

From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>

To: undisclosed-recipients;

Bcc: jeevacation@gmail.com

Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 06/09/2013

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Attachments: Towards_the_end_of_poverty_The_Economist_Jun_1st_2013.pdf;
American_Wealth_Isn't_Even_Half-
Recovered_From_the_Big_Crash_Jordan_Weissmann_The_Atlantic_May_31,_2013.pdf;
Austerity_would_hurt_U.S._jobs_and_growth_Lawrence_Summers_TWP_June_2,_2013.pdf;
Grand_Old_Party_for_a_Brand_New_Generation_June_3,_2013.pdf;
College_Republicans_Report_Finds_Young_Voters_Hold_Many_Positions_Opposite_Of_Party_Luke_Johnson_Huff_Post_June_3,_2013.pdf;
Black_people_in_Iowa_singled_out_in_marijuana_arrests_data_suggests_Paul_Harris_The_Guardian_4_June_2013.pdf;
Austerity_To_Cost_U.S._Economy_2_Million_Jobs_By_2019,_Study_Huff_Post_June_6,_2013.pdf;
NSA_collecting_phone_records_of_millions_of_Verizon_customers_daily_Glenn_Greenwald_The_Guardian_June_5,_2013.pdf;
Total_Protection_Government_David_Bronwich_Huff_Post_06_06_2013.pdf;
What_You_Should_Know_About_The_Government's_Massive_Domestic_Surveillance_Program_Igor_Vohky_ThinkProgress_June_6,_2013.pdf;
Charlie_Chaplin's_final_speech_in_the_Great_Dictator_June_9,_2013.pdf;
The_Great_Dictator_overview_June_9,_2013.pdf

DEAR FRIENDS.....

There was a saying during the Integration Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, "*Keep Your Eyes On The Prize.*" No time in recent history in the United States is this concept/advice more important and applicable. When we are not talking about the debt, we're talking about Benghazi or the IRS, NSC monitoring who we call or what did the White House know and why didn't say anything or they're coming to get your guns. These often make believe scandals obfuscate the real challenges that our country is facing. The one thing that is self evident is that the country's infrastructure is in serious decay. I live in Los Angeles and not a month goes by when there isn't a major water-main break flooding a local neighborhood. In the seventh largest economy in the world, they are forecasting the possibility of rolling brown-outs due to an overburden antiquated electrical grid, and the possibility of a water shortage this summer -- and where the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest public school system in the country, offers the equivalent of a Third World education at best. And although I live approximately 15 miles from the beach it often takes more than an hour to get there due to the over-burdened highway system exacerbated by the absence of a good public transportation system.

When bridges are collapsing in Washington, ground water is being contaminated in Pennsylvania, dikes in Sacramento California which are so deficient that it is just a matter of time when the city will look like New Orleans after Katrina, so the one thing that should be self-evident is that the one of our greatest priorities should be upgrading the country's infrastructure. With interest rates close to zero and unemployment at 7.6%, repairing the country's infrastructure is a no-brainer. When you go to Germany you see state-of-the-art bridges and a brand new subway system in Berlin. France's TGV high speed trains travel at 200 mph and you still feel that you are standing still. Johannesburg

International Airport makes JFK and LAX look like they are in a Third World country. In London, Paris, Amsterdam and Zurich you can take a train, subway or trolley directly from the airport into the heart of the city with the ease of a taxi. Why isn't this possible anywhere in America? Why do we have outdated Amtrack, when trains in China, Japan and Spain are 50 years ahead in technology? And let's be honest that this is not going to be addressed by the private sector. Because in Europe and Asia it was only addressed by governments. So why isn't both major political parties not proposing ground breaking infrastructure programs..... since they both claim that they want to leave future generations with a better country.

Instead we are govern by greed. I had a friend who bought a huge railroad company so that he could sell off the real estate, as the property was worth more than the operating profit of the railroad. Think about it, he sold off hundreds of thousands of acres of contiguous properties that we will never be able to reassemble. Some of these same right-aways (corridors) could have been used to create high speed public transportation in the future. And they could have also been use to lay fiber optic cable, waterways, new electric grids, etc. I was watching **Bill Mayer's Real Time** last week and he had a young panelist who said that government was the problem and that an example of this was government support of student loans. He forgets that it was the GI education loans which allowed for a generation of American men to receive a college education. And it was Eisenhower's Highway Bill that built the transcontinental highway system that led to the development of West. It was the building of the Hoover Dam and the Tennessee Valley Authority that created the electric grid and harnessed water resources for their surrounding regions. And it was the government that built the Eire Canal, which opened the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean enabling the development of the Midwest. The private sector didn't/won't rebuild New Orleans, the Jersey Shore or other storm damages areas. And to say that government is the problem is a naive as suggesting arming teachers can stop school shootings or the war on terrorism will stop terrorist.

The truth is that the Boston bombing is this generation's "*going postal*." And until we truly engage students and make education "*cool*" we are not going to end school violence. And we will be targeted by Islamic terrorist, as long as we are seen as their enemies, because they are not attacking Brazilians, New Zealanders and South Africans. We have to asked ourselves how can European trains travel as 200 mph speeds and Chinese and Japanese trains travel at 250 mph speeds, yet when Amtrack trains go over 85 mph they derail. We know from our own history that traffic corridors enhance economies. Imagine how much more commerce would be generated if we had high speed trains between Boston, New York and Washington D.C or along the West Coast from Seattle to San Diego or from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. We have to ask ourselves is it better to provide free adult education like most European countries, so that our students aren't saddled with decades of debt when they leave college. And we have to ask ourselves, is it our duty as a nation to leave the country in the best condition possible.

If this is true, it behooves me that with the government currently being able to borrow money at the lowest costs ever and unemployment at 7.5%, why isn't both parties pushing policies to rebuild the country's crumbling infrastructure? Especially when rebuilding the country's infrastructure will add to the quality of life for all Americans, making us more competitive industrially, as well as a multiplier in the creation of jobs across the board and leaving a more modern, efficient and better country for future generations. With this said, I urge everyone to push your political representatives to support an aggressive program to rebuild America so that it again will be the gold standard around the world. And for those who ask how do we afford this.... the answer is simple..... reset our priorities... Cut the military budget in half and use the money to rebuild the country's infrastructure. And instead of nation building in the Middle East, lets *Keep Our Eyes On The Prize* and rebuild America.

A Dolphin Asks a Human for Help!

We have seen animal rescue, but rarely have we seen the animal search for humans to save it!

On a night-time dive near Hawaii, 2 divers were found by a bottlenose dolphin and started to swim around them over and over again. When looking closer, one of them discovered the reason for this strange behavior - the dolphin had a fishing line hooked around it, hindering its ability to swim.

