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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.. 12/27/2015

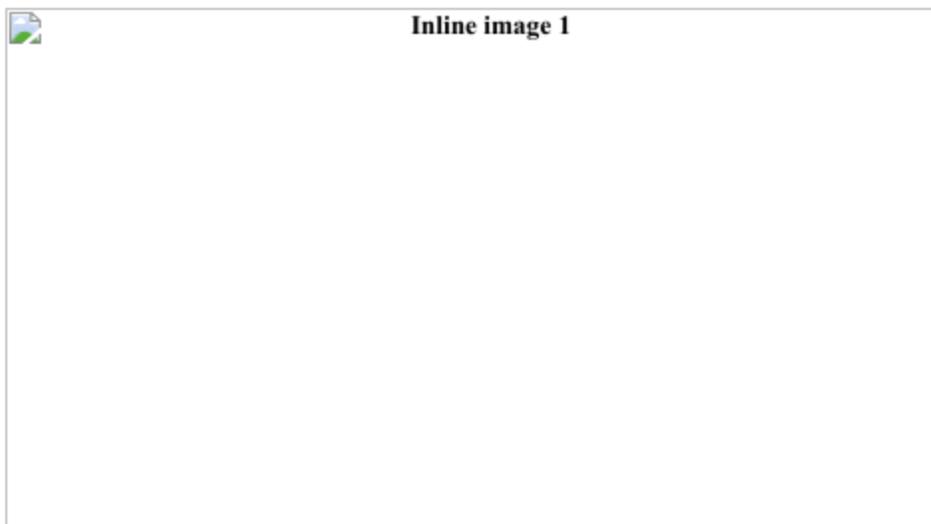
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DEAR FRIEND.....

Heroin in the Heartland



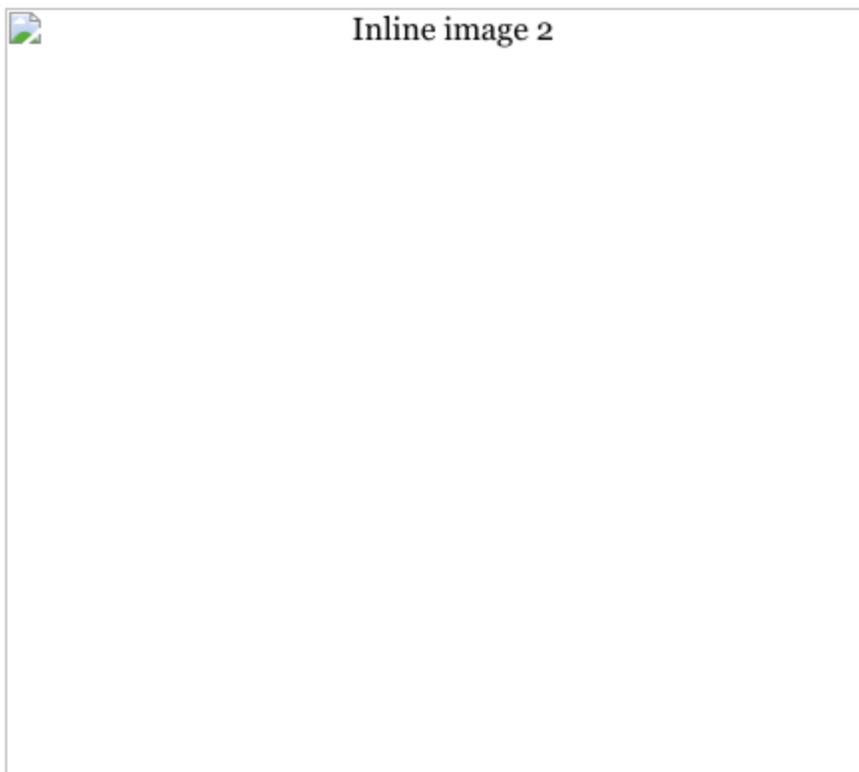
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There is a new drug epidemic in America.... *daa.....* And we know this because **60 Minutes, the New York Time, The Washington Post** recently told us. And the only reason it has now become a crisis is because of the growing use of heroin in the white suburbs and the heartland of America. The fact that rampant drug use has destroyed black and brown neighborhood for decades and the

criminalization of its use has devastated millions of black and brown lives, both authorities and media chalked "*this epidemic*" up to the lack of personal responsibility and the breakdown of the traditional family. But now that heroin use and deaths have surged mostly among whites in the suburbs and small towns, the parents of those who have overdosed have also successfully pushed for a more forgiving approach to addiction, a stark contrast from the response to crack cocaine in the 1980s and '90s.

