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Attachments: Moyers & Company Marshall Ganz on Making Social Movements Matter M1y_10_2013.pdf; Subaru Craigslist Ad Is Brutally Honest Huff Post 05_12_2013.pdf; IRS Knew Tea Party Was Being Targeted In 2011, Report Stephen Ohlemache AP-Huff Post May_11_2013.pdf; Who Can Take Republicans Seriously The Editorial Board NYT May_12_2013.pdf; How Austerity Kills David Stucker & Sanjay Basu NYT May_12_2013.pdf; America the Clueless Frank Bruni NYT May_11_2013.pdf; Gunmen fire on Mother's Day parade Chevel Johnson May_12_2013.pdf; The Day the Earth Stood Stupid Marty Kaplan Huff Post 05_13_2013.pdf; If the Fed Knows Banks Are To =?WINDOWS-1252?Q? o_Big_Why_Doesn=92t_It_Make_The? =_m_Smaller=5FJames Kwak The Baseline Scenario May_15_2013.pdf; President John F. Kennedy Commencement Address at American University, June_10_1963.pdf; Are multiple concussions driving suicides in the military Alan Zarembo LAT May_16_2013.pdf; 10 Examples of Bush and the Republicans Using Government Power to Target Critics Bob Cesca Huff Post 05_16_2013.pdf

Inline-Images: image.png; image(1).png; image(2).png; image(3).png; image(4).png; image(5).png; image(6).png; image(7).png; image(8).png; image(9).png; image(10).png; image(11).png; image(12).png; image(13).png

DEAR FRIEND.....

The last gilded age was the 1920s when the rich and the poor lived in totally separate worlds. But today, the wealth gap is so much more profound than it was in the 1920s. The average 'sales associate' at Walmart only makes \$8.81 an hour, while the six heirs for the Walmart fortune are worth more than \$90 billion, the same as the bottom 130 million Americans. One in four Americans makes less than \$10 an hour. 146 million do not have enough to meet basic needs. 42% of college grads are living at home with their parents because they can't afford rent anywhere else.

I realize that the Top 1% don't want to hear this, but they should because when people have nothing to lose, violence is a convenient way out. And in countries where there is a huge disparity between the rich and the poor, the rich gets kidnapped. It happens 72 times a day in Mexico, and getting kidnapped in South Africa is so common that there is an industry of professional brokers to handle the transfers.

The greatest strength of America was the growth of its Middle Class which has been decimated by trickle-down supply-side Reaganite economics of the past three decades. This economic devastation is compounded by the fact that those at the top are so distant from Mitt Romney's famed 47% at the bottom and the fact that almost everyone in between them and the Top 10% are living pay-check to pay-check having been squeezed by the crash of the housing bubble and financial markets.

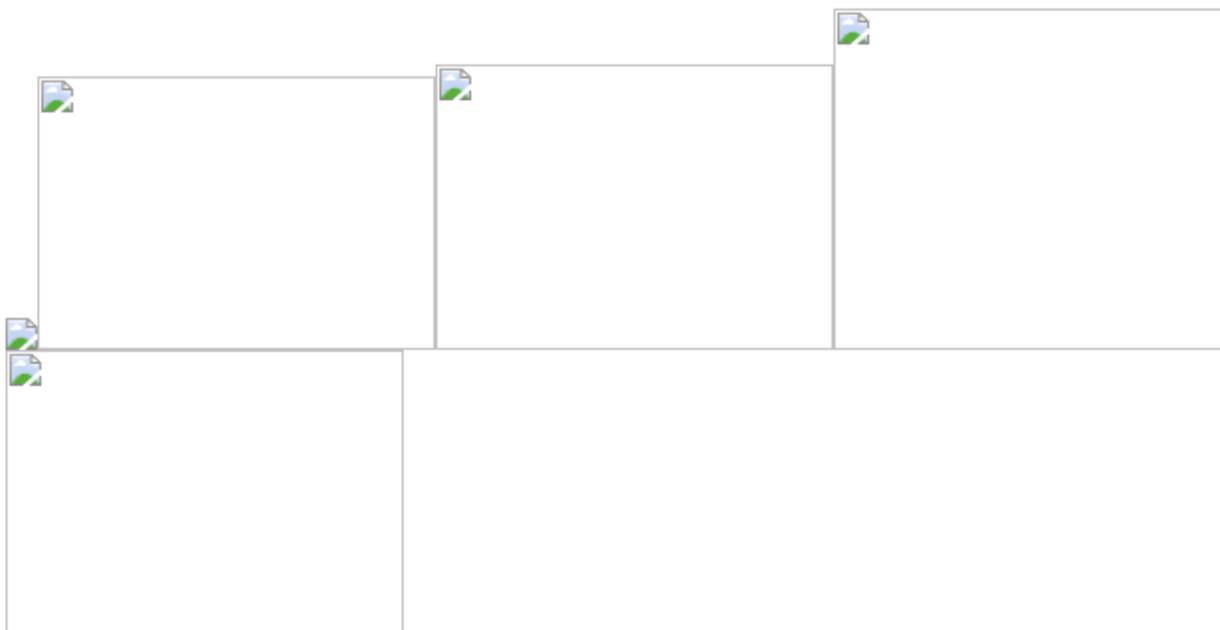
Let's remember that the Soviet Union, Roman empire, French aristocracy, overthrow of the Shah and the Arab Spring came to pass from within. And if we chose to ignore the ever increasing plight of the poor and the middle class, due to the indifference, our country runs the risk of an increasing number of Boston Marathons, Wacos, Timothy McVeighs and other forms of armed insurrections.

For more than two hundred years the United States of America has been the beacon of hope for people around the world, because hard work and a shared sacrifice enabled anyone to become successful. In many ways today this is still true, with the exception of those who are teetering on the edge of survival or the increasing millions of Americans who have fallen through the safety-net, which if not aggressively addressed will lead to us becoming a second-tier nation, in spite of our military might or the wealth of the Top 1%.

Again, as many of you know I am a huge fan of Bill Moyers and last week's **Moyers & Company – Marshall Ganz on Making Social Movements Matter** – Bill spoke with veteran activist and organizer Marshall Ganz to discuss the power of social movements to effect meaningful social change. Ganz is a social movement legend who dropped out of Harvard to volunteer during Mississippi's Freedom Summer of 1964, he then joined forces with Cesar Chavez of the United Farmworkers, protecting workers who picked crops for pennies in California. Ganz also had a pivotal role organizing students and volunteers for Barack Obama's historic 2008 presidential campaign. Now 70, he's still organizing across the United States and the Middle East, and back at Harvard, teaching students from around the world about what it takes to beat Goliath. One of Ganz's themes is the crucial role narrative plays in social movements. *"I think it's particularly important because doing the kind of work that movements do requires risk-taking, uncertainty, going up against the odds. And that takes a lot of hope,"* Ganz tells Bill. *"And so where do you go for hopefulness? Where do you go for courage? You go to those moral resources that are found within narratives and within identity work and within traditions."*

Web site of this segment: <http://billmoyers.com/segment/marshall-ganz-on-making-social-movements-matter/>

"We need a new story, a new way of describing our economic challenges and our political challenges that emphasizes not this idea of what each individual competes with, but the ways in which we cooperate and collaborate with one another." **Marshall Ganz**



BILL MOYERS: At Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Marshall Ganz teaches the next generation of organizers, students from all over the world. He tells them: when in doubt, just remember the story in the Bible of little David and his slingshot...

MARSHALL GANZ: In the story of *David and Goliath* the action begins when Goliath day after day marches out and repeatedly challenges the Israelites. And no one comes out to challenge him. It shifts when David shows up to bring the food to his brothers and hears this and says, "Why is no one doing anything to respond to this?"

Or as Ganz puts it, the first thing that happens here is injustice, need to act, commit, and then the action begins. Until that point, nothing is really happening. ... When the king says, "*Here, take my, take my helmet, take my shield.. Take my armor.*" And David puts it on only to discover that he can't move because it is too heavy. And being a shepherd who knows how to protect his sheep from a wolf or a bear and it wasn't with a sword and a shield, he looks down seeing five stones, picking up one, using his slingshot to hit Goliath in the forehead. Pointing out that this is not a story about non-violence....

BILL MOYERS: Smiting Goliath might as well be Marshall Ganz's job description. It began in Mississippi's Freedom Summer of 1964 when his fury against injustice pulled him out of Harvard and into the struggle for civil rights. From there, he signed on with the legendary Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers and for 16 years, struggled to unionize the men and women in the fields of California who toiled endless hours and mounting days, picking crops for next to nothing.

Three decades after Marshall Ganz had dropped out of Harvard, he went back to finish his degree and earn a doctorate. A few years later, he was asked to become the architect behind the Obama campaign's skillful organizing of students and volunteers.

Today, Marshall Ganz is a founder of the Leading Change Network, a global community of organizers, educators and researchers mobilizing for democracy. You'll find more of his experience and philosophy in this book: *Why David Sometimes Wins*.