They cut him free, and the dolphin swam away, relieved. The fact that a dolphin would come to humans for help is once again evidence of its amazing intelligence, as most injured animals would never come close to a human and would actually be aggressive and defensive. This is amazing to watch and a life-time experience for those two divers, who got to share a moment of true understanding with a wild animal.

Please see the video on this web site: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2gvkHSyKFE

Millions of American families say they have trouble putting food on the table and the economic recovery has done little to provide them with relief. Despite our relative prosperity as a nation, the percentage of Americans who, at some point in a given year, cannot afford to eat sets us apart from other wealthy countries. Last month, the Pew Research Center used International Monetary Fund data to analyze the “*levels of deprivation*” across various countries, including our own. When the data was compiled, it’s clear that the U.S. (GDP \$49,922) is an outlier: We are by far the richest country included in Pew’s study, but nearly a quarter of our population – over 78 million people – live in what’s called a “*food insecure*” household. In Canada, the second richest country Pew looked at, only nine percent of people had difficulty; in China, it was eight percent. America’s Exceptional Food Insecurity is a reality.

 Inline image 5

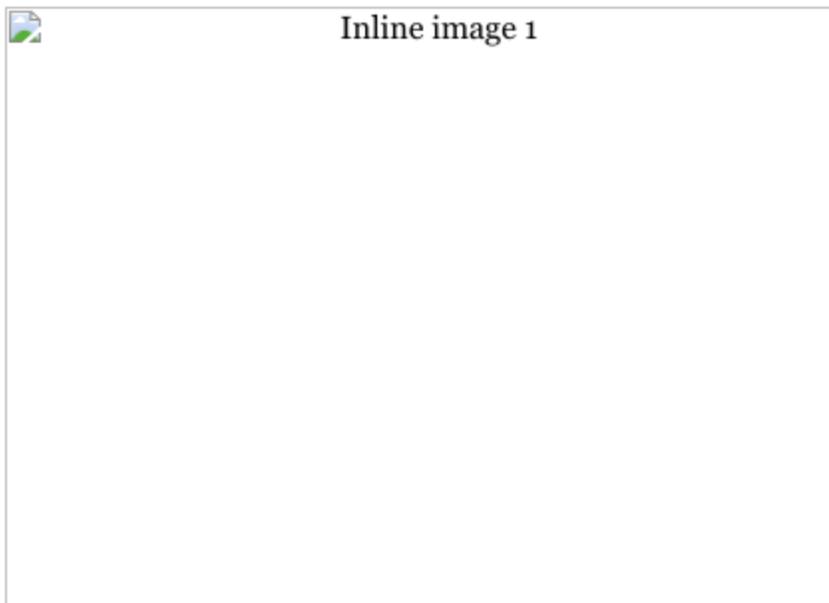
Germany with a GDP of \$39,028 the number was 8%. While in Japan with a GDP the number was 2% and Spain with a GDP \$30,557 the number is 14%. Other countries with less *food insecurity* are Australia, Great Britain, Malaysia, France Argentina and Russia. Countries with the same 24% rate of *food insecurity* as in the United States, are Greece and Brazil. And the US *food insecurity* is just 2% lower than Poland and South Korea’s 26%. Since the start of the recession the Second Harvest Food Bank which distributes food to 500 pantries, shelters and other relief agencies in the Orlando, Florida area has seen the need jump by 60% with almost 30% of those seeking help being first-timers. At this same time congressional Republicans are trying to reduce food stamps, school lunches and other programs that hungry Americans rely on.... **Another Big Ugly.....**

If you haven’t already heard, my dear friend and a role model for every leader, Libya’s **President Mohamed Yousef Al-Magariief** and parliament chief, resigned from his post last Tuesday following the passing of a law banning anyone who held a senior post in Muammar Qaddafi’s regime from government. In a televised speech to congress, Megaryef announced his resignation - which had been expected - after the passing of the “*political isolation*” law, which critics and diplomats fear could strip government of experienced leaders, further complicating the transition to an orderly democracy. “*The people’s representatives have expressed their word -the political isolation law - and it must be respected,*” Reuters quoted him as saying. “*And I will be the first ... I place my resignation in your hands.*” Magariief said that “*everyone must obey the law out of respect for legality and democracy.*”



The Former President was Libya's ambassador to India in the 1980s under the regime of now slain dictator Qaddafi before he defected in 1981 to become a leader of the exiled opposition for three decades. *"I leave with my head held high and my conscious clear,"* AFP quoted him as saying. He stressed that he was the first of Qaddafi-era officials to conform to the law. The General National Congress passed the law on May 5 under pressure from gunmen who had surrounded the foreign and justice ministries for several days to press the government to sack officials linked to Qaddafi. The President's eyes welled up as he spoke before the General National Congress in Tripoli.

He decried what he described as the empowerment of some lawmakers backed by gunmen and warned of the need to eradicate Qaddafi-era schemes, including *"revenge, antagonism ... and hatred"* that still plague Libya, the Associated Press reported. **The President received a standing ovation from congress members after he ended his speech,** which touched on his own exile and opposition to Qaddafi and which paid tribute to the former rebel fighters who ousted the dictator.



A Britain-educated economist, he was born in 1940 in the eastern city of Benghazi, the cradle of the uprising that toppled Qaddafi. He spent 31 years in exile, including 20 years as a political refugee in the United States. Along with other dissidents, he founded an opposition group that had tried to

overthrow Qaddafi. During his exile he was hunted by Qaddafi's intelligence services, who had launched a campaign in 1980 to liquidate his opponents.

For those of you who would like to know how this affects the stability of democracy in Libya, my answer is that it strengthens it. To show that no one in Libya is above the law, President Al-Magaryef, who is considered the "**Nelson Mandela of Libya**" voluntarily resigned, as an example to the many other Qaddafi Regime ambassadors, ministers, governors, mayors, department heads, police and military officials who are trying to hold on to their positions. As for how it affects some of the things that I would like to do in Libya, Dr. Al-Magariief (who is revered both at home in Libya and internationally) is now free of politics to work freely with others. So a good thing..... As such I urge everyone to work with former President Magariief in supporting democracy and development in the rebuilding of the **New Libya**, in a similar way that President Clinton has done internationally with the **Clinton Initiative**.

If You Know Anyone Who Thinks Racial Profiling Is Exaggerated? Watch This Video, And Tell Me When Yours And Their Jaw Drops.

What Would You Do? With A Bike Theft (*White Guy, Black Guy, Pretty Girl*) Would You Treat Them The Same?