Heroin-related deaths jumped 39 percent from 2012 to 2013, and the longer-term trends are equally disturbing: from 2002 to 2013, the rate of heroin-related overdose deaths nearly quadrupled, according to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**. Researchers have found that prior to the 1980s, whites and nonwhites were equally represented among first-time heroin users. But that's changed as heroin use has expanded across other parts of the country. Now, nearly 90 percent of the people who tried heroin for the first time in the past decade were white. And a growing number are middle-class or wealthy.

But how did this happen? It appears that big pharmaceutical inadvertently got this new generation hooked on heroin, not by design, but because heroin is cheaper than prescription pills -- about \$10 a bag, compared to \$60 to \$80 per pill -- and often a more potent high. As opioid addiction boosted demand and doctors becoming more cautious about prescribing opioids, decreasing supply, prices of pills skyrockets on the black market driving more addicts into heroin. As a result, today three out of four heroin addicts started out by using prescription drugs, according a recent survey, which is part of a growing body of evidence that many of today's heroin users are shifting from prescription pill addiction to heroin addiction. The [REDACTED] reports that 45 percent of people who used heroin between 2011 and 2013 were also addicted to prescription painkillers. People who are dependent on prescription opioids are 40 times more likely to abuse or be dependent on heroin, according to the [REDACTED].



Between 1996 and 2011, the number of people who ended up in substance abuse treatment centers in Suffolk County New York, as a result of heroin jumped 425 percent, according to a 2012 special grand jury report from the county's Supreme Court. During the same period, the number of people who

landed in substance abuse treatment for opioid pill use spiked 1,136 percent, the report found. Long Island is one of many areas of the country where heroin addiction is reaching harrowing levels, according to Gregory Bunt, the medical director at **Daytop Village**, a New York-based substance abuse treatment center. The crisis received renewed attention after actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman died a year ago from an apparent heroin overdose. The rise in heroin use mirrors a decade-long spike in abuse of prescription opioids -- painkillers that are a medical cousin to heroin, but are legal as long as they're prescribed by a doctor.

Opioid deaths were up 76 percent in New Hampshire in 2014, with 325 people dying from an opioid overdose, according to state figures. Emergency room visits from heroin have more than tripled since 2013 in New Hampshire as well. In Massachusetts, opioid deaths rose 20 percent in 2014, and are up 63 percent over 2012, **The Boston Globe** reported, while Maine has seen heroin-related deaths surge as well. In Vermont, Gov. Peter Shumlin declared the state to be in a "*full-blown heroin crisis*" in his 2014 State of the State Message. Nationally, deaths from heroin rose to 8,260 in 2013.

Officials in Mexico and the United States say Mexico's opium production rose an estimated 50 percent in 2014, thanks in part to "*a voracious American appetite*" for heroin. It is all part of a global surge.

As **The New York Times** reported in June, the United Nations' annual World Drug Report found that Afghanistan's poppy fields expanded by 36 percent from 2012 to 2013. Over all, global poppy cultivation hit its highest level since the 1930s, the United Nations report found, suggesting that today's heroin epidemic will continue.

Last week, President Obama traveled to West Virginia, a mostly white state with high levels of overdoses, to discuss his \$133 million proposal to expand access for drug treatment and prevention programs. The Justice Department is also preparing to release roughly 6,000 inmates from federal prisons as part of an effort to roll back the severe penalties issued to nonviolent drug dealers in decades past. And in one of the most striking shifts in this new era, some local police departments have stopped punishing many heroin users. In Gloucester, Mass., those who walk into the police station and ask for help, even if they are carrying drugs or needles, are no longer arrested. Instead, they are diverted to treatment, despite questions about the police departments' unilateral authority to do so. It is an approach being replicated by three dozen other police departments around the country.