MARSHALL GANZ: It helped me understand that dealing with, dealing with fear is probably the central moral question we have to deal with. By moral, I mean, if you think, if you think of moral questions as not being about principles, but more what Jung called "moral sentiment." In other words, how do I live with empathy as opposed to alienation? How do I live with a sense of my own value as opposed to a feeling of deficiency? How do I live in a spirit of hope instead of fear?

WHEN ASKED ABOUT LOVE, POWER and JUSTICE.

MARSHALL GANZ: Argues that power without love can never be just, but similarly love that doesn't take power seriously can never achieve justice. what I learned, the public narrative is the leadership skill of moving people to public action. There's a story of self, which is using narrative to communicate why I've been called enabling me to tell stories that can communicate the values that move me . A story of us is using narrative to create a sense of the values we share as a community. And then the story of now is do they experience the challenge to those values that requires action now? So sort of three pieces.

THE THEME OF YES WE CAN.

BILL MOYERS: Is it true that the slogan for Cesar Chavez and his farm workers was "*si se puede*"?

MARSHALL GANZ: Si se puede, yeah.

BILL MOYERS: Which translated literally into Obama's...

MARSHALL GANZ: "*Yes, we can.*" Oh, you betcha.

BILL MOYERS: Is that right?

MARSHALL GANZ: Well, "*si se puede*" came in Arizona, 1972 Arizona had a governor Jack Williams that passed a law that denied farm workers the right to organize, boycott. I mean, it was a terrible law. And so we had to figure out were we going to challenge it or not? So we all went to Arizona to challenge it. We got there. And went out talking to people. And Dolores Huerta actually came back. We were meeting in a hotel/motel room. She said, "I've been talking to all these everywhere. And everywhere I go, people say, 'no se puede,' 'no se puede.'" She goes, "Ah, you can't do it. You can't do it, you know? It's just too, you know? And we got to, we got to answer that. We got to say, '*si se puede*.'" And so that became the slogan in that campaign was "*si se puede*." Yes, it can be done. And that then became a farm worker movement slogan. "*Si se puede*." So in New Hampshire, when Obama lost that night, and there was a lot of that talk going on around.

BARACK OBAMA: Generations of Americans have responded with a simple creed that sums of the spirit of a people.

MARSHALL GANZ: Then comes out, "*Yes, we can*." Well, that's "*si se puede*."

BARACK OBAMA: ***Yes we can. Yes we can.***

POLITICAL INEQUALITY

BILL MOYERS: I remember what you wrote once that you had learned in Mississippi during the summer of 1964. You said all the inequalities between Blacks and Whites were driven by a deeper inequality, the inequality of power. That seems to me, the fundamental reality of American life today.

MARSHALL GANZ: Yeah, I think the political inequality and the economic inequality and a kind of cultural inequality that sort of all reinforce one another is an enormous problem, obviously. I mean, that's sort of what we're trying to deal with. And so the question and in some ways, you could sort of think that liberal democracy is based on a deal that inequality and economic resources can be balanced by equality in political resources. In other words, that equal voice can somehow balance unequal wealth. Well we're sort of way beyond that. And...

BILL MOYERS: One man, one vote, one person, one vote has been, has been overwhelmed by \$100,000 and a million dollars.

MARSHALL GANZ: And it's not even just the money. If you live in a swing state, your vote counts so much more than if you live in New York or Illinois or California, when it comes to electing a president. If you live in a swing district, when it comes to electing a member of Congress, your vote counts. If you live in a district that's been gerrymandered so it's all Democrats or all Republicans, your vote does not count. So when you really look at whose votes count, it's a very, very small proportion.

So we have some deep structural flaws that go all the way back to the beginning that aren't, they don't, it's not about us as a people or our culture, our beliefs. We're operating within in a set of political institutions that distort and actually warp our capacity to express our beliefs. Maybe what we really need is an equal voice amendment to guarantee that each vote actually had equal weight. That'd be pretty radical. And if we actually designed a system that did that, now, you know, would we get something like that tomorrow? No, probably not. But, but I guess my point is that, that there are a lot of sources of energy and change in a country, not to mention the world. A lot of it is generationally driven. It's in places that may be unexpected. That was a great moment. That was what sort of raised such hopes about his presidency.

THE FLAW OF THE FREE MARKET

BILL MOYERS: So you talk about the power of story and for the last 40 years, the story of the free market has been the triumphant story in American culture.

MARSHALL GANZ: It really is, you know? And it's powerful, because it has a moral dimension and it has a political dimension and it has an economic dimension. It's sort of like that the market means we're all free to make our own choices, so isn't that great, because we want to be free. And it's all about choices.

And politically, well it's all based on people making their choices. And so that's democratic. And economically, well, we all know it's efficient, right, because that's how markets work. It's, and the problem is every one of those claims is fundamentally flawed and fundamentally an act of faith. I mean, Harvey Cox wrote this thing about the market is God. And...but the big question is where's the missing alternative counter to that? And I think that is an enormous intellectual challenge for our time right now. Where's that alternative?

BILL MOYERS: We need a new story?

MARSHALL GANZ: We need a new story. But it's also a new way of describing our economic challenges and our political challenges that emphasizes not this idea of what each individual competes with, each other individual as the answer, but the ways in which we cooperate and collaborate with one another as the answer. You know, Albert Hirschman, the development economist wrote this book a number of years ago, I'm sure you know about it, "Exit, Voice, and Loyalty." And sort of the idea was, okay, so you got an institution. And it's screwing up. And so one way to fix it is to exercise voice. The other way is you can exit. The market solutions are all exit solutions.

BILL MOYERS: Explain that to me.

MARSHALL GANZ: Well, so you don't like the way the schools work, exit, make your own over here. And that way you exercise choice. You don't like the way public health works, exit, over here, make your own. Now the only problem is you can only exit and make your own if you got the money to do it. And so the result is that you create these parallel systems of elite systems that are, you know, that fragment the whole.

The public gets poorer and poorer and poorer, and you create all these little isolated golden ghettos all around of privilege. And the focus is on how do we find market solutions, market solutions, market... when we should but saying, how do we find more effective ways to exercise voice? How can we have more, more effective public deliberation? How can we bring more people into the process? How can we create the venues where people can actually learn and deliberate with one another?

BILL MOYERS: Can you take this one step further or beyond government over to the leadership of other institutions, business leaders, educational leaders? I mean, how do we write a narrative that includes them in this new story of collaboration, cooperation?

FREE MARKET'S BIGGEST FLAW.

MARSHALL GANZ: You know Karl Polanyi's book, "*The Great Transformation*," written in 1941, sort of nailed it when he said, if you have a good that can, where price captures value, you can marketize it. And where price does not capture value you cannot marketize it. And he was talking about labor and land when he was writing in 1941. And he was trying to explain the, the problem of the open market system after World War I that had wiped out all sorts of social structures that cleared the way for the rise of fascism in Europe. I mean, this is the context he was writing in. He was saying, "*So the open market system was allowed to be a solvent that ground everything down.*"

Because it doesn't respect values other than price values. Now how do you put a price on education, really? How do you put a price on health, really? How do you put a price on art, really? Now when we price these things, we undermine their value. And so that's why we need churches. That's why we need schools whose value isn't based on pricing, it's based on a different set of understanding and the resources that it generate doesn't depend on pricing. So I don't know. There's potentials out there. But I think somehow we need to get this into the, we need to get into this debate. We need to get into this argument and have it be about something really substantive. And not get drawn into these, "*Oh, we're too polarized*" or something. We need to be more polarized, but polarized around the right things.

THE INTERVIEW ENDS WITH THIS.

MARSHALL GANZ: There were three questions posed by a 1st century Jerusalem scholar Rabbi Hillel, when asked *"How do we, how do we understand what we are to do in the world?"* And he responded with three questions. The first one to ask yourself, *"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"* It's not a selfish question, but it is a self-regarding question. Sort of saying, "Ask yourself what you're about, what you value, what you have to contribute, what..." But then the second question is, *"If I am for myself alone, what am I?"*

But it, which is, it's to even be a who and not a what is to recognize that we are in the world in relationship with others and that our capacity to realize our own objectives is inextricably wrapped up with the capacity of others to realize theirs.

And finally, *"If not now, when?"* The time for action is always now, because it's often only through action that we can learn what we need to learn in order to be able to act effectively in the ways that we intend. And the fact that they're questions is also really important to me, because it suggests that this work, this work of organizing, leadership is not about knowing, it's about learning.

And it's about asking and it's about understanding that it is about dealing with the uncertain. It is about probing the unknown. It's not about control. It's about, it's about learning through purposeful experience. And so that's kind of, I think, what I've tried to, as I look back, what I've tried to learn, to teach, to do, to practice is how to be that kind of a learner and teacher.