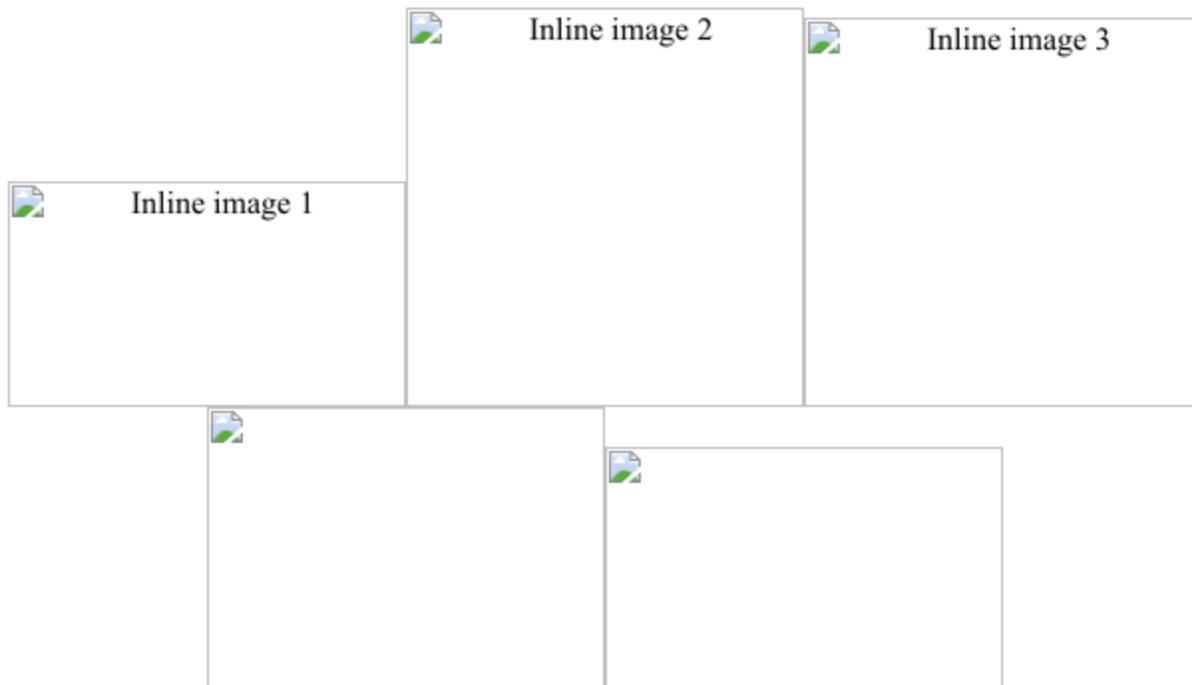
This ABC experiment on race dynamics is easily the best thing I've seen on television in years. The result blows my mind, and at 1:50, I literally yelled, "You've got to be kidding me!" at my screen. Let me know if you do, too. *Said the person who posted it on YouTube.....* I realize that everyone gets a bit uncomfortable talking about race, but it would be great if people were more aware so they could challenge their own pre-conceived notions.

Please watch the YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge7i60GuNRg#!>

A social experiment is conducted in a park. Three people try to steal a bike out in the open. First, a white teenager. Then, a black one. Finally, a young blond tries her luck. Does anyone try to stop them? Racial profiling is alive and well in America. And as I person of color, I have been the subject of racial profiling since I was a child. Asked anyone one of the hundreds of thousands of Black and Latinos who are stop and frisked each year. And just so you know it is not limited to males, not to long ago, Oprah went into several store on Madison Avenue in New York to see what they would do. And in every store she was shunned and at one she was asked to leave. So for Conservative Political Organizations who felt they were singled out unfairly, I truly understand how they feel, but we aren't seeing any Congressional Hearings trying to fix this obvious injustice.

This past Friday while President Obama was in Los Angeles attending a fund raiser and holding court with party faithful willing to pay \$10,000 for lunch and a picture, several miles away a young man went postal killing his father and brother, torching their home, accosting the driver of a Mazda hatchback, telling her to stop, getting in the vehicle and telling her to drive him to Santa Monica College, while shooting another women who stopped to inquire "what's going on", then randomly shooting with a semiautomatic rifle at a bus, cars and passersby and continuing on his shooting rampage on the way to campus. With people diving for cover, campus police intercepted the gunman on the edge of campus and exchanged gunfire with him. They continued to trade shots as the man ran toward the school's library and shooting a woman outside the building's entrance before disappearing inside. A woman outside the library unable to get out of his way later died at a hospital, as well as a driver who was shot minutes earlier in the

parking lot. During the 10 minute rampage, five people were killed (including the gunman), another five were wounded, two seriously.



What is unique about this latest shooting rampage is that it isn't unique. And although it was widely covered by local media in Los Angeles, it received at best third-page coverage by the national media and two days later it was no longer mentioned. After the shootings in Newtown and Portland you would have thought that not this latest shooting rampage would have received more media attention and public outrage. More than one million people have been killed by guns in the USA since John Lennon was shot and killed on December 8, 1980 and almost 5000 people have been killed by gun violence since the Newtown shooting. Still, Congress has been unwilling and unable to enact legislation to address this epidemic. While the politicians and the media is currently consumed with the IRS scandal, it seems that the public is no longer concerned with gun reform. As a result, I have to ask why do I have to take off my shoes before boarding a commercial flight when there was only one "unsuccessful" person in history who tried to bring down a plane with a shoe-bomb. We should be ashamed that gun violence in America is so casual....

Bill Maher: Ronald Reagan Was 'The Original Teabagger' (VIDEO)

Bill Maher took Ronald Reagan supporters on both sides of the aisle to task on the latest episode of "*Real Time*," declaring that the former President was "the original teabagger."

After hearing Bob Dole say that Reagan wouldn't fit in with today's Republican party, Maher contested that Reagan actually "*wrote the playbook*" for today's far-right GOPers. He compared Reagan's views on income inequality and race to today's Tea Party ("*On race, his ideas couldn't be more Tea Party if he shouted them from a rascal scooter*") and even credited him for inspiring today's colorful Tea Party protesters.

"He's the original, official pitch-man for batshit," Maher said, later adding: "When you mainstream Reagan, the far right becomes the new middle."

Watch the "**Real Time**" clip to hear Maher's full takedown:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/08/bill-maher-ronald-reagan-original-tea_n_3408357.html

Everyone should see this video as it truly unmask the myth of Ronald Reagan, because until we come to terms on how, when and why America started its current decline the American Dream will drift further and further away..... Remember that it was Ronald Reagan who famously said, "*government is the problem*" and thus inspiring a generation of followers who hate government to get into government. *And you wonder why Government doesn't work.....*

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Last week in a cover article in **The Economist** — *Towards the end of poverty* — the author says that in the past 20 years nearly 1 billion people have been taken out of extreme poverty. Obviously good news. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell by half as a share of the total population in developing countries, from 43% to 21%—a reduction of almost 1 billion people. Of the 7 billion people alive on the planet, 1.1 billion subsist below the internationally accepted extreme-poverty line of \$1.25 a day. Nobody in the developed world comes remotely close to the poverty level that \$1.25 a day represents. America's poverty line is \$63 a day for a family of four. In the richer parts of the emerging world \$4 a day is the poverty barrier. But poverty's scourge is fiercest below \$1.25 (the average of the 15 poorest countries' own poverty lines, measured in 2005 dollars and adjusted for differences in purchasing power): people below that level live lives that are poor, nasty, brutish and short. They lack not just education, health care, proper clothing and shelter—which most people in most of the world take for granted — but even enough food for physical and mental health. Raising people above that level of wretchedness is not a sufficient ambition for a prosperous planet, but it is a necessary one.