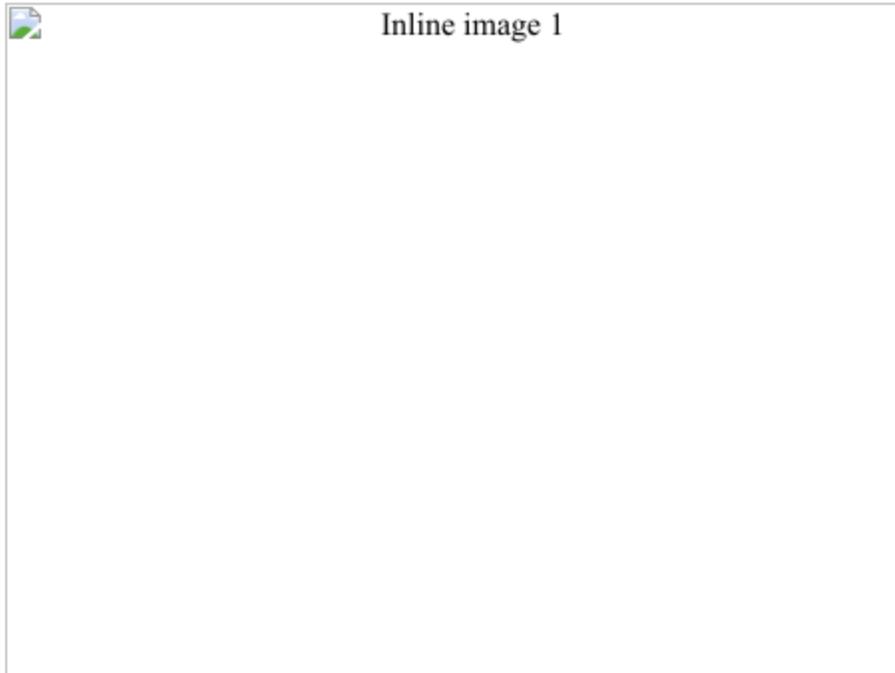
One can easily see the stark difference between how these policies evolve and the connection with race, as that the new consensus seems to be emerging: The drug problem will not be solved by arrests alone, but rather by treatment. Parents of these new middle-class addicts say that while they recognize the racial shift in heroin use, politicians and law enforcement are responding in this new way because they realized what they were doing wasn't working. "*They're paying more attention because people are screaming about it,*" Mr. Griffin said. "I work with 100 people every day — parents, people in recovery, addicts — who are invading the statehouse, doing everything we can to make as much noise as we can to try to save these kids."

Some law enforcement experts and African-American leaders have expressed frustration with the fact that there seems to be more tolerance and sensitivity for drugs once they move into white communities. "*This is not a new problem,*" said Marc Mauer, executive director of **the Sentencing Project**, which examines racial issues in the criminal justice system. "*Go back 100 years on race and the drug war. Look at marijuana in the 1930s. Marijuana was demonized and the popular image of it was that it was used in racy parts of town, where blacks or Mexican-Americans went. That was*

the perception. Then in the 1960s, millions of largely white, middle-class college students started consuming enormous quantities of marijuana and perceptions changed almost overnight.”

Now that that non-prescription drug abuse in the form of heroin has aggressively made its way into the heartland and suburbs of Middle America, hopefully attitudes will finally change demanding authorities decriminalize all drug use and instead, treat the addiction as the disease that it is...

So True



The Paradigm of Change

The reason Why Our Dependence on Fossil Fuels Will Wane



Inline image 2

I recently came across an article in **Oil Pro** by Allen Brooks – ***Could Self-Driving Vehicles Destroy the Oil Business*** – written in defense for the longevity of fossil fuels. But the premise that self-driving vehicles will somehow affect fuel consumption is sort of a non sequitur as self-driving technology has little effect on conservation/consumption. But within the article is an analysis of economic growth and overall energy and materials consumption. The technologies, some of which are very new and revolutionary but are just starting to reshape the industrial world and its energy use. And this is what peaked my interest.

Modern economic growth is generally the result of industrialists and consumers constantly figuring out how to do more with less. To the extent this effort is successful, it is largely due to the impact of modern technology, meaning that humanity has, over time, been able to create ever more value while using less and less material. To that point, data collected by University of Manitoba natural scientist Vaclav Smil shows that today it requires 20% less energy to produce a ton of steel than it did in 1900. For aluminum and cement, the energy reduction needed to produce a ton today versus 1900 is 70%. It takes 80% less energy than it did in 1900 to synthesize nitrogen fertilizer. The amount of energy used to heat a home in the United States is down 50% from the amount consumed in 1978. Lastly, it takes 90% less energy to desalinate a gallon of water today compared with 1970. These are all significant reductions in energy use and reflect the improvement in technologies for producing these products.

Dr. Smil has calculated that in the United States it took about 10 ounces of materials in 1920 to produce one dollar's worth of value. Today, that relationship has declined to 2.5 ounces, a 75% decline in less than a century. Energy is certainly a part of that equation, which is supported by the 2013 study produced by the Alliance to Save Energy. One of the key conclusions from that study stated: *“Over the past forty years, the United States made significant gains in energy productivity. U.S. economic output expanded more than three times since 1970 while demand for energy grew only 50%.”* Clearly that data demonstrates that we have become significantly more efficient in utilizing energy to maximize economic output. It also speaks to the role of technology in helping to improve manufacturing processes, boost the efficiency of the nation's distribution system and revolutionize the products and services today's consumers can enjoy.