There was a cliché that management consultants coined years ago, *"thinking outside the box."* These words sums up much of what is wonderful about Marshall Ganz. He is a non-liner thinker who understands structure and realizes that our real strength is that instead of me, his mantra is we. He is someone who seeks the greater good, even if it necessitates conflict before compromise. Because if you are not willing for fight for something, you deserve whatever you are given. In Ganz's world, we should to see beyond monetary value, status quo, fame or convenience. Example, great films are based are not on box office success and great music is not the result of record sales or how many people download an iTunes selection. Greatness is the shared experience that we can offer to others, even if we are not famous or rich, as long as we do it for the greater good for everyone and without prejudice. As such, I urge everyone to download and watch Bill Moyers' interview with Marshall Ganz, as he is a inspiration and a guide for everyone who is willing to look beyond their own needs, desires or special interest in search of the greater good.

On its second showing I strongly recommend that everyone see — ***The Untold History of the United States***, a 10 hour (10 episodes) documentary series on Showtime, directed and narrated by Oliver Stone. Co-written and co-produced by American University history professor Peter Kuznick — who collaborated with Stone on a same-titled, 784-page tie-in book — ***Untold History*** is part of a tradition of alternative cultural criticism, journalism, and history. Its chapters echo Ida Tarbell, Upton Sinclair, John Reid, Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Norman Mailer, I.F. Stone, Michael Moore and Jim Burns. With one reviewer calling it ominous, seductive, verbose, apocalypse-left in its politics, filled with scurrilous factoids about men who have monuments named after them, I found it as a refreshing look at United States during the last 80 years, especially when history is always re-written by the winners.... The most recent installment, episode 6, ***OLIVER STONE'S UNTOLD HISTORY OF THE US: JFK*** chronicled JFK and the Bay of Pigs; on the brink of total war during Cuban Missile Crisis; early Vietnam; JFK's attempts at peace with Khrushchev; JFK assassinated. As a result, I took another look at the Presidency of JFK, which I would like to share below.

President John Kennedy, harboring doubts about another land war in Asia as a student of history who as a young Congressman that visited Viet Nam in 1951 during the debacle of the Korean War he advised the Truman Administration against *"aiding the French Colonist and later spoke broadly of needing to win the support of Arabs, Africans and Asians who hated the White Man who bled them, beat them, exploited them and ruled them while pointing out the contradiction of supporting the French empire in Africa and Asia, while opposing Soviet moves in Hungary and Poland."* However

Kennedy a decorated combat veteran of World War 11 resisted in bringing in combat troupes, telling his adviser Arthur Schlesinger, *“the troupes will march in, bands will play, the crowds will cheer and in four days everyone will have forgotten, and then we will be told that we have to send in more troupes. It’s like taking a drink, the affect wears off and you have to take another.”*

But being an admirer of guerrilla warfare in World War 11, where British and Americans fought behind the lines in places like the Burma jungle, he did approve his generals other recommendations expanding military involvement in Viet Nam with the US personnel jumping from 800 when he took office to more than 16,000 advisers in 1963. He also allowed a growing army of CIA and numerous American contractors to flock to this new honey-pot of enterprise. Under Kennedy’s three year watch, the CIA launched 163 major covert operations worldwide, only seven fewer than had been conducted under President Eisenhower in eight years. As such in its early years, Viet Nam was often referred to as a CIA War. Even with this Republicans were after Kennedy’s scalp, with Moderate Republican New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller charging JFK, *“being soft on Communism, naively believing that the Soviet leaders are reasonable and desirous of reaching a fundamental settlement with the West. Rockefeller who was a Moderate Republican said, “the foundations of our safety are being sapped. Kennedy hadn’t stopped Communist aggression in Laos, he had failed to provide air support during the Bay of Pigs invasion and stood idly by when the wall was being built in Berlin.”*

In June 1963 Kennedy gave one of the extraordinary speeches in the 20th Century at the Commencement at American University, where he encouraged his listeners to think about the Soviet people in human terms and calling for the end to the Cold War.

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUjJa9jnynA>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro5XO8rrCes>

The American University speech, titled ***A Strategy of Peace***, was a commencement address delivered by President John F. Kennedy at the American University in Washington, D.C., on June 10, 1963. In the speech, Kennedy announced the development of the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and his decision to unilaterally suspend all atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons as long as all other nations would do the same. The speech was unusual in its peaceful outreach to the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War, and is remembered as one of Kennedy’s finest and most important speeches. As such, I invite you to see the speech on **YouTube** via the above web links, read the attached transcript of the speech and most of all, I implore everyone to see Oliver Stone’s — ***The Untold History of the United States***.

I am tired to Republicans trying to tie everything that is not working with President Obama. He didn’t start the wars in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Long before the US Consulate in Benghazi was attacked, during the previous Bush/Cheney Administration there were thirteen US Embassies that had been attacked killing several hundred people. Where was these same outraged Republicans? As Mark Shields and David Brooks said last Friday during **PBS’ Newshour** when host Judy Woodruff asked how would they compared Watergate to the "scandal" hearings of the past week.

MARK SHIELDS: “Yes. I mean, if we’re going to compare it, I mean, we’re talking about the Boston massacre vs. double parking, I mean, this week. This is not a -- I have heard this compared, this president -- in fact, Sen. Inhofe talked about impeachment of the president, which is just beyond ludicrous, because there’s nothing that rises to any even criminal or negative effect here. I would say this, Judy, that the trust and confidence in the federal government began to end and erode and diminish when that happened. We had a president resign. We had 25 of his closest friends and allies and colleagues go to jail. And it was just -- it was a shock for this country’s system, from which it’s never really recovered.”

JUDY WOODRUFF: David, what about Watergate?

DAVID BROOKS: “Yes. I have a perverse relationship to Watergate, because it made me interested in politics. It was those hearings, watching those hearings on TV that really lit the fire for me that this was really important, that what happened in Washington tremendously important, for good and evil, a test of character and a test of virtue. And it should be pointed out that, in Watergate, we saw acts of cowardice. We also saw some incredible acts of courage from some of the people chasing it down and reacting with integrity. To me, the aftershocks have been negative mostly, in part, as Mark described, with loss of trust in government, in part the rise of a scandal culture.

Watergate really was a scandal, but we now have a lot of people who try to use scandal to settle policy differences by other means, who take mini-scandals and try to use them to get some policy edge or a political edge. And I actually think we as a country have become over-addicted to scandal as a way to destroy other people. And that was in the Supreme Court hearings, and that's in a lot of the scandals. So, I think it's bred a politics of cynicism which kind of reverberates, without the actual substance of a major act of corruption.”

Echoing this last week was Bill Mayer on his **HBO** show, **Real Time With Bill Mayer**, during his segment, **New Rules**, pointing out that there are scandals and then there are scandals and comparing Benghazi, prospective is important. MAYER: “And yes to explain Benghazi on the Sunday morning news shows Susan Rice used talking points (*and showing Sarah Palin reading talking points that she had written on the palm of her hand*) at least she didn't have to read them off her hand....” then commenting about Representative Darrell Issa, who made a fortune in the car alarm business, who keeps calling everything a scandal.... Mayer, “the difference between Darrell Issa and a car alarm is that sometimes when a car alarm goes off, there's actually is a crime... I keep looking for a crime.... Susan Rice said mob instead of al Qaeda, Obama said active terror instead of terrorist act. Republicans are constantly coming up with these never before stated secret rules, that they only tell you about once you have broken them.... You don't make important speeches from a teleprompter.... No golfing until we have a budget.... Thou shall not criticize the President when he is on foreign soil unless he is a Democrat, then its okay.... Congressman Peter King thundered that the President was almost four minutes into his first Benghazi statement before he mentioned act of terror.... Oh yes, the four-minute rule, how could I have missed it...”

MAYER: “Excuse me! Nixon ran a burglary ring out of the Oval Office. Reagan traded arms with terrorist. Bush gin up a war where thousands died by sending Collin Powell to lie to the UN with props.... In a poll last week, four in ten Republicans said that Benghazi was the worse scandal in American history.... If you think that Benghazi is worse than slavery, the Trail of Tears, Japanese internment, Tuskegee, purposely injecting Guatemalan mental patients with syphilis, lying about WMDs and the fact that banks today are still foreclosing on mortgages that they don't own..... then your hard on for Obama has lasted for more than four hours and you need to call a doctor... And while the press has been occupied with scandal, the biggest sandal and then most important story of the century so far happened last week when scientists reported that the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has passed the long-feared milestone of 400 parts per million and unless you are a chimney sweep that is bad news, because humans have never lived through it..... You think that Susan Rice gave bogus talking points about Benghazi, what about the BS talking points that the entire Republican Party has been spewing on climate change since the 1990s.... Who came up with the talking points that global warming is just a theory, and that it needs more study, and climate change is a hoax..... The Obama Administration isn't dirty, the air is....”