Starting this week and continuing over the next year or so, the UN's usual Who's Who of politicians and officials from governments and international agencies will meet to draw up a new list of targets to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set in September 2000 and expire in 2015. Governments should adopt as their main new goal the aim of reducing by another billion the number of people in extreme poverty by 2030. Again, the world's achievement in the field of poverty reduction is, by almost any measure, impressive. Although many of the original MDGs — such as cutting maternal mortality by three-quarters and child mortality by two-thirds — will not be met, the aim of halving global poverty between 1990 and 2015 was achieved five years early. The MDGs may have helped marginally, by creating a yardstick for measuring progress, and by focusing minds on the evil of poverty. Most of the credit, however, must go to capitalism and free trade, for they enable economies to grow—and it was growth, principally, that has eased destitution.

 Inline image 3

Poverty rates started to collapse towards the end of the 20th century largely because developing-country growth accelerated, from an average annual rate of 4.3% in 1960-2000 to 6% in 2000-10. Around two-thirds of poverty reduction within a country comes from growth. Greater equality also helps, contributing the other third. A 1% increase in incomes in the most unequal countries produces a mere 0.6% reduction in poverty; in the most equal countries, it yields a 4.3% cut. China (which has never shown any interest in MDGs) is responsible for three-quarters of the achievement. Its economy has been growing so fast that, even though inequality is rising fast, extreme poverty is disappearing.

China pulled 680m people out of misery in 1981-2010, and reduced its extreme-poverty rate from 84% in 1980 to 10% now.

That is one reason why (as the briefing explains) it will be harder to take a billion more people out of extreme poverty in the next 20 years than it was to take almost a billion out in the past 20. Poorer governance in India and Africa, the next two targets, means that China's experience is unlikely to be swiftly replicated there. Another reason is that the bare achievement of pulling people over the \$1.25-a-day line has been relatively easy in the past few years because so many people were just below it. When growth makes them even slightly better off, it hauls them over the line. With fewer people just below the official misery limit, it will be more difficult to push large numbers over it. With this said, the aforementioned goal is still within reach, if the poorest countries are not left behind by faster-growing middle-income ones; and if inequality does not widen so that the rich lap up all the cream of growth—then developing countries would cut extreme poverty from 16% of their populations now to 3% by 2030. That would reduce the absolute numbers by 1 billion. If growth is a little faster and income more equal, extreme poverty could fall to just 1.5%—as near to zero as is realistically possible. The number of the destitute would then be about 100m, most of them in intractable countries in Africa. Misery's billions would be consigned to the annals of history.

Last week in an article in **The Atlantic** by Jordon Weissmann -- ***American Wealth Isn't Even Half-Recovered From the Big Crash*** -- the author says that although the stock market is booming it hasn't trickled down to most families whose major assets is in their house. This is especially troubling because during the Great Recession, middle class Americans saw their personal wealth cut in half to an almost 40-year low. Adjusted for inflation the average net worth -- the value of what households own minus their debts -- is still far below its pre-recession peak with Middle Class families recouping less than half of what they lost.



One of the problems is that wealth from rising home prices during the bubble was illusory to begin with -- "*wealth effect*," related to housing that's important to the economy. When values go up, consumers spend more, in part because they can borrow against the rising value of their property. Economists Amir Sufi and Atif Mian calculate, for instance, that homeowners stripped \$1.25 trillion out of their houses during the bubble. But when prices fall, families also cut back their spending rapidly. That's one of the factors which likely exacerbated the recession.

 Inline image 2

It's unclear whether a housing recovery will give the same spark to economy as it did during the boom years, in part because Americans have become less likely to use their houses as piggy banks. But it still seems reasonable to guess that until the middle class sees its finances return to something close to their former health -- either through cutting down on debt or thanks to appreciating assets -- our recovery will keep unfolding in slow motion. But what is clear is that the top 1% has disproportionately fared better than everyone else during the recovery causing a much greater economic division between the super-rich and everyone else. As someone who believes that a strong Middle Class, it the greatest asset in America, the government needs to pursue policies that focus more on jobs than on companies.

In a **Washington Post** op-ed this week former Secretary of the Treasury and former President of Harvard University Lawrence Summers wrote — ***Austerity would hurt U.S. jobs and growth.*** Summers: A prudent government must balance spending and revenue collection in a way that assures the sustainability of its debts. To do otherwise leads to instability and slow growth; it courts default and catastrophe. Yet responsible governing also requires recognizing that when economies are weak

and interest rates are constrained, changes in fiscal policy will have large effects on economic activity. In turn, this activity will improve revenue collection and reduce expenditures on social welfare. In such circumstances, efforts to rapidly reduce budget deficits may backfire. Yet deficit financing of government activity is not a sustainable alternative to increasing revenue or cutting public spending. It is only a means of deferring payment. Just as a household or business cannot indefinitely increase its debt relative to its income without becoming insolvent, neither can a government. There is no permanent option of public spending without raising commensurate revenue.

Summers continues: In normal times, there is no advantage to running large deficits. Public borrowing does not reduce ultimate tax burdens. It tends to crowd out borrowing by the private sector, which could otherwise finance growth, and fosters international borrowing, which means an excess of imports over exports. The private sector may also be discouraged from spending if businesses fear tax increases to pay for the deficit. In normal times, it is the job of the Federal Reserve to increase demand in the economy by adjusting base interest rates, rather than the job of those in charge of deficit financing. It was essentially this logic that drove the measures — usually bipartisan — taken in the late 1980s and the 1990s to balance the budget. As a consequence of policy steps in 1990, 1993 and 1997, it was possible by 2000 for the Treasury to retire federal debt. Deficit reduction and the associated reduction in capital costs and increase in investment were important contributors to the nation's strong economic performance during the 1990s, when productivity growth soared and unemployment fell below 4 percent. We enjoyed a virtuous circle in which reduced deficits led to lower capital costs and increased confidence, which led to more rapid growth, which further reduced deficits.

In recent years, of course, circumstances have been anything but normal. High unemployment, few job vacancies and deflationary pressures all indicate that output is not constrained by what the economy is capable of producing but by the level of demand. With base interest rates at or close to zero, the efficacy of monetary policy has been circumscribed. Under such circumstances, there is every reason to expect that changes in deficit policies will have direct effects on employment and output in ways that are not normally the case. Borrowing to support government or private-sector spending raises demand, increasing output and employment above levels they otherwise would have reached. But these gains will not be offset by reduced private spending because, unlike in normal times, there is substantial excess capacity in the economy. These “*multiplier effects*” operate far more strongly during economic downturns sparked by financial crises.