To further demonstrate the impact of what new technologies and greater energy efficiencies have meant for growth of the United States economy, we have the following statement based on data collected by the Rocky Mountain Institute. *“If energy productivity had remained constant since 1970*

[when about 68 quadrillion Btu (Q or quad) were consumed], the U.S. would have consumed 207.3 quadrillion Btu in 2007, when it actually only consumed 101.6 quads.” What does consuming less than half the number of quads of energy mean? A quad is roughly equivalent to 170 million barrels of oil. If we saved 106 quads of energy, it would equate to 18,020 million barrels of oil, or approximately 18 billion barrels. On a daily basis, that would be the equivalent of 49 million barrels of oil a day. But let’s understand that crude oil represents only about 30% of total primary energy consumption. So out of the 106 quads of energy savings, the oil savings would have been about 31.8 quads of energy represented by oil, or about 5.4 billion barrels of oil. At the present time, the United States consumes about 20 million barrels of oil per day, or 7.3 billion barrels of oil annually. By the more efficient use of oil, we do not need to be burning 34.8 million barrels of oil a day as otherwise would have been the case.

The above paragraph for me was the wheels coming off the car, as self-driving vehicles aren't going to be the death knell for gasoline/diesel driven cars, as much as battery and fuel cell innovation. Tesla has already proven that not only are electric cars possible, there is also a growing willingness of the public to embrace them on a wide scale. Additionally, there are a growing number of municipalities who are replacing diesel driven vehicles with biodiesel buses, hybrid-electric buses, and electric trolleys and light-rail systems.

Most important, all-electric transit options pollute far less than their diesel counterparts, but they can be even greener if the municipality invests in its own renewable energy system or commits to renewable energy credits for its power. This renewable electricity can be from wind farms, Cow Power (in Vermont), landfill methane, solar, or other renewable options. And yes, initially there are often an extra costs for a municipality to switch to green electricity, but I believe that it’s a good investment for many reasons — including public health and supporting the local economy.

But using the tenets of Moore’s Law and Dr. Smil’s observations, alternative fuels will eventually produce more energy with more efficiency for lower and lower costs. This is not to say that the use of fossil fuels will disappear in the near future, but like everything else it days are numbered. And yes, automated driven cars will one day be as common as cellular phones, personal computers and emails, none of which existed when I was a kid... because as we knew then.... phone calls needed to be connected by wires, computers needed to be big and the idea of sending mail over the air required an airplane.

Agriculture Pollution



Inline image 1

It is the leading cause of almost all forms of environmental destruction.

Web Link: 

Agriculture is responsible for 51% of all greenhouse gas emissions.... and it's not fossil fuels. It's the leading cause of species extinction, ocean dead zones, habitat destruction and water pollution. It's animal agriculture. Livestock covers 45% of the earth's total land. 136 million rain forest acres are destroyed for animal agriculture. 1 to 2 acres are cleared every second to grow feed for beef cattle. Cows produce 150 billion gallons of methane daily. Methane is 25 to 100 times more destructive than CO2. Agriculture emissions will rise 80% by the year 2050. It's now responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than all global transport combined. Even without fossil fuels we would still exceed our CO2E limit by 2030. All from raising animals. Three fourths of the world's fisheries are exploited or depleted. 2.7 trillion Animals are pulled from the ocean each year. 650,000 whales and dolphins are killed every year by commercial fishing. As such we could see fishless oceans by 2048. Why is this happening? The animal agriculture & fishing industries can't keep up with our demand for meat and animal products.

World population figures:

1812: 1 billion people

1912: 1.5 billion people

2012: 7 billion people

70 billion farm animals are reared annually worldwide, with 6 million animals killed every hour for food. Is this sustainable? And since it is not, what should we do?

As Deep Throat Said: Follow The Money

Because Military Contractors Are Corrupting Our Political System

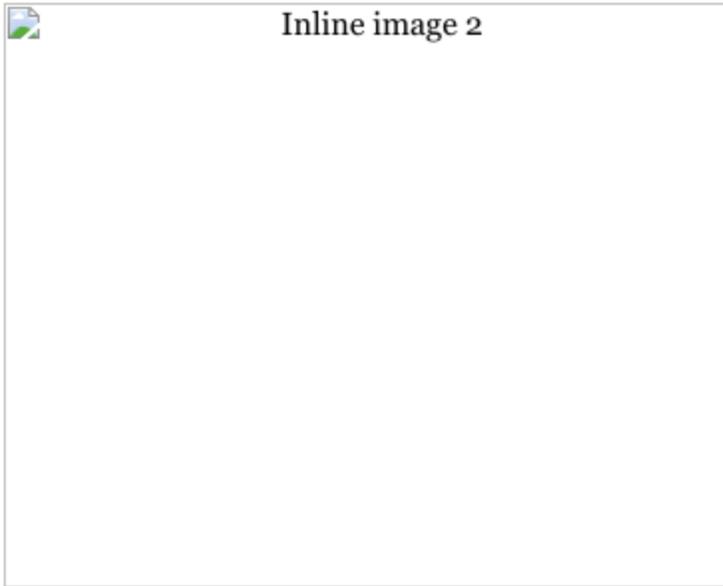


Inline image 1

If you want to know why we are still engaged in the longest war in America's history, one of the reasons might be because companies and individuals are making billions of dollar while diverting your attention to Welfare Mothers and Food Stamp recipients. In 1960 Dwight Eisenhower tried to warn us about the danger of an unbridled Military Industrial Complex, where ideology and greed manipulates the way we see the world and what we do based on fear. And for those who will tell you just follow the money and when you do you will see that just the top 10 government contractors (all defense contractors) have more than \$105 billion (larger than the GDP of half of of the countries on the planet) in contracts which you have to believe that they don't want them to end and are doing everything possible to increase.