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

In my seventh grade homeroom, my teacher, Mr. Kaiser would welcome each student into his classroom with, “*you better check yourself.*” Because whatever baggage, behavioral issue, anger, arrogance, petty peeve, etc that you were feeling, his “*check yourself*” was a warning to not bring it into his classroom. Standing 6’7” with a heavy voice, this WW11 veteran was rarely challenged. And for those who did, he had a disarming way of making them feel like idiots in front of the entire class. Although Mr. Kaiser is long gone by now, boy I wish he or someone like him ran Congress. I start with this story because I realize that in my zeal to expose, enunciate, discover and share whatever pearls of news worthy or cultural information that I post each Sunday, I should “*check myself*” to make sure that my own arrogance, ignorance and special peeve of the moment are within the confines of a balanced assessment. This doesn’t mean I am always successful. Nor does it mean that I am not partisan. Because as most of you know, I am a card carrying liberal Democrat who is extremely proud that I live in a country that elected Barrack Hussein Obama as its President..... Leading me to believe that it is really true, that anyone in America truly has the chance of becoming President, although they may have a much better chance winning the lottery.

I start with the above prequel because in trying to represent my beliefs, even for me at times it seems that I am always beating up on Republicans, Conservatives, Congress and the NRA -- and its over the top. After a bit of soul searching I realize that one of the reasons why my view of the above constituencies is so negative, is because they don’t check themselves. Case in point: this week the Editorial Board of the **New York Times** wrote – ***Who Can Take Republicans Seriously?*** And – *“It is time for President Obama to abandon his hopes of reaching a grand budget bargain with Republicans. Senate and House Republicans are refusing to meet with Democrats to negotiate over the budgets passed by each chamber. Four times in the last two weeks, Senate leaders have proposed beginning a conference committee to hash out a federal budget; four times they have been blocked by Republicans. The Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell, and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said they were afraid the committee might reach an agreement to raise both taxes on the rich and the debt ceiling, which are, of course, the Democrats’ stated goals. Knowing that their positions would be deeply unpopular among the public if their stubbornness were exposed in an open committee, Republicans would simply prefer not to talk at all.*

Instead of negotiation, Republicans cling to their strategy of extorting budget demands by threatening not to raise the debt ceiling. On Thursday, the House passed a stunningly dangerous bill that would allow foreign and domestic bondholders to be paid if Republicans forced a government default, while cutting off all other government payments except Social Security benefits. The bill has no possibility of becoming law, but its passage was a deliberate thumb in the eye to Mr. Obama, business leaders and those who say the debt ceiling should not be used for political leverage.

Republican lawmakers have become reflexive in rejecting every extended hand from the administration, even if the ideas were ones that they themselves once welcomed. Under the circumstances, Mr. Obama would be best advised to stop making peace offerings. Only when the Republican Party feels public pressure to become a serious partner can the real work of governing begin.”

Even to me, it feels that every week I am taking pot-shots at Austerity, which although totally discredited it is still the economic mantra for Conservatives like Paul Ryan. These same Conservatives believe that an unbridled Market Economy is the pathway to sustained growth which is false, because time and again markets can easily be manipulated and are distorted, enabling malfeasance and induced surges ([dot.com](#) bubble, housing bubble or crude oil prices to rise 500% in five years although there was never a shortage or false shortages created by ENRON). This week in the **New York Times**, David Stucker senior researcher at Oxford and Sanjay Basu, professor of medicine at Stanford wrote the op-ed – ***Why Austerity Kills***. The piece starts out with the story of the triple suicide in the seaside town of Civitanova Marched, Italy where a married couple, Anna Maria Soprani,

68, and Romeo Dionisi, 62, had been struggling to live on her monthly pension of around 500 euros (about \$650), and had fallen behind on rent, hang themselves in a storage closet at home and after reading their note asking for forgiveness, Ms. Sopranzi's brother, Giuseppe Sopranzi, 73, heard the news, he drowned himself in the Adriatic. All because the Italian government's austerity budget had raised the retirement age, Mr. Dionisi, a former construction worker, became one of Italy's *esodati* (exiled ones) — older workers plunged into poverty without a safety net. Although most of the stories in the media about Austerity are centered on deficit reduction numbers, little is said about the lives they affect.

In addition to greed induced rigging, markets aren't equal. Because in truly free markets there are moral, political and economic dimensions. Yes, free markets are about the freedom to make choices, but what about the choices. The flaw in market solutions, is that they really are '*exit solutions*,' which are fine when you are choosing dish powder, computers and restaurants. But if you don't like the way the schools work, then exit and make your own over there. As such, you exercise choice. If you don't like the way public health works, exit, over here, make your own. Except the only problem is you can only exit and make your own if you have the money to do it. The result is that we are creating parallel intuitions and services in elite alternative systems that, that fragment the whole. Causing the public to get poorer and poorer and poorer, while the rich become more isolated in their golden ghettos built around privilege. Market solutions that don't extend to a broader constituency are not solutions at all.

The real weakness of markets are that they don't respect values other than price values. They really don't reflect the value of education. They don't value health, otherwise as a country we would be willing to spend more on health than on defense. And often when we price these things we undermine their value. Suggesting that the biggest blockbuster is a better movie and that Justin Beaver latest offering is good music. When we do this we end up with a pop culture, where derivative traders really believe that they are important then doctors, firefighters and schoolteachers. How do you price churches, that offer hope and community? And this is why we need schools whose value isn't based on pricing, We need a different understanding that values are not dependent on price.

As for the NRA, their hubris is beyond belief. Even after Newtown, they are opposed to basic background checks or a gun registry. We live in country were the registry of cars is mandatory if you want to use one. We live in a country where a license is required if you want to drive. We live in a country where 19 people were shot during a Mother's Day parade in New Orleans, including two children, with little notice in the major media. I wonder if this most recent gang related mass shooting would have receive this little attention from major media if the victims weren't minorities living in Seventh Ward in New Orleans. If you want to impeach Barrack Obama over four whites killed in a war zone in Libya, why hasn't anyone asked for Congressional hearings for these 19 victims of gun violence here at home? As such, how can I take Republicans, Conservatives and the NRA seriously, other then when they are spoofed by Stephen Colbert or on late night television. With this said, please forgive me if I continue to lambaste the stupidity. arrogance, ignorance, intolerance, hatred, racism and hypocrisy of those institutions. Because as they use to say in the neighborhoods that I grew up in, "*someone needs to tell these people what time it is.*" ***Now Welcome to My Weekly Readings.***

Although it was common knowledge for the past several years, last week a new scandal surfaced. It appears that senior Internal Revenue Service officials knew agents were targeting tea party groups as early as 2011, according to a draft of an inspector general's report obtained by **The Associated Press** that seemingly contradicts public statements by the IRS commissioner. The IRS apologized Friday for what it acknowledged was "*inappropriate*" targeting of conservative political groups during the 2012 election to see if they were violating their tax-exempt status. The agency blamed low-level employees in Cincinnati, Ohio, saying no high-level officials were aware.

It appears that on June 29, 2011, Lois G. Lerner, who heads the IRS division that oversees tax-exempt organizations, learned at a meeting that groups were being targeted, according to the watchdog's report. At the meeting, she was told that groups with "*Tea Party*," "*Patriot*" or "*9/12 Project*" in their names were being flagged for additional and often burdensome scrutiny, the report says. Obviously if this isn't crime it should be. But to turn it into a national scandal is ridiculous. Because in 2004, the Bush Administration used the IRS to do a full audit on the NAACP because of public comments made by its President Julian Bond against the War in Iraq. And this was stated publicly in the documents of cause as the reason for the audit.

Also the head of the IRS, Commissioner Douglas Shulman at the time was a both a Republican and a Bush appointee, whose 6 year term just expired last November. And due to the backlog of Obama appointees having trouble getting through the Congressional process, the agency is now run by an acting commissioner, Steven Miller. And one of the reasons why this came to notice by the IRS was due to a surge of politically active groups claiming tax-exempt status in recent elections – conservative and liberal. Among the highest profile are Republican Karl Rove's group Crossroads GPS and the liberal Moveon.org. These groups claim tax-exempt status under section 501 (c) (4) of the federal tax code, which is for social welfare groups. Unlike other charitable groups, these organizations are allowed to participate in political activities, but their primary activity must be social welfare. That determination is up to the IRS.