Summers ends by saying that the United States and other countries will not benefit from further measures directed at rapid deficit reduction. Output and jobs will suffer. A weaker economy means that our children may inherit an economy with more debt and less capacity to bear the burden it imposes. Already, premature deficit reduction has affected economic performance in Britain and several countries that use the euro. While continued deficits are a necessary economic expedient, they are not a viable permanent strategy, and measures that reduce future deficits can increase confidence. This could involve commitments to reduce spending or raise revenue. But there is a better way. Pulling forward necessary future expenditures, such as those to replenish military supplies, repair infrastructure or rehabilitate government facilities, both reduces future budget burdens and increases demand today. It is the right way forward, but getting there will require moving beyond the slogans either in support of or opposition to austerity and focusing instead on what measures can best support sustained economic growth.

Again, my belief is that we should enact a major rebuilding of the country's decaying infrastructure, as it will stimulate the economy, address the current unemployment problem with the obvious benefit of upgrading the country's infrastructure which in turn will make America more competitive internationally.

A new study by the Center for American Progress, estimates that today's austerity measures are going to leave the U.S. economy with 2 million fewer jobs and \$433 billion less in economic growth by 2019. Another recent think-tank study, by the Brookings Institution, found that austerity had already cost the U.S. economy more than 2 million jobs since the recession. The CAP study suggests those jobs are not coming back for at least six years, if ever. Both say that the reason for this is that the anemic recovery has left too much of the economy's valuable resources idle: People and factories aren't working, when they could have been. As you can see from the chart below, which was produced by Hersh and the CAP, the U.S. factory sector has still not gotten fully back up to speed since the recession. And the job market is in even worse shape, with millions of workers sitting out of the labor market, their skills deteriorating by the day. (Story continues below gloomy chart.)

 Inline image 4

As you can see in the chart, less than 58 percent of the U.S. working-age population is either working or looking for work, the lowest level of labor-market participation since the early 1980s. Some of this is due to Baby Boomers retiring, but most of it is due to a sluggish economy, studies by the San Francisco Federal Reserve and others have shown. As Hersh writes in his study, idle workers will slowly lose their skills, and companies will be slower to invest in new productivity-enhancing technologies. This may be one reason for the troubling slowdown in U.S. productivity in recent years. Ultimately, this will lead to lower long-term growth and fewer jobs. The economy is weak for some reasons that don't have to do with austerity. Mainly, the bursting of the credit-market bubble of the mid-2000s has taken a long time to clean up. And it is true that the economy is chugging along -- barely -- despite austerity, as The Wall Street Journal's David Wessel pointed out on Thursday.

But the economy might be in much better shape had the U.S. government not pivoted, shortly after the recession, to its biggest spending squeeze since the end of the Vietnam War. Though the economic research driving this austerity movement has since been thoroughly discredited, many of these policies are still going strong. Austerity measures, including the payroll-tax hike and the government spending cuts of the "sequester," are going to cut 1.5 percentage points from growth this year, economists estimate. Meanwhile, federal, state and local governments have cut more than 800,000 jobs since the recession ended, adding to the labor market's pain. All of this missing growth could have put unemployed people and dormant factories back to work. Instead, the productivity of those people and factories will continue to wither, and our future along with it. Again, this best way to put these workers back to work would be instituting a large scale program to refurbish and upgrade the country's infrastructure.

How Does Writing Affect Your Brain?

Most of us write a little something everyday. It might be a grocery list, a poem, or a write-up on the infographic of the day. As we go through this daily ritual, however, we are probably not aware of the effects writing has on our brains.

According to today's infographic, writing can serve as a calming, meditative tool. Stream of conscious writing exercises, in particular, have been identified as helpful stress coping methods. Keeping a journal, for example, or trying out free-writing exercises, can drastically reduce your levels of stress.

It should also be noted that writing can hold a powerful influence over its readers. Today's infographic informs us that storytellers have the power to "*plant emotions, thoughts, and ideas into the brain of the listener.*" But all of these mind-shaping tools can be completely disregarded if one chooses to insert a cliché into his or her writing. When you hear phrases like "love is blind" or "*dumb blonde,*" your brain skips over these ideas and simply accepts them as a collection of words. Clichés have

become so familiar to us that the sensory responses they are supposed to evoke are often severely diluted.

Having lost language skills due to a stroke, as therapy I started writing every day. So, whether you're trying to de-stress, or improve your writing, check out the infographic below for some helpful insight into the goings-on of your brain. I hope you never stop writing!

Web Link: <http://dailyinfographic.com/how-does-writing-affect-your-brain-infographic>



A report by the **College Republican National Committee** released Monday found that most students hold positions closer to Democrats on many issues, underscoring the difficulty in the GOP's push for younger voters. Yet, the report remains vague on solutions for Republicans. The report's focus groups, conducted after the 2012 election loss for the GOP, found that young people are mostly liberal on a range of issues -- not surprising given the fact that 60 percent of voters aged 18-29 voted for Obama in 2012. President Barack Obama won 5 million more votes than Gov. Mitt Romney among voters under the age of 30 in the 2012 election. Despite Romney holding a 2 million-vote advantage over the President among voters aged 30 and older, Obama's significant lead with the youth vote was enough to ensure his reelection reinforcing the generational challenge faced by the GOP. Still one of the biggest surprises for Republicans on election day was not the wide margin of Republicans' losses with young voters, but rather the increased proportion of the electorate made up by the under-30 set. Volumes of data before the election seemed to indicate diminished enthusiasm among young voters. It was not hard to see why that might be the case: youth unemployment was particularly high and student loan debt had spiraled upward. Yet despite significantly less enthusiasm for President Obama than four years ago, the millennial generation made an even bigger mark at the ballot box than in 2008, jumping from 18% to 19% of the electorate.

The post-election discussion within the Republican Party has focused heavily on understanding what went wrong and how the party can rebuild itself. There are essentially three camps that have emerged in the aftermath of the 2012 election, each of which has a different take on why the Republican Party failed to appeal to an adequate number of voters. Broadly summarizing, these groups can be thought of as the "*technology*" camp, the "*policy*" camp, and the "*brand*" camp.

