
Trading Class	ZQ
Symbol	ZQ NOV 22
Product Type	Money Market
Settlement Method	Cash

Trading Schedule: November 2, 2022 [Calendar](#)

Regular Trading Session 08:30 - 16:00 (21:30 - 05:00 y)

Total Available Hours 17:00* - 16:00 (06:00 - 05:00 y)

Exchange Time Zone US/Central

** Times in italics are on the calendar date preceding trade date*

Margin Information

Margin Requirements Per Contract [More](#)

Initial	1437.50 USD
Maintenance	1150.00 USD



Why \$4,167 per point?

That's 1 percentage point = \$50,000 per year

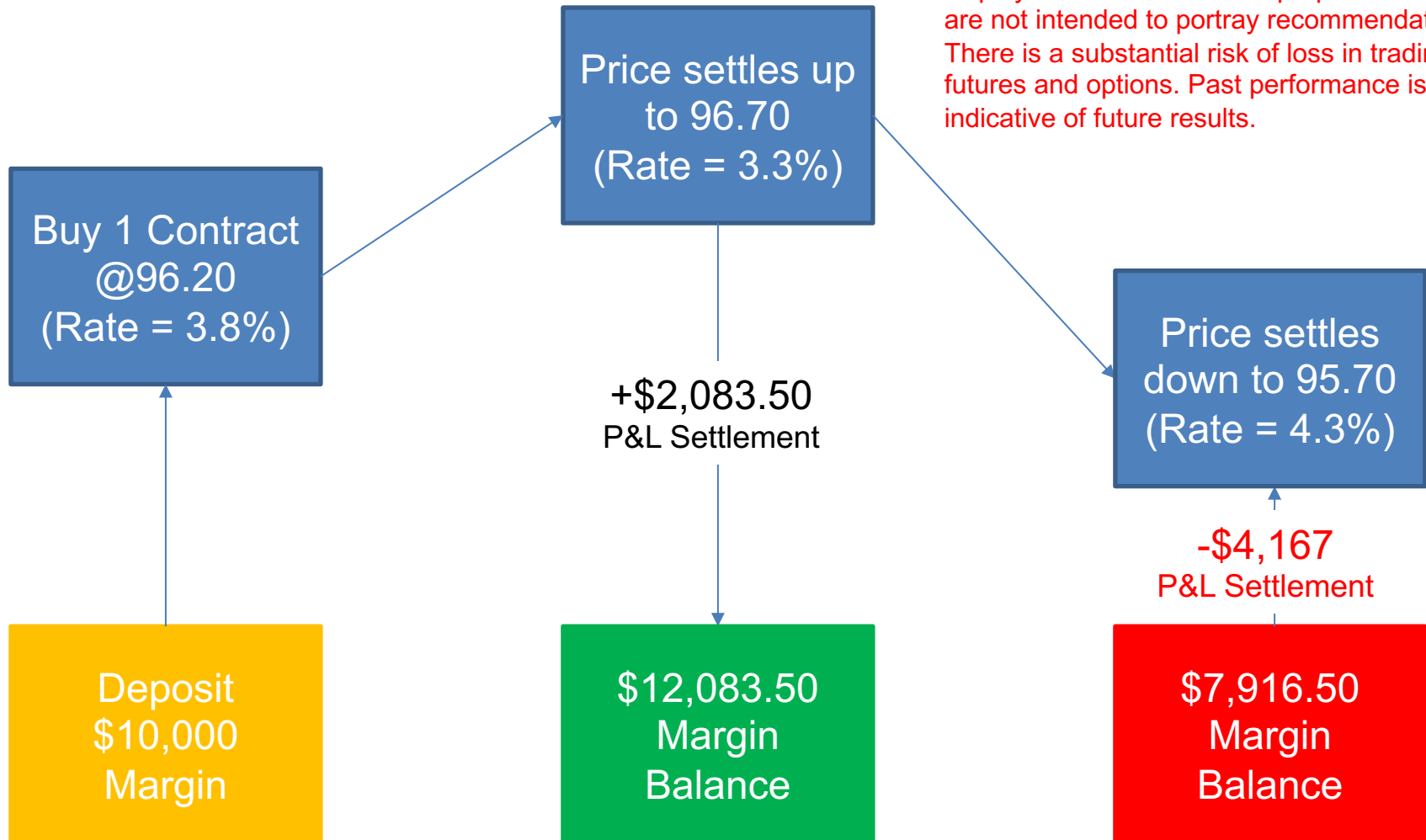
Implied "notional" = \$5,000,000

Source: IBKR TWS, 2 Nov 2022 11:45am CET

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Sample Fed Funds Futures P&L

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Micro Yield Futures

- \$1,000 per point of yield
- Quoted in yield terms
- Better for trading the “curve”, e.g. 2s-10s
- No options
- 2YY vs Fed Funds is an interesting spread to watch, short-end

Fed Funds Futures

- \$4,167 per point of “yield”
- Quoted in 100 – rate terms
- Better for trading “binary” Fed policy decisions (e.g. 50 vs 75 bp hike or cut)
- Options available

Forming your yield curve strategy

- Do you have a view on the absolute direction of rates?
 - *Sustained inflation to drive rates higher, or*
 - *Aging demographics to weigh rates down?*
- Do you have a view on the curve inversion?
 - *Aggressive Fed to continue raising short end, raising recession risks, or*
 - *Stagflation scenario with near-term recession vs higher long-term inflation?*
- Best tool for the job?
 - *Small & simple view on yields or curve → Micro Yield futures*
 - *Sizeable trade referencing bond prices → Bond futures or options*
 - *Near term expectations of Fed policy rate → Fed Funds futures or options*
 - *View on Fed Funds vs the curve → Fed Funds – Micro Yield spread*

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Questions?

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