Having been a subject of targeting (*often referred to as racial profiling*), since I was a young teenager and until my late 50s, I truly understand the outrage that these conservative groups feel. But every time that something like this happens, before the facts are fully vetted Conservatives jump to scandal, long before everyone settles on stupidity, and yes whether it be the latest IRS skulduggery or Benghazi miscalculation. What is amazing to me is that these same Conservatives - Republicans who are always harping on government's incompetence, (*they can't do anything, they don't know what they are doing*), except than when Barrack Obama wants to make it work against them, somehow government can do it really well and really effectively. As Napoleon once said, "***never ascribe to malice what can easily attributed to incompetence.***"

If you watch *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, you will know one of his regular outside of studio segments, *Jay Walking*, where he walks around with a television crew, usually in commercial areas, such as Universal City Walk, The Third Street Promenade and The Grove interviewing random people and asking general knowledge things, such as "*who is buried in Grant's Tomb*," "*who was our first President*," "*what is the largest state in the country*," and "*who was Mitt Romney's running-mate in the 2012 Presidential Election*." Answers that a fourth grader should know. And the humor in the segments are the clueless answers. Echoing this sentiment that many Americans are clueless is an article last week in the **New York Times** by Frank Bruni – ***America the Clueless***. Using Obamacare as his initial example, Bruni says that according to a recent poll, almost 40% of Americans don't even know that it's a law on the books. With 40% of Americans clueless about its sheer existence. Some think it's been repealed by Congress. Some believe it's been overturned by the Supreme Court.

According to a survey that Bruni stumbled across several weeks ago, 21 percent believe that a U.F.O. landed in Roswell, N.M., nearly seven decades ago and that the federal government hushed it up, while 14 percent believe in Bigfoot. But only limited sense can be made of what is often nonsensical, and the truth is that a great big chunk of the electorate is tuned out, zonked out or combing Roswell for alien remains. Polls over the last few years have variously shown that about 30 percent of us couldn't name the vice president, about 35 percent couldn't assign the proper century to the American Revolution and 6 percent couldn't circle Independence Day on a calendar.

One of Bruni's favorite findings: in a poll in 2011, after intense, closely chronicled fiscal battles in California, a sampling of the state's residents were quizzed about which category of spending

accounted for the biggest share of California's budget. Only 16 percent correctly said public education through the 12th grade. And they did this poorly in spite of being given just four possible answers, including the correct one, from which to choose. In 2010 in California, Bruni covered a Tea Party rally at which Carly Fiorina, vying for the Republican nomination for a United States Senate seat, was scheduled to speak. Bruni approached a couple whose profusion of hats and buttons and handmade signs — along with their willingness to spend hours in a crowded field under a punishing sun — led him to believe that they were at least somewhat politically engaged. I asked them if they were inclined to support Fiorina. With great seriousness, they said that they hadn't yet decided between her and Meg Whitman. Whitman was running not for senator but for governor, in a race that hardly wanted for coverage. They didn't have to choose.

But we live in a country where although the President has said from day one he is a Christian, yet more than four years as President, almost one in third or Republicans still believe that President Obama is a Muslim and 13 percent think President Barack Obama is the Antichrist. According to the poll of 1,247 registered American voters, 37 percent believe global warming is a hoax. Among Republicans, the poll found that 58 percent believe global warming is a hoax, while just 25 percent do not. Among Democrats, 11 percent believe global warming is a hoax, while 77 percent do not. According to the poll of 1,247 registered American voters, 37 percent believe global warming is a hoax. Among Republicans, the poll found that 58 percent believe global warming is a hoax, while just 25 percent do not. Among Democrats, 11 percent believe global warming is a hoax, while 77 percent do not.

Apart from perennial news stories about how many Americans would flunk the citizenship test that immigrants must pass, we mostly gloss over our ignorance or deny it. Election analysts are constantly saying that voters are "too smart" for some ploy or "smarter than" they get credit for being. And there's a whole subgenre of nonfiction that assures us that we shouldn't be spooked by how uneducated we are. "The Wisdom of Crowds" suggests that if enough bumbling people act in concert, they'll find their way to a less bumbling place, while "Blink" portrays snap judgments as the fruits of an information intake that isn't easily measured but is meaningful nonetheless. There's "Emotional Intelligence" as well as nuts-and-bolts knowledge, and we can be guided, profitably, by it.

Bruni sums up his op-ed: "Into the vacuum of substantive knowledge rush the unprincipled advertisements, the unctuous hucksters, the "super PACs," the Swift boating, the Sunday-morning-talk-show spin. And that a clueless electorate is a corruptible one, and one that seems ill poised to make the smartest, best call about something as sweeping as Obamacare and how it gets tweaked or not down the line. Maybe we'll blink our way to the right decisions. Or maybe we'll just stumble around with our eyes closed." But *The Big Ugly* in the article is that where there is ignorance. It is played upon by special interest to get pockets in the America to support issues against their own self interest. Otherwise, how else can one explain that there isn't more support for a non-profit national health single payer healthcare system in America, like there is in every other industrialized country?

This week in the **Huffington Post** — Marty Kaplan Director, Norman Lear Center and Professor at the USC Annenberg School, wrote the article — ***The Day the Earth Stood Stupid***. The title is from the 1951 film about an alien landing his flying saucer on Earth to issuing a final warning: Stop it. If you don't, you're doomed. Back then, the "it" was violence -- the Cold War, and the threat of nuclear midnight. But last week, it was climate change -- greenhouse gases, and the promise of ecological extinction. ***"Heat-Trapping Gas Passes Milestone, Raising Fears,"*** ran the headline on the front page lead story in Saturday's **New York Times**, with this sub-head: ***"CO2 at Level Not Seen in Millions of Years, Portending Major Climate Changes."***

Included is a animated graph from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth Science Research Lab showing how atmospheric carbon dioxide has changed over the last 800,000 years should be as horrifying as any computer-generated imagery Hollywood has to offer. Along with

the news that we had hit the 400 ppm mark on the CO₂ curve for the first time since the Pliocene epoch came scary quotes from scientist after scientist calling this our last chance before the point of no return. Unless we act, children born today will see temperatures rise irreversibly and sea levels rise catastrophically. Weather patterns will be disrupted, deserts and drought will spread and -- in the words of Lord Stern, head of the U.K.'s Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment -- "hundreds of millions of people will be forced to leave their homelands because their crops and animals will have died.... When they try to migrate into new lands... [they will be brought] into armed conflict with people already living there. Nor will it be an occasional occurrence. It could become a permanent feature of life on Earth."

Pumphandle 2012: Time history of atmospheric carbon dioxide

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA7tfz3k_9A&feature=player_embedded&noredirect=1

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=vA7tfz3k_9A

If graphs and quotes aren't sexy enough to warrant attention, the **Climate Reality Project's** website features 18 disturbing but entertaining videos about the price of carbon and our addiction to fossil fuels. **"Do the Math,"** the film that journalist Bill McKibben is using to spark his 350.org movement, has a dramatic narrative that's compelling but not preachy. ***The Years of Living Dangerously***, **Showtime's** climate change documentary series now being shot, has producers who know a little something about how to capture audiences: James Cameron, Jerry Weintraub and Arnold Schwarzenegger. There's plenty we can do in our personal lives to reduce our carbon footprint. Local and state policies in conservation, transportation, building design and urban planning can also curb greenhouse gas emissions. But without federal leadership like killing the Keystone XL pipeline and putting a tax on carbon, and without global commitments with teeth to enforce them, it's hard to imagine a path back from the brink.

In the U.S., the same dysfunctions preventing anything else useful from happening -- the Senate filibuster, the gerrymandered House, the corrupt campaign finance system -- also hold climate change mitigation hostage. So does denial. And though some denial can be attributed to hoax propaganda funded by the fossil fuel industry, some comes from an infantile strain in the American psyche that should not be mistaken for religious freedom. Last week, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D -- R.I.) gave a floor speech urging his colleagues to *"awaken to what carbon pollution is doing to our planet, to our oceans, to our seasons, to our storms. And I wonder, 'Why is it that we are so comfortable asleep, when the warnings are so many and so real?' What could beguile us away from wakefulness and duty? I was recently at a Senate meeting where I heard a member of our Senate community say, 'God won't allow us to ruin our planet.'... That statement... is less an expression of religious thinking than it is of magical thinking."* If this doesn't work maybe blowing past the 400 ppm barrier can get humans finally address the human activity that is contributing to climate change. Because if we don't..... being called stupid will be the least of our problems.

This week in **The Baseline Scenario**, James Kwak post the article — ***If the Fed Knows Banks Are Too Big, Why Doesn't It Make Them Smaller?*** On May 2, **The Wall Street Journal** reported that regulators were pushing to require "very large banks to hold higher levels of capital," including minimum levels of unsecured long-term debt, as part of an effort *"to force banks to shrink voluntarily by making it expensive and onerous to be big and complex."* The article quoted Fed Governor Jeremy Stein, who said, *"If after some time it has not delivered much of a change in the size and complexity of the largest of banks, one might conclude that the implicit tax was too small, and should be ratcheted up."*

A few days later, Fed Governor Daniel Tarullo said roughly the same thing: *“The important question is not whether capital requirements for large banking firms need to be stronger than those included in Basel III and the agreement on capital surcharges, but how to make them so,”* said Mr. Tarullo, adding later that even with those measures in place it *‘would leave more too-big-to-fail risk than I think is prudent.’* Tarullo recommended higher capital requirements and long-term debt requirements for systemically risky financial institutions.