The technology camp posits that Republican losses had quite a bit to do with the GOP's failure to keep up with Democrats on key items such as data systems, polling, social media, and advertising. While each of these items is very different from the others, they are frequently lumped together under the umbrella of a GOP technological deficit. While the Obama campaign built sophisticated data systems that shared information across the campaign, allowing supporters to be effectively targeted and swing-voters to be persuaded with precision, the Romney campaign's data systems were epitomized by the public fiasco of "Project ORCA," a turnout engine that crashed on election day. While Obama's pollsters had accurate situational awareness about his standing in key swing states, the Romney campaign was guided by overly optimistic data and was left stunned on election night. While Obama's campaign consistently tested and optimized their online efforts, such behavior was not ingrained into the culture of the campaign on the right. The technology camp posits that Republican losses had quite a bit to do with the GOP's failure to keep up with Democrats on key items such as data systems, polling, social media, and advertising.

As for policy, the Republicans are increasingly becoming more and more out of step with the views of young (Millennials) voters starting with the defense budget and the propensity to be more hawkish on foreign policy. Fifty-four percent of respondents in a March 2013 survey said taxes should go up on

the wealthy, which Republicans have long opposed. Just 3 percent said taxes should be cut for the wealthy. On health care, 41 percent said Obama's health care reform law would make the health care system better, versus 32 percent who thought it would make things worse. House Republicans have tried 37 times to repeal Obamacare. On immigration, respondents most frequently said that undocumented immigrants should be given a path to citizenship, while the second-most favored initiative was an "enforcement first" strategy. Republicans are divided on providing a pathway to citizenship, with those such as Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) backing one, while Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) opposes it. Fifty-one percent said that Republican economic policies played a major role or "*the biggest role*" in the financial crisis, while larger numbers blamed banks and financial deregulation. Forty-four percent said that gay marriage should be legal, 26 percent said it should be left up to the states and just 30 percent said that marriage should be only between a man and a woman, the official position of the Republican National Committee.

The report said that there were many examples of Republican missteps in the 2012 election that challenged the brand. Whether the infamous "47%" remarks made by Romney or the "*legitimate rape*" comments made by Rep. Todd Akin in his Senate campaign, there were numerous examples of Republican leaders making statements that were terribly out of step with where voters – particularly young voters – stand. Is it any wonder, asks the brand camp, that young people reject the GOP when its message is being carried in such a negative and out-of-touch way? The responses of individuals from the focus groups were harsher. Respondents described the Republican Party as "*closed-minded, racist, rigid, old-fashioned.*" And because the report does not outright call on the Republican party to change its stances on issues to be more amenable to young voters. Instead, it calls for the party to slightly shift its message. For instance, the report states, "focus on the economic issues that affect young people today: education, the cost of health care, unemployment," but does not say to embrace Obamacare. It says, "Don't concede 'caring' and 'open-minded' to the left," but does not call for the outright backing of gay marriage. Smoke and mirror didn't work in 2012, and massaging the message instead of making meaningful policy changes are not going to endear them to Millennial voters anymore than it did in the last election. Republicans like to say, that is America is a center-right country. But if this Republican report is correct, for young voters this is definitely not true, as they are much more aligned with Progressive and Democratic positions.

I understand why Conservatives are upset when their fears of that they were being singled out by the IRS was publicly confirmed last month. But for me and other people of color, being the subject of the practice of profiling is nothing new. In fact it is the law in Arizona and common practice in New York, where the police routinely '*stop and frisk*' Blacks and Latinos of all age and especially the young. This week in **The Guardian** journalist Paul Harris wrote – ***Black people in Iowa singled out in marijuana arrests, data suggests*** – based on an ACLU study that showed Iowa has greatest racial disparity in US, with African Americans eight times more likely to be arrested for possession of marijuana than white Iowans, despite the fact that their rate of marijuana use was about the same, in spite of only making up just 3.1% of the population. After Iowa, the next largest areas of racial disparity were Washington DC, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

The news stunned some experts. "*The statistics are shocking to me,*" said L Song Richardson, a law professor at the University of Iowa. Richardson said it was unclear if the police were being actively racist in creating the higher arrest rate, or if the disparity was the result of black Iowans being a visible community in an overwhelmingly white state where federal funding is linked to arrest rates and can provide an incentive to adopt heavy-handed police tactics. "*I am hesitant to say that it is a deliberate racist motive. But we do know that this might be caused by the structural issues linked to policing. Blacks are arrested more, because they are focused upon more,*" Richardson said. The ACLU study also looked at the issue of arrests for marijuana on a national level, calculating that between 2001 and 2010 there had been more than 8m arrests for possession of a drug that in many states is now well on

its way towards legalization. It added that enforcing marijuana laws is estimated to cost around \$3.6bn a year.

But what the article didn't mention is the long-term consequences of this practice, as these arrests are blights on the arrested individuals for the rest of their lives. Hurting them when it comes to their ability to get jobs, rent apartments and qualify for loans. More importantly, with many states having '3 Strike' laws, this types of non-violent crimes leads to harsher sentences in the country's penal systems, which tend to be a factories producing harden criminals, as this is often the only way that inmates can survive, because when a young person goes into the prison system in California and elsewhere, they better make friends and the strongest friends are usually gangs based on racial or regional lines, such as the Aryan Nation, Latin Kings or Black Muslims.

One way to stop this criminalization inequity is to decriminalize the use and sale of marijuana. In recent years, public opinion in the US has shifted markedly towards some form of legalization of marijuana, whether for medicinal use or for recreation. Last year, Colorado and Washington state essentially legalized it fully and a total of 18 states have made some form of move towards liberalizing its use. Last month, for the first time in more than four decades of polling on the issue, a Pew survey showed a majority of Americans in favor of legalization. But to get at the root of the problem we have to acknowledge that racism is still rampant in America and the polarization of politics has further enforces this undercurrent, allowing many whites to believe that the current environment of economic despair and social disillusion is due to illegals "*Hispanics*", gang culture "*Blacks*" and the 47% "*poor whites, minorities, ungrateful students and the undeserving elderly.*"

Although it isn't 1984, George Orwell's Big Brother is here and everywhere. This past week in **The Guardian**, Glenn Greenwald offered a startling glimpse of the program of systemic surveillance Dick Cheney innovated and Obama has refined. A FISA court order, obtained by Greenwald and linked in the article, compels the Verizon Business Network to furnish for the NSA "*on an ongoing daily basis for the duration of this order. . .all call detail records. . .created for Verizon for communications (i) between the United States and abroad; or (ii) wholly within the United States, including local telephone calls.*" This command is sweeping. It makes Verizon hand over to the FBI all "*From*" and "*To*" information about all phone calls made by all customers using Verizon. The order is dated April 25, 2013. It expires on July 19, 2013. It is classified "*Top Secret*," and due to be declassified on 12 April 2038. It is one of the approximately seven million documents which the Obama administration hides from most Americans every year.