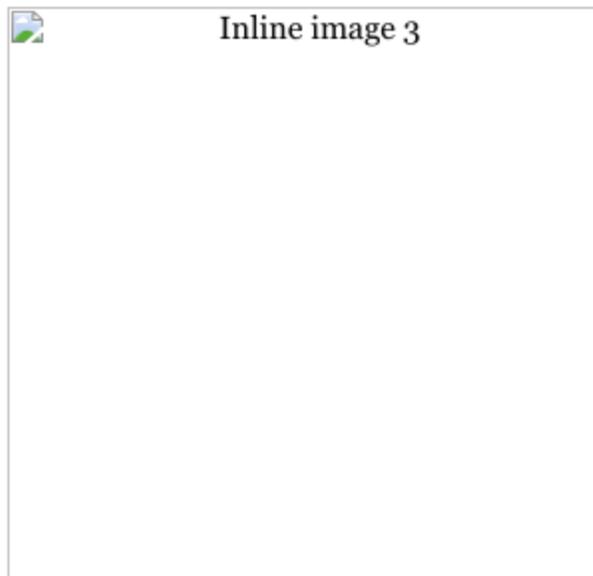
As such they spend tens of millions of dollars lobbying Congress, Federal Departments and the military to keep their gravy train running. Worse is that these same companies are manipulating our political system, in wake or the Citizens United Supreme Court Decision and this practice should be banned when there is no longer limits on what these big companies can spend on politics.

Please understand this round robin because eccentricly these companies including Lockheed-Martin, Northrop Grumman and Boeing are being given taxpayer's money to lobby and give away money to politicians who will vote for even more aerospace weapon systems. And as Robin Reich asks, why should be pay Raytheon and General Dynamics to lobby and contribute to politicians who will vote for even more high-tech weapons. Any why we should we pay Halliburton, Blackwater and Bechtel to lobby and finance politicians who will vote for more private military contractors around the world.



The Senate just passed a \$607 billion defense spending bill, with 93 senators in favor and 3 opposed (including Bernie Sanders); the House has already passed it, 370 to 58. Obama agreed to sign it even though it's loaded with pork for military contractors -- including Lockheed Martin's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the most expensive weapons system in history,

Our military expenditures are approximately 3.5% of the country's GDP compared to 2.3 average worldwide. In fact the U.S. military spending is larger than the combined budgets of the next seven countries and five are supposed to be our allies. And if homeland security spending is included, the U.S. spend more on protection than the next fifteen countries combined spending of which thirteen are allies. Even if we cut our military budget it still would be larger than the combined military spending in China, Russia, Iran and North Korea.



And even though we are spending more than any other country we are no safer than Brazil, Germany, Japan and Australia. And the most effective weapon against ISIS has been drones, small Delta Forces and good intelligence relegating aircraft carriers and advanced jets into the boondoggles that they are. But most important is that we have to get unbridled spending by military contractors under controlled as has corrupted our political system, as well as diverting trillions of dollars that could have been better used to repair, upgrade and replace our decaying roads, bridges, levies, dams, power grid, water, sanitation, hospital and schools.

We currently spend more on defense than the next 7 countries combined. Defense spending accounts for almost 20 percent of all federal spending — nearly as much as Social Security, or the combined spending for Medicare and Medicaid. The sheer size of the defense budget suggests that it should be part of any serious effort to address America's long-term fiscal challenges. National security threats have evolved over the past 50 years, changing the nature of U.S. commitments around the world. We need a defense budget that matches these new security challenges, not the threats of the last century. We should also recognize that a strong economy is essential for providing the resources to meet future threats, and addressing our long-term structural debts will keep our economy strong. Indeed, as Admiral Mike Mullen, the past Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said: "*The single greatest threat to our national security is our debt.*"

Mandatory Sentencing Laws Needs to be Repealed



As Meteor Blades recently wrote in The Daily Kos that the one crime which got you a mandatory sentence in 1750 was piracy. At the birth of the republic mandatory minimum sentences were a rare and targeted thing. Attacking and robbing ships at sea got you life, no ifs, ands or buts. What gets you a mandatory minimum sentence today? Any one of 261 different crimes. Most mandatory minimum sentences apply to drug offenses, but Congress has enacted them for other crimes, including certain gun, pornography, and economic offenses.