Last week, Governor of Governors Ben Bernanke quoted from the same talking points: “Mr. Bernanke said the Fed could push banks to maintain a higher leverage ratio, hold certain types of debt favored by regulators, or other steps to give the largest firms a ‘strong incentive to reduce their size, complexity, interconnectedness.’ “The Fed chairman acknowledged growing concerns that some financial companies remain so big and complex the government would have to step in to prevent their collapse and said more needs to be done to eliminate that risk.”

It’s important to note exactly what Stein, Tarullo, and Bernanke are all saying.

- Here’s what they’re not saying: Too-big-to-fail banks enjoy implicit subsidies and impose externalities on the rest of us; therefore those subsidies and externalities should be priced; and then those banks can decide whether they want to absorb those costs or make themselves smaller.
- Here’s what they are saying: Too-big-to-fail banks are too big and complex and pose a systemic risk to all of us; therefore they need to become smaller and less complex; and the Fed will tweak the regulations until they become smaller and less complex.

What’s remarkable about this? These three men—probably the three most important on the Board of Governors when it comes to systemic risk regulation (as opposed to monetary policy, for example) — all say that they know that the megabanks are too big and complex. They all say that accurate pricing of subsidies and externalities is not an end in itself. They all say that the goal is smaller, less complex banks. But as Kwak says, *“what baffles me: If the goal is smaller, less complex banks, why not just mandate smaller, less complex banks? Why beat around the bush with capital requirements and minimum long-term debt levels? Those tools might be appropriate if you think huge, complex banks should exist but you want to make them safer. But if you’ve already concluded that banks need to be smaller and less complex, then they’re just a waste of time.”*

They also betray a frightening naivete regarding corporate governance. The theory is that higher capital requirements, for example, will lower banks’ profits, which will upset shareholders, who will eventually force the board of directors to eventually convince the CEO to break up his empire. This scenario, unfortunately, depends on the premise that American corporations are run for the benefit of their shareholders, which is only roughly true, and even that often requires long, expensive, and messy shareholder activist campaigns.

Instead, there’s an obvious solution: rules that limit the size and scope of financial institutions. But Bernanke has ruled out “arbitrary” size caps in favor of his cute regulatory dial-tweaking.

Again, Bernanke’s position might be defensible if he wasn’t already sure that today’s banks are too big and complex. Then it might make sense to tweak the incentives and see how the market reacts. But if he knows they are too big and complex, he should eliminate that risk in the simplest, most direct way possible. If he’s not sure how much smaller and simpler banks need to be, he can do it in steps: set one set of size and scope limits, see what he thinks about the outcome, and then set another set of limits if he’s still unhappy. To use a crude analogy, let’s say we’re concerned about guns on airplanes. Ben Bernanke thinks, like I do, that guns on planes present an unacceptable risk to the safety of air travel. But his approach is to charge a \$100 fee for anyone who wants to bring a gun onto a plane. If people keep bringing guns on board, he’ll raise the fee to \$200, then \$300, and so on until people stop. The

sensible, obvious solution is to just ban guns on planes. But that would be “arbitrary.” So if the Fed is truly serious, why don’t they do what they have already said they should do?

The U.S. military is currently facing two epidemics as a result of more than a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. One is suicide. The annual rate of military personnel taking their own lives has doubled to about 20 per 100,000. That translated to a record 324 suicides in the Army last year and one suicide every 65 minutes. The other is concussion, also known as mild traumatic brain injury, or TBI. The proliferation of roadside bombs has subjected tens of thousands of troops to brain-rattling explosions. Several studies have suggested a link between the two epidemics — that service members who suffered concussions are at greater risk for suicide. A paper published — ***Repetitive Traumatic Brain Injury, Psychological Symptoms, and Suicide Risk in a Clinical Sample of Deployed Military Personnel*** — Wednesday in the journal **JAMA Psychiatry** helps illuminate the nature of that relationship. Researchers found that military personnel in Iraq who suffered multiple concussions were far more prone to suicidal thoughts than those who sustained just one such injury or never had a concussion. And by controlling for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder — well-known risk factors for suicide — the study moves closer to establishing TBI as a significant factor in suicides.

The most extensive study yet by the U.S. government on suicide among military veterans shows more veterans are killing themselves than previously thought, with 22 deaths a day — AGAIN..... one every 65 minutes, on average. The study released on Friday by the Department of Veterans Affairs covered suicides from 1999 to 2010 and compared with a previous, less precise VA estimate that there were roughly 18 veteran deaths a day in the United States. More than 69 percent of veteran suicides were among individuals aged 50 years or older, the VA reported. *“This data provides a fuller, more accurate, and sadly, an even more alarming picture of veteran suicide rates,”* said Democratic Senator Patty Murray of Washington state, who has championed legislation to strengthen mental health care for veterans. The news came two weeks after the U.S. military acknowledged that suicides hit a record in 2012, outpacing combat deaths, with 349 active-duty suicides — almost one a day. The long-term effects of concussions have become a pressing research topic in recent years as a result of the wars. Emerging evidence from football, ice hockey and other contact sports has also shown that repeated injuries may pose a cumulative danger.

While the new study suggests that TBI directly contributes to the risk, it is far from definitive. Another possible explanation for the link is that a character trait — impulsiveness — is driving both phenomena. It is a well-established risk factor for suicide. And as Craig Bryan (one of the authors of the study) pointed out, it also increases the likelihood of suffering a concussion. *“Somebody impulsive is more likely to act without foresight and get injured,”* he said. More studies are needed to determine cause and effect, he said. Also, it is likely that some patients in the study were less than truthful about their medical and psychiatric histories. Studies suggest that troops are reluctant to acknowledge problems that might sideline them. *“They very much want to be returned to duty,”* Bryan said. *“They feel guilty letting everybody else down while they are in a clinic.”* Some studies have estimated that up to 20% of the troops deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq have suffered a concussion. While those caused by bomb blasts have received the most attention, many have also occurred in various accidents outside of combat.

This week in the **Huffington Post** by Bob Cesca — ***10 Examples of Bush and the Republicans Using Government Power to Target Critics*** — he starts his article with, *“they say two wrongs don’t make a right, but ignoring one of those wrongs while vilifying the other is intellectually dishonest and violently hypocritical, among other things.”* And certainly that’s the case surrounding news that the IRS targeted tea-party groups as a means of determining and verifying their tax-exempt

status has resurrected a familiar debate about government overreach and abuse of power. Obviously the IRS has over-reached its authority and there hasn't been a Presidential Administration in recent history who hasn't tried to go after whistle blowers. But as Cesca points out that for congressional Republicans be outraged by the IRS story, Justice Department-AP story, Benghazi, etc, claiming that they are so egregious to warrant a Special Prosecutor, here are some forgotten history from the Bush years, but the first three items are quite new and ongoing.

- 1. Planned Parenthood.** After a hoax video was produced by James O'Keefe and released by a professional clown-wrangler, the late Andrew Breitbart, the Republican Party has engaged in a years-long effort to strip the organization, which offers cancer screenings and other affordable medical services for women, of critical funding from the government.
- 2. ACORN.** The government attack on ACORN, traditionally a left-leaning organization, might be hilarious if it wasn't so tragic. As with Planned Parenthood, the Republican inquisition against ACORN was nothing more than a politically motivated witch hunt based on, once again, a selectively-edited prank video by a scam artist, O'Keefe, who's been convicted of wiretapping a sitting U.S. Senator and forced in court to pay \$100,000 in restitution to a fired ACORN employee. Yet the entire Republican congressional delegation lined up behind Breitbart and O'Keefe and destroyed ACORN, which entirely shut down in 2010.
- 3. Voter ID Laws and Voter Purges.** Whether it's Governor Rick Scott of Florida purging voter rolls of minority voters who are likely to vote for Democratic candidates or states like Georgia, Indiana, Kansas and Tennessee passing restrictive Voter ID laws, the Republicans are making sure that fewer and fewer Democrats will be able to freely cast a ballot -- our most sacred right as citizens in a representative democracy.
- 4. The Bush Justice Department Targeted Democrats for Prosecution.** Back in 2007, the House Judiciary Committee investigated charges that attorney general Alberto Gonzales singled out prominent Democrats for prosecution, specifically Pennsylvania Democrats -- an assertion that was backed up by Dick Thornburgh, the attorney general under Reagan and Bush 41.
- 5. The Attorney Firing Scandal.** Of course there was the attorney firing scandal in which the Bush Justice Department fired a slate of U.S. attorneys for strictly partisan reasons, either because the attorneys were prosecuting too many Republicans or because they weren't prosecuting enough Democrats.
- 6. The Bush IRS Audited Greenpeace and the NAACP.** Not only was the NAACP suspiciously audited during Bush's 2004 re-election campaign, but high-profile Republicans like Joe Scarborough had previously supported an audit of the organization even though he's suddenly shocked by the current IRS audit story. Also in 2004, the Wall Street Journal reported that the IRS audited the hyper-liberal group Greenpeace at the request of Public Interest Watch, a group that's funded by Exxon-Mobil.
- 7. The Bush IRS Collected Political Affiliation Data on Taxpayers.** In 2006, a contractor hired by the IRS collected party affiliation via a search of voter registration roles in a laundry list of states: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin. This begs the obvious question: why? Why would the IRS need voter registration and party affiliation information?
- 8. The Bush FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force Targeted Civil Rights / Anti-war Activists.** In 2005, an ACLU investigation revealed that both the FBI and the JTTF surveilled and gathered intelligence about a variety of liberal groups including PETA and the Catholic Workers, along with other groups that it hyperbolically referred to as having "semi-communistic ideology."