This revelation is only the latest indication of the modus operandi of the justice department. If anything has slowed the public challenge to the actions of the attorney general, it is that his infractions against the first amendment bruised different parties in such diverse ways. The Right has taken most seriously the language about "*conspiracy*" used to obtain secret warrants against the Fox reporter James Rosen; while the liberal side has been struck by the unraveling of the post-Watergate restraint on vendettas against investigative journalism. But the character of the FISA court order shows how far the abuses have reached beyond party. William Binney quit the NSA in 2001, in disgust at its policy of encroachment in the name of protection. Today on **Democracy Now**, Binney gave a precise idea of the extent of the data that Verizon is commanded to surrender to the Holder justice department:

NSA has been doing all this stuff all along, and it's been all the companies, not just one. . . .If Verizon got [a FISA order], so did everybody else, which means that, you know, they're just continuing the collection of this kind of information on all U.S. citizens. That's one of the main reasons they couldn't tell Senator Wyden. . .how many U.S. citizens are in the NSA databases. . . . If you drill down to the numbers, we are talking about 280 million U.S. citizens, being monitored several hundred to several thousand times. Warrantless surveillance began shortly after the September 2001 terrorist attacks. Program fell under court supervision in 2007. Congress extended the law through 2017. In December

of 2012, Congress voted to reauthorize **The FISA Amendments Act** until 2017. The Act “allows federal agencies to eavesdrop on communications and review email” with a warrant from the secret FISA court.

Thomas Drake, whom the justice department harassed and prosecuted for whistle-blowing on wasteful expenditures by the NSA, made a related observation in the same extended pair of interviews. With an indiscriminate generality of focus, such as this order demonstrates to be the rule in the Obama administration, “there’s no need now to call this the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. Let’s just call it the surveillance court. It’s no longer about foreign intelligence.” And what of your phone calls, reader? And what of mine? In the connection between the dates of certain calls and certain subsequent events, may it not be that a “signature” or pattern worthy of prosecution will be discoverable at some future date? Medical records also will be subject to the same interested construal if a government agency large enough and operating under secret orders can lay its hands on them.

There is, in fact, a deep correspondence, which we tend to ignore, between the protection-state at home and the war-state the government operates abroad. Still, in the initial response to Greenwald’s article and the court order, Republicans have been characteristically worried about the leak and not the contents of the leak; most Democrats have been silent; and a bipartisan inertia has appeared in comments by senators Feinstein, Graham, and Chambliss: they knew all along what was happening, they say, and Americans should be grateful for the acts of a state that has the goodness to protect us and the discretion to do it in secret. But there are fresh warnings, now, from senators Ron Wyden and Mark Udall, and from others too: Jeff Merkley and Barbara Mikulski and Dick Durbin, and a Republican, Mark Kirk, and an independent, Bernie Sanders. The warnings all say: the more we give to the government on the pretext of sheer protection, the more it will take and use as it pleases.

The press would like to talk about press harassment and whistleblower persecution. Liberals are up-and-arms, feeling that civil rights have been abused. And Republicans use it as an example of the Obama Administration over-stepping boundaries. But when the Bush Administration homeland security legislation in the War on Terrorism as a result of 9/11, we acquiesce our rights of oversight, especially if you expect to stop any idiot, willing to put a bomb in their underwear, shoes, knapsacks, vans or are willing to fly airplanes into buildings and shoot up schools. We celebrated the fact that we identified the Boston bombers within 48 hours, appended the London bombers with a similar time-frame and thwarted numerous other potential terrorist plots. As a result, this week both Republican leaders including Senator Lindsey Graham and President Obama defended the practice of monitor of our phone calls, emails and tweets and other correspondence domestically and internationally.

Or as my father use to say, “*the price you pay to be free.*” Obviously these types of programs are truly scary, but let’s be honest you can’t walk around London without being in view of a surveillance camera and the Supreme Court just approved the right for police to take DNA swabs of any suspects arrested. Understand that every time we click on Google and Facebook or buy anything on Amazon or with a credit card companies are monitoring our every decision. We are living in a police state, evidence by one fact: We have more people incarcerated than in any other country and the highest rate of incarceration in the world. So it is only natural that Big Brother is listening in on our phone calls and reading our emails and tweets. Nothing is more dangerous is fear and technology. And America is great at both.... And when God or Country is added you get..... **WMD = Drone Strikes. War on Terror = Patriot Act. Al Qaeda = Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and hopefully not Iran or Syria and War On Drugs = Invade a sovereign country that you are not at war and arrest, transport, try and jail a former CIA asset who happened to be President of the Country.** See attached article from **The Guardian, Huffington Post** and **ThinkProgress**.

LIFE IN THE AMERICA

Poet Sherman Alexie describes what it is like being a Native American walking though an all night supermarkets in Downtown Seattle.... walking the aisles. And... and sensing that in his own country

and in his own city for the past two decades he is an outsider.....

Passing under a sign that says.... **Welcome to Madison Market**..... *“the beautiful, wondrous, abundant, glorious, politically progressive, expensive and elitist place. But not a whole lot of brown people wander the aisles here. But I, a brown boy, do wander the aisles. I mean, let's not tell lies. You want the good life? You live where white people live, you go to school where white people go to school, and you shop where white people shop. You've got soy milk. You got lactose-free ice cream. You got Rice Dream. You got beauty products never tested on any animals.... You got juices from fruits and vegetables I've never heard of. You got your beeswax products scattered here and there. 70% of bees voted for Nader in the last election, but I think the wasps, they went for Buchanan. No wheat was harmed in the making of this bread. And Paul Newman is everywhere. But it's good too, being awake, meeting the other insomniacs, the other artists, the other night-time people, and sometimes it's just poor and middle class folks who are working the graveyard shift so they can make a little money, maybe one and a half or two times the minimum wage....”.*

And then after leaving Madison Market.... someone yells out to Alexie from a pickup truck window, “go back to your country.”

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Next Time Someone Tells You That Immigrants Are Destroying Our Country, Show Them This

This British lady is kind enough to do the math on what's wrong with our thinking on immigration so you don't have to. She curses a little, but only because she's quoting a faulty argument. **Mathematics** || **Spoken Word** by **Hollie McNish**

I invite you to see this web link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJX5XHnONTI>

Hollie McNish is a published UK poet and spoken word artist, based between London and Cambridge. She has released two poetry albums, **Touch** and **Push Kick**, both to critical acclaim, and a first collection of written poetry, **Papers**, published by Greenwich Exchange, London.

She has appeared in venues as diverse as Glastonbury festival, Ronnie Scotts Jazz Bar, London's Southbank Centre and Cambridge University and has had poems commissioned by Radio 4 Womans Hour, WOW festival, Tate Modern and Channel 4 Random Acts. She performs across the UK as well as abroad, with previous tours and residencies in Belgium, Australia, France and Portugal, and for the British Council in Latvia and Poland. She was the UK Slam poetry champion 2009, through which she represented the UK in the Slam du Monde finals in Paris, coming 3rd behind the USA and Canada. She now runs Cambridgeshire's youth poetry slam for young people ages 12 – 25.