Mandatory minimum sentencing laws require binding prison terms of a particular length for people convicted of certain federal and state crimes. These inflexible, "*one-size-fits-all*" sentencing laws may seem like a quick-fix solution for crime, but they undermine justice by preventing judges from fitting the punishment to the individual and the circumstances of their offenses. Mandatory sentencing laws cause federal and state prison populations to soar, leading to overcrowding, exorbitant costs to taxpayers, and diversion of funds from law enforcement.

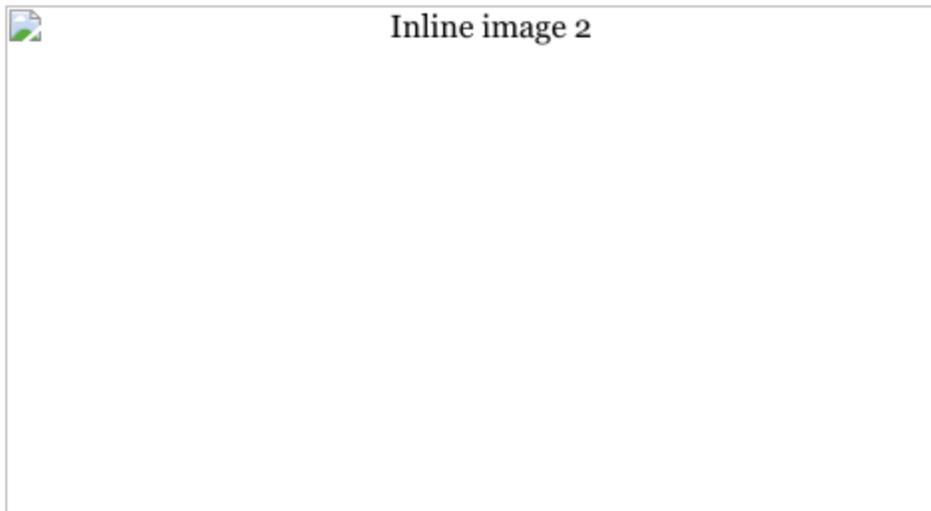
See Mandatory Minimum Sentences web link: <http://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Chart-All-Fed-MMs-NW.pdf>

AGAIN: Mandatory minimum sentences require judges to punish certain crimes with a minimum number of years in prison regardless of context. The problem is that context is important as circumstances make a huge difference. Our current mandatory minimums were mostly past during the **'Tough on Crime'** era in the 1980s and 90s. And they are partially responsible for the explosion of our prison population here in the United States. Since 1980 the prison population in the US has quadrupled with one out of 100 adults being locked up. We have 2 million people incarcerated in America. More importantly mandatory minimums have a huge human cost with a one person receiving a sentence of life without parole for distributing 3 ounces of meth. That is insane.

Most of the mandatory minimum drug laws on the books were written in the 1980s and 90s when America was in the grips of a full-fledged drunk he still anti-drug hysteria. As a result in the 1980s Ronald Reagan passed tough mandatory minimum drug penalties and his successor President Bush pushed for even harsher laws. This this was by no means just a Republican issue. Democrats in Congress, state legislatures and even Bill Clinton also pushed for these laws. By early 1994, 31 states and Washington, DC had mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses with strong bi-partisan support of both Republicans and Democrats. This tide has changed as everyone from President Obama to Ted Cruz have spoken out against mandatory minimum sentences. And earlier this year a bipartisan group of legislators offered a bill to reduce mandatory sentencing.

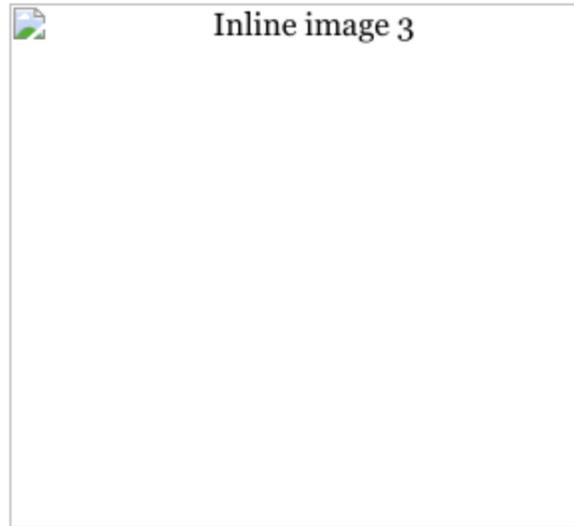
Many of the inmates who are incarcerated on the mandatory minimum sentences had no idea of what the punishment was, made stupid mistakes and never that they would get caught. As such, these harsh sentencing is not going to stop these types of crimes. Ridiculously long sentences are not a deterrent to crime.