9. The Bush Pentagon Spied on Dozens of Anti-war Meetings. Also in 2005, the Department of Defense tracked 1,500 "suspicious incidents" and spied on four dozen meetings involving, for example, anti-war Quaker groups and the like. Yes, really. The Bush administration actually kept track of who was attending these meetings down to descriptions of the vehicles used by the attendees, calling to mind the pre-Watergate era when the government investigated 100,000 Americans during the Vietnam War.

10. The Bush FBI Targeted Journalists with the New York Times and the Washington Post. By now, we're all familiar with the AP situation in which U.S. attorney Ronald Machen subpoenaed and confiscated phone records from the AP as part of a leak investigation into an article about a CIA operation that took place in Yemen to thwart a terrorist attack on the anniversary of Bin Laden's death. Well, this story pales in comparison with the Bush administration's inquisition against the reporters who broke the story about the NSA wiretapping program. In fact, the Justice Department considered invoking the Espionage Act of 1917, the archaic sequel to the John Adams-era Alien and Sedition Acts. The Bush FBI seized phone records -- without subpoena -- from four American journalists, including Raymond Bonner and Jane Perlez. How do we know this for sure? Former FBI Director Robert Mueller apologized to the New York Times and the Washington Post.

Adding... Bush White House Warns Bill Maher After 9/11. Congressional Republicans Condemn Moveon.org. I've coupled these two instances into one simply because they each underscore the Republican penchant for bullying dissenters. Shortly after 9/11, Bill Maher committed the mortal sin of suggesting that terrorists weren't "cowards" (he was merely agreeing with conservative fire-eater Dinesh D'Souza). White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, speaking from the White House, warned Maher: "people have to watch what they say and watch what they do." Maher's show at the time, **Politically Incorrect**, was cancelled shortly thereafter. Years later, Moveon.org criticized conservative superhero David Petraeus with a full-page ad featuring the awkward play-on-words "General Betray Us." George W. Bush himself pilloried MoveOn and the Senate voted to condemn the ad while lionizing Petraeus (a love affair that came to an end last year).

With the IRS and AP stories, any cursory glimpse at the news will prove that Democrats -- even liberal bloggers -- have been critical of the Obama administration's actions, just as they had been with the actions of the Bush White House and the Republican Party. But Republicans? No such fairness or honesty. Of course. And it's also important to note the distinction between these recent stories and what's obviously a Republican textbook strategy of employing any means necessary in suppressing its opposition -- from the ballot box to the pages of our top-shelf newspapers. This is what they do: they intimidate, bully, prosecute and silence their critics as a matter of routine. And they rarely apologize or accept responsibility for it. As I mentioned earlier in this week's offerings, I am sympathetic to the conservative organizations who have been targeted by the IRS, having been a subject of racial profiling since a young teenager. This is America today and Big Brother is alive and well.... And like every other disease, it is now affecting non-minority institutions.... *Hopefully they now know who "we" feel....*

As many of you know I am also a huge fan of **HBO's Real Time With Bill Mayer**, and during the past month he has profiled eight Congressmen, who are known for saying over-the-top things in a face-off that he titled: **Craziest Congressman**. Mayer who himself is quite outspoken as a result of his sartorial political commentary booted off of his previous late-night half-hour political talk show, **Politically Incorrect** in 2002 by ABC executives when he suggested that terrorist who were willing to fly their plane into the World Trade Center weren't cowards. And although he apologized later, he should really be able to recognize, stupid talk.

The eight Congressmen are all Republicans and include:

 Inline image 1  Inline image 2  Inline image 3  Inline image 4

Rep. Joe Barton (R – Texas) turned to the Bible during a congressional hearing, claimed that humans couldn't be the cause of Climate Change because in the Bible Noah's flood was not caused by humans but by God. *"I would point out that if you're a believer in the Bible, one would have to say the Great Flood is an example of climate change and that certainly wasn't because mankind had overdeveloped hydrocarbon energy."* Barton not only denies Climate Change, he denies that carbon dioxide is bad for you because it is found in Perrier. *"It's in your Coca-Cola, your Dr. Pepper and your Perrier water. It's necessary for human life,"* he continued. *"It's odorless, colorless, tasteless, doesn't cause cancer, doesn't cause asthma."*

Steve King (R – Iowa) In 2010 he said that the fact that it was a snowy day in America meant *that "the liberals, environmentalists and Al Gores of the world were wrong on science."* In response to the bombing of the Boston Marathon, King speculated that the bombers were probably Saudi nationals on student visas and we should rethink immigration reform. King a birther who once speculated that the way Obama's parents got his birth announcement into a Hawaiian newspaper was by telegram from Kenya. And last year Congressman King said that *"a man could impregnate a 13-year-old girl, take that girl off the playground, haul her over the state line, force her to get an abortion to eradicate the evidence of his crime and bring her back and drop her off at the swing-set. And that's not against the law in the United States."*

Michelle Bachmann (R – Minnesota) Bachmann famously claimed *"the founding fathers worked tirelessly until slavery was no more in the United States."* While the truth is that Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and a number of other founding fathers were slave owners. She once stated that, *"Planned Parenthood had vowed to become the Lens Crafters of abortion."* She also said that the HPV vaccine causes mental retardation, based on a scientific study, which she never produced. *"I don't know how much God has to do to get the attention of the politicians. We've had an earthquake; we've had a hurricane. He said, 'Are you going to start listening to me here?' Listen to the American people because the American people are roaring right now. They know government is on a morbid obesity diet and we've got to rein in the spending."*

Steve Stockman (R – Texas) with official campaign bumpers sticker that says: *"If babies had guns, they wouldn't be aborted,"* no one should be confused that David Stockman is both Pro-Gun and Pro-Life. One day after Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy (D) signed a comprehensive gun control package into law, Rep. Steve Stockman (R-Texas) invited all gun owners and manufacturers who feel *"unwanted"* and *"persecuted"* by their states' gun control policies to move to Texas. In an open letter published Friday, the Texas Republican blasted state legislatures that have implemented tougher gun restrictions in recent months. *"Recent draconian gun legislation passed in Colorado, Connecticut and Maryland has made those states unfriendly to law abiding gun owners, weapons manufacturers, and weapons parts manufacturers,"* Stockman wrote. *"These states have proven they do not value those who obey the law and pump millions of dollars into local economies. This is not the way for government to treat people."* *"Come to Texas!!!"* Stockman pitched. *"Your rights will not be infringed upon here, unlike many local current regimes."* In his letter, Stockman specifically reached out to Magpul, HiBiv, Beretta and Colt, all manufacturers of firearms and firearm accessories located in states that have recently amped up their gun control laws.

 Inline image 5  Inline image 7  Inline image 8  Inline image 9

Louie Gohmert (R – Texas) *"It's very clear to everybody but this administration that radical Islam is at war against us,"* Gohmert told WND Radio. *"And I'm hoping either this administration will wake up or a new one will come in at the next election before irreparable damage is done. Because radical Islam is at war with us. Thank God for the moderates who don't approve of what's being done. But this administration has so many Muslim Brotherhood members that have influence that they just are making wrong decisions for America."* Gohmert also said, *"... Muslim terrorists are gathering in Mexico, learning Spanish and training to slip into the US and act like they are Hispanic."* On another not Gohmert claims that oil pipelines are good for nature because they make animals horny. *"... When Caribous what to go on a date they head over to the pipeline."*

Don Young (R – Alaska) Young, 79, used that slur for Mexican Americans during an interview with a local radio station when trying to make a point about how technology has shrunk the number of jobs in the country. *“My father had a ranch,”* Young told KRBD in Ketchikan. *“We used to have 50 to 60 wetbacks to pick tomatoes. It takes two people to pick the same tomatoes now. It’s all done by machine.”* On the same day as his racial slur comment, Young also held a press conference in which he advised that the best solution to domestic violence is for people to do more imbibing in private: *“Watch the alcohol and the drugs,”* he said. *“You look at the relationship between violence against the loved ones you love, (it) is usually related to either one of those. And I’m going to suggest for those that may be drinking together – Stop it! If you want to drink by yourself, you may do it. But when you drink together, the possibility of harm becomes greater every day.”*

Scott Desjarlais (R – Tennessee) is a Conservative, Pro-Family, Pro-Life medical doctor, who during his first marriage had affairs with at least 2 patients, 3 co-workers and a pharmaceutical rep. And when he got one of his patients pregnant, Mr. Pro-Life pressured her into getting an abortion, which all came out in his divorce from his wife who had 2 abortions of her own. With 3 abortions, 6 mistresses and two of them were his patients, not to mention his divorce, this Mr. Pro-Family is the poster-child for hypocrisy, as his 2012 campaign slogan was *“Trust & Faith.”* Last week DesJarlais, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform participated in questioning three State Department whistle-blowers about the handling of terrorism threats to U.S. personnel in Libya last year that led to the killing of Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Libya, *“today’s hearing is about finding the truth.”* What a hypocrite!