As well as poetry performances, Hollie runs poetry workshops and recitals for schools, youth centers, charities and more around the country through her poetry education organization,

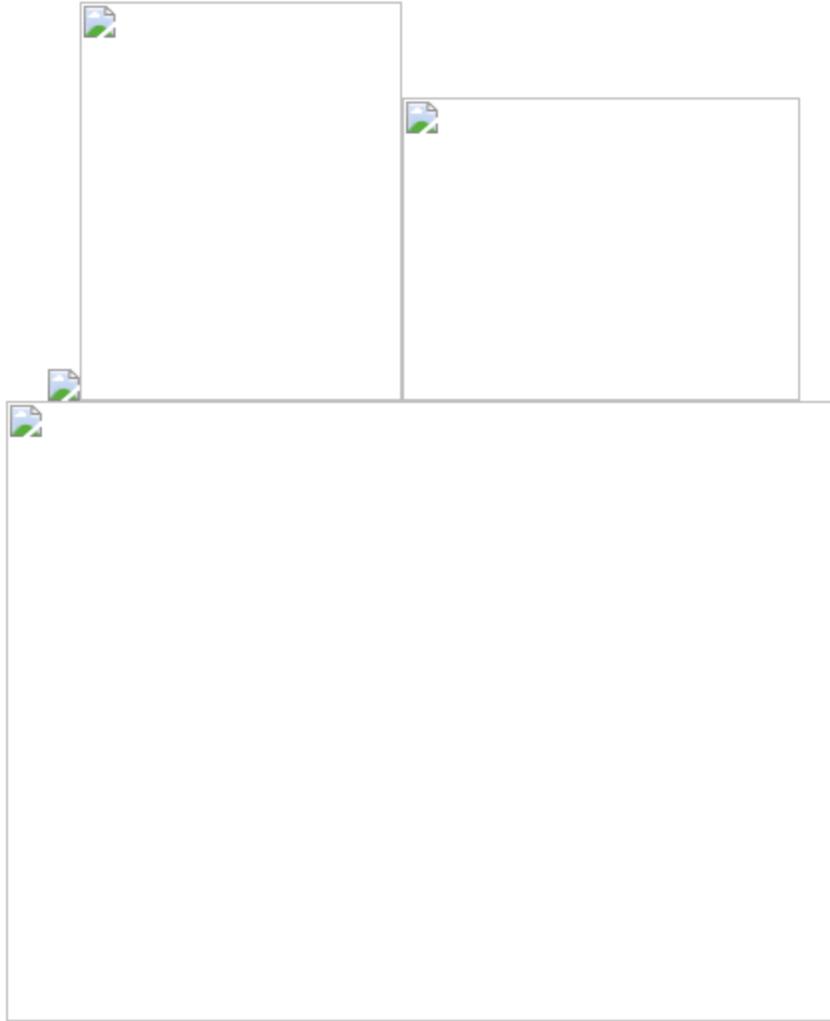
One Of The Greatest Speeches Ever Made

Charlie Chaplin's final speech in the film the **Great Dictator**, with a splash of modern imagery. Song: Window by The Album Leaf

Please feel free to look at the speech on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WibmcsEGLKo>

The Great Dictator is a 1940 American comedy-drama film starring, written, produced, scored, and directed by Charlie Chaplin, following the tradition of many of his other films. Having been the only

Hollywood filmmaker to continue to make silent films well into the period of sound films, this was Chaplin's first true talking picture as well as his most commercially successful film.



At the time of its first release, the United States was still formally at peace with Nazi Germany. Chaplin's film advanced a stirring, controversial condemnation of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini's fascism, antisemitism, and the Nazis, whom he mocks in the film as "machine men, with machine minds and machine hearts".

Chaplin's film followed only a few months after Hollywood's first parody of Hitler, the short subject *You Nazty Spy!* by the Three Stooges, although Chaplin had been planning it for years before. Hitler had been previously allegorically pilloried in the German film by Fritz Lang, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*. In his 1964 autobiography, Chaplin stated that he would not have made the film had he known about the actual horrors of the Nazi concentration camps. The film was released in New York on October 15, 1940.

PICTURES FROM A BY GONE ERA

...these historic pics were taken at least a century before "megapixels" and I would be so pleased if I had taken one like them today.

Web Link: <http://photosilke.blogspot.com/2013/03/historic-pictures-restored.html>

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

Ideology knows the answer before the question has been asked. Principles are something different: a set of values that have to be adapted to circumstances but not compromised away.

George Packer (journalist)

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Not knowing what I wanted to do with this week's music, I went on YouTube to get inspired and came across **Joe Pass**, who although a musician whom I respect is not one of my regulars. So I thought that maybe this is the same for you too. And as such, I thought that I would start with the bluesy jazz guitar music of **Joe Pass** which blew me away with both its soulfulness and sophistication. Somehow this led me to **Wes Montgomery's** performance of **Round Midnight** with John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk, which then took me in an entirely different musical direction and somehow onto **Pharoah Sanders' The Creator Has a Master Plan** and to another level. I hope that you enjoy this musical journey as much as I did....

Joe Pass – **Summertime** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkinLvUrUYE>

Ella Fitzgerald & Joe Pass – **Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnYnpApOkQg>

Joe Pass – **Blues in G** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oggdWBQzXfo>

Joe Pass – **When You Wish Upon A Star** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yinn5ek56pVI>

Joe Pass – **Stella by Starlight** -- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNooEWuc_Ng

Joe Pass – **All the Things You Are** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWa6aChSfiw>

Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane & Thelonious Monk – **Round Midnight** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pbp2FhdKyg>

Wes Montgomery – **Body and Soul** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5124nCOBNw>

Wes Montgomery – **Impressions** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXvdU7f-q7I>

Wes Montgomery Quartet – **Four on Six** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CytGY1PNCTQ>

Wes Montgomery – **Bumpin on Sunset** -- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqn3PF_DcSg

Pharoah Sanders – **The Creator Has a Master Plan** (first third of the song) -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13L6sjk080c>

Pharoah Sanders - **The Creator Has a Master Plan**. Karma, February 14, 1969. Pharoah Sanders (ts); Leon Thomas (vcl, percussion); Richard Davis (b); Julius Watkins (french horn); James Spaulding (fl); Reggie Workman (b); Lonnie L. Smith Jr. (p); William Hart (d); Nathaniel Bettis (percussion). 33 minutes approx.

"There was a time, when peace was on the earth, and joy and happiness did reign. Each man knew his worth. In my heart how I yearn for that spirit's return and I cry, as time flies, oooooom, oooooom.

There is a place where love forever shines, and rainbows are the shadows of a presence so divine, and the glow of his love lights the heavens above, and it's free, come with me, can't you see.

The Creator has a working plan - peace and happiness for every man.

The Creator has a master plan - peace and happiness for every man.

The Creator makes but one demand, happiness thru all the land."

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