Take for example take the case of Weldon Angelos, a father of two with no criminal record who at who when he was 24 sold small amounts of marijuana to an informant and when he was arrested he happened to have a gun in his possession. As a result this a first time offender received a 55 year mandatory minimum sentence with no possibility of a parole. Weldon Angelos won't get out of prison until he is 79 years old – for something that is legal in four states today. More importantly, he was not the only one affected by his sentence. His sons who are now in their late teens, were five and seven when he was incarcerated, taking away the male figure in their lives and destroying their relationship with their father.



Even The judge who sentence Angelos says that his sentenced was for two severe. Because if he was a hijacker his sentence would've been 24 years and if you was a terrace the Sims would've been 20 years

he was a child and if he was a child rapist who would've gotten 11 years in prison. Whereas this low level pot dealer was sentenced for 55 years for selling less than 2 ounces of marijuana.... obviously that's just not right. As a result many judges oppose mandatory minimum sentences because they essentially hand over the sentencing to prosecutors, who then use the threat of long mandatory minimum sentences to convince defendants take a plea bargain or to cooperate by providing information and often to entrap others.



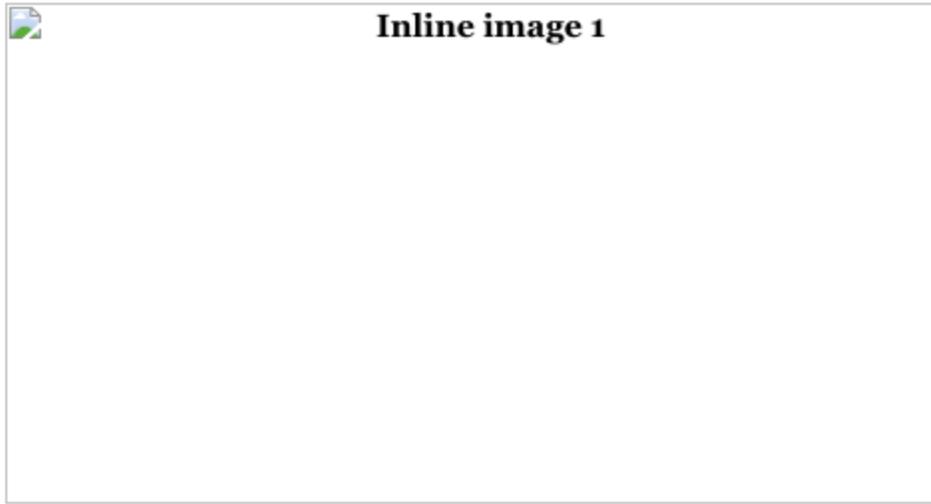
Without A doubt drugs have heard people for sure, but the mandatory minimum sentences designed to stop them have done way more harm than good particularly to certain populations. In 2010 almost 3/4 of federal drug offenders sentenced on the mandatory minimums were black or Hispanic. The good news is that at the federal level we have reduce some mandatory minimums with safety valve provisions giving judge's discretion in certain cases. While on the local level, at least 29 states have rolled-back their mandatory minimal laws since 2000.

But for the most part those reforms have not been made retroactive and as a result tens of thousands of people are stuck in prisons for crimes that now carry far shorter sentences if they committed them just a few years later. This is terrible. We need both the states and the federal government to repeal mandatory minimum sentences laws going forward but to also pass laws so that the existing prisoners can apply for retroactive reduce sentences as almost everyone now agrees that mandatory minimum sentence in laws were a mistake and we cannot have a system where people are continuing to pay for that mistake ***and this is my rant of the week....***

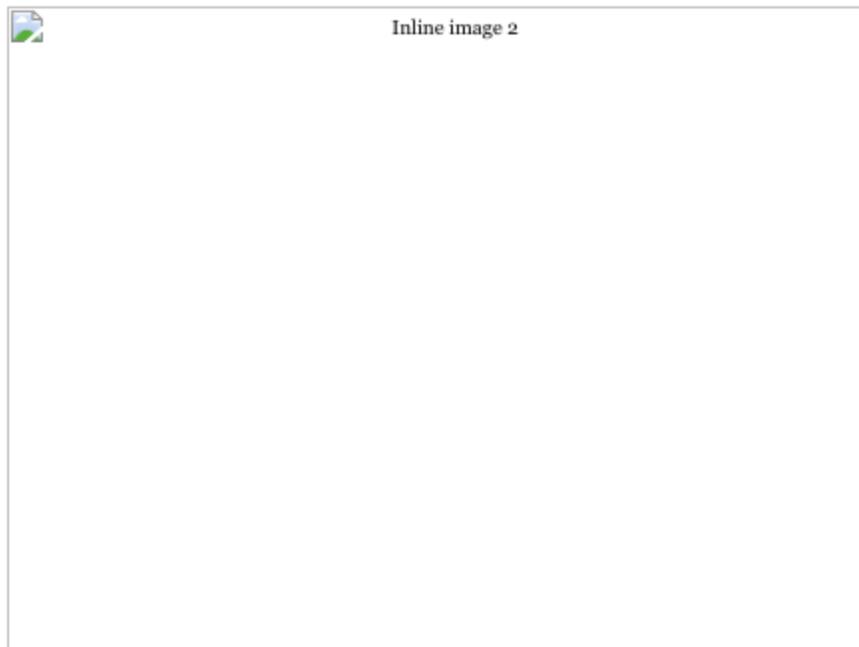
WEEK'S READINGS

Why Stereotypes Can't Be Trusted

30 People Arrested For Food Stamp Fraud; Guess How Many Were Black



It's a common stereotype that food stamp recipients, and those who abuse it, are black, Hispanic, or any other race but white. According to the USDA in their report for fiscal year 2013, 40% of recipients are white and 26% are black.



While the media and America's culture will have you believe that black people (*or anyone who isn't white*) account for copious amounts of fraud, there's a story breaking that you won't hear on Fox "News" anytime soon (or you might, because any chance to crush the SNAP program, they will take).

According to WCAX News in New York:

More than 30 people have been nabbed for food stamp fraud in the North Country.

Investigators say over the past couple month's people used their food stamps to get food or alcohol at the Old Time Butcher Block store in Brushton.

Police also say it's not the first time the owner of that store, Dennis Sauve, has been charged with allowing such fraud.

Police say more arrests are expected.

Now here's the kicker: they're all white. Brushton, New York, where this bust happened, has a population of roughly 480 people. Approximately 99.83% of the population is white, and 0.42% are black. These demographics are eerily similar to the food stamp capital of the country, Owsley County, Kentucky, which is 99.22% white and 95% Republican. Maybe we should investigate them.

I just wish we could get the political affiliations of those arrested in Brushton.

According to WPTZ News:

Police say the arrests are the result of a year-long investigation, initiated by the Franklin County Department of Social Services Fraud Unit. Franklin County District Attorney's Office, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance helped with the investigation.

The store owner, Denis Sauve (also white), has been charged with third-degree grand larceny and misuse of food stamps. This really isn't a racial issue so much as it is an, "I told you so," issue. While the food stamp program has one of the lowest rates of abuse than any other welfare program, a lot of people buy into this misconception that it is the "lazy blacks" who account for all the fraud and woes of government assistance. Well, here we are, a major food stamp "bust" and every criminal involved is white.

It might be time to rethink today' stereotypes.

RYAN DENSON -- FEBRUARY 15, 2015

The #2 Cause of Death in America



Of the 584,881 cancer death in America 158,040 are the result of lung cancer.

As someone whose both parents was diagnosed with cancer and who also has had several serious health incidents I took special interest in a recent article in **Oprah Winfrey's** magazine by Aimee Swartz – ***What Non-Smokers Need To Know About Lung Cancer*** – pointing to the fact that there is a growing number of women developing lung cancer who have never smoked. Until about a decade ago, most doctors considered it nearly impossible for young nonsmokers to develop lung cancer. *"It would have been assumed that a tumor found on the lung had spread from cancer elsewhere in the body,"* says David Carbone, MD, PhD, director of the James Thoracic Center at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Today, doctors know that isn't always the case: About one in five of the estimated 105,590 American women who will be diagnosed with the disease this year are what doctors call *"never-smokers"* -- those who have literally never lit up or who have smoked fewer than 100 cigarettes in their lifetime. And a 2012 French study revealed that from 2000 to 2010, rates of lung cancer among never-smokers shot up an alarming 33 percent. In fact, if lung cancer in nonsmokers was its own category, it would rank among the ten deadliest cancers in the United States. This is in part because the symptoms -- coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath -- are so similar to those of common illnesses; as a result, the disease is often ignored by patients and overlooked by physicians.

The article starts with the story of Sandy Jauregui-Baza who in 2012 while hiking along the Tamul waterfall in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, started coughing and having trouble breathing. *"I remember thinking I must be coming down with something."* Jauregui-Baza was an avid exerciser; she ran or hiked daily, logging more than 100 miles each month. She ate clean, avoiding almost all processed foods. She figured she was too healthy for anything to be seriously wrong. But after developing flu-like symptoms, she went to an urgent care clinic in Los Angeles. The doctor thought it might be tuberculosis, based on the results of her cloudy chest X-ray and her recent honeymoon in Nepal, where the infectious disease is common. But a few days later, when the definitive test for TB came back negative, doctors did a lung biopsy