Paul Brown (R – Georgia) called President Obama *“a Marxist who wants to destroy is from the inside.”* Brown is a medical doctor who doesn’t believe in embryology. Last year he took pride in his self-proclaimed status as the first congressman to call Obama a *“socialist.”* Brown, a member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, drew nationwide scrutiny last year after referring to scientific principles such as evolution and the big bang theory as *“lies straight from the pit of hell.”* He was later reappointed to the committee. *“God’s word is true. I’ve come to understand that. All that stuff I was taught about evolution and embryology and the big bang theory, all that is lies straight from the pit of hell,”* said Brown. He believed, he said, that that scientific data shows that the Earth is only 9,000 years old, and that the Bible is *“the manufacturer’s handbook”* which *“teaches us how to run all of public policy and everything in our society.”* Also, *“scientist all of this world say that the ideal of human induced global climate change is a hoax.”*

AND

 Inline image 10

New Hampshire state Rep. Stella Tremblay now says Boston Marathon bombing victim Jeff Bauman “was not in pain” after losing both legs, proving U.S. government involvement in the attack.

Just so that no-one thinks that the political craziness is limited to Washington D.C., New Hampshire state legislator State Rep. Stella Tremblay (R-Auburn) told a conservative talk show host Tuesday that the federal government caused the Boston Marathon bombing claimed proof in a victim Jeff Bauman, who lost both legs and *“was not in pain,”* because he was not *“screaming in agony.”* Tremblay, a tea party member with ties to the birther movement, made the remarks about Bauman after causing a stir with her marathon bombing government conspiracy theory. She said photos of the bombing showed intact backpacks, which she said should have been destroyed if they contained bombs. Last week, she posted a comment on Glenn Beck’s Facebook page saying the federal government caused the bombing. She has resisted calls to resign over the post.

I am sure that there are crazies in the Democratic party, because for every Mark Sanford there was/is an Anthony Weiner. It is just that when you are arrogant to truly believe that your God speaks through you and that the President of the United States is the Antichrist, it is easy to slide down the slippery slope of intolerance and Jingoism.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, that is such a thing as being too late... And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

My New Favorite Television Ad Is From Oscar Mayer

Here is my favorite exchange that takes place right at the beginning of the ad:

Website: <http://www.reviewgeek.net/2013/03/grandpa-tells-it-like-it-is-in-funny-oscar-mayer-ad.html>

Teen Girl: *Grandpa when did you know Grandma was the one?*

Grandpa: *When her sister dumped me...*

Best Craigslist Ad

Finally an honest Craig List ad for a 1996 Subaru with almost 300,000 miles is probably near the very bottom of things we want to buy online..... . But the seller's flair and his Subaru's totally unique special qualities almost make us want to buy the car, or "The Toad," as it's lovingly nicknamed. This ad is both brutally honest and funny....

 Inline image 20

If you're a parent considering buying and fixing up this car for a teenager in your house who imagines they'll use it to go to the local drive-in theater with a cute boy / girl and let their hormones run wild, rest assured, this car is an automotive chastity belt. I mean, look at it. Every part of the car is shaped and styled like the least attractive parts of the human anatomy. The back is too small to lay down in, the rear seats are contoured in such a way as to make love-making impossible, and the center console is loaded with enough protuberances and jagged edges that necking could lead to a visit to the emergency room. This car is the anti-boner, its pastel paint job and fabric interior dousing any hormonal flames. Trust me on this, I drove this car for four years. Your teenager will experience a baffling streak of abstinence when they drive this car, to their frustration, and your relief.

The car also smells like blueberries, has been known to turn vegetarians into meat-eaters and has "The Godfather" soundtrack stuck in the tape deck. What a rare find.....

I Like This Guy's Sense of Humor...

GREAT PHOTO

Photos of Raindrops

Website: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=875c48a476&view=att&th=13ea3357af92c60a&attid=0.1&disp=safe&zw>

GREAT VIDEO

What a museum did to attract people! Wonderful. Especially if you've seen the painting!

The *Rijksmuseum Museum* in Holland had an idea: Let's bring the art to the people and then, hopefully, they will come to see more at the museum.

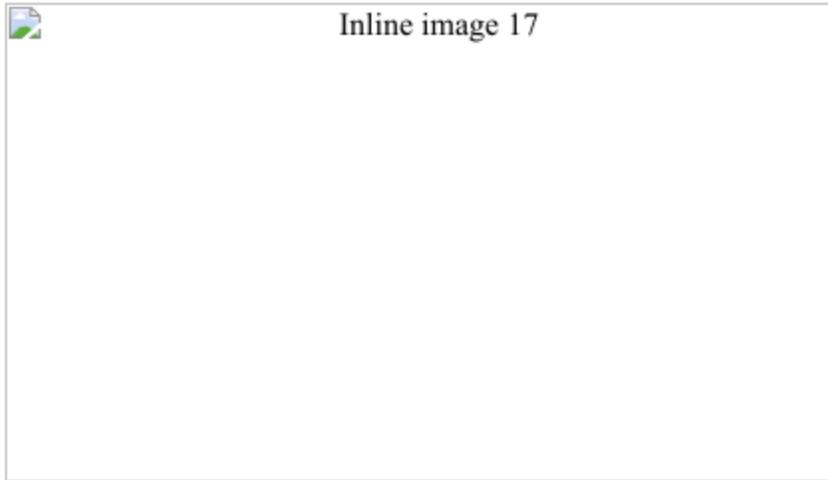
They took one painting Rembrandt from 1642, *Guards of the Night*, and brought to life the characters in it, placed them in a busy mall and the rest you can see for yourself! [You really need to see this YouTube recording of bringing the painting to life. Mike]

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6W2ZMpsxhg&feature=player_embedded

 Inline image 12  Inline image 13  Inline image 14

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

This week's music offering is the American indie band **Dispatch**. Aside from being possibly the most successful band that most people have never heard of, having sold-out five shows at Madison Square Garden in New York City and having had the most successful international indie band tour, they are friends of mine, having been introduced to them more than 10 years ago by our mutual friend the artist Bill Quigley. The band consists of Brad Corrigan (*vocals, drums, guitar, percussion, and harmonica*), Pete "Francis" Heimbold (*vocals, bass and guitar*), and Chad Urmston (*vocals, guitar, bass, and percussion*). The band, which is based in the Boston area, was originally active from 1996 until 2002. The members then announced a hiatus, which would ultimately last for almost a decade; during this period, the band came together for reunion concerts in Boston (2004), New York City (2007) and Washington, D.C. (2009). The hiatus ended in the beginning of 2011, when the band announced a national tour. In May of the same year, Dispatch released an EP containing six new songs, their first all-new release since 2000. The band released both their first studio album in over a decade, *Circles Around the Sun*, and an iTunes session in 2012 and toured North America that summer in support of the album. On April 22, 2013, Dispatch announced a double-disc live album called *"Ain't No Trip to Cleveland Vol. 1"* and slated for release on June 4, 2013. I invite everyone to listen to one of my favorite indie bands.... **DISPATCH.....**



- Dispatch – **Two Coins** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJJB2pMF5zk>
- Dispatch – **Mayday** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI9pMWAqJhg>
- Dispatch – **Ride a Tear** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMITSOIQNX8>
- Dispatch – **Prince of Spades** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gohyQU3RkMU>
- Dispatch – **Carry You** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72MCaiuZlko>
- Dispatch – **Outloud** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLSGXgT456Y>
- Dispatch – **Bridges** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPLI54yTdKA>
- Dispatch – **Fallin'** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKjIpzDZzoc>
- Dispatch – **Here We Go** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ7M22Ejj7M>
- Dispatch – **Open Up** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gYoMwLN4Yk>
- Dispatch – **Even** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phCU2Fm2euY>
- Dispatch – **Elias** -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCPv__vgB74
- Dispatch – **Past the Falls** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce46uVP7shs>
- Dispatch – **Passerby** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHAn0aYuLxM>
- Dispatch – **Riddle** -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRT5S7oDWs>
- Dispatch – **Zimbabwe** - Live At Madison Square Garden -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR4LTNcyC5Y>

I hope that you have enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you a great week....

*Sincerely,
Greg Brown*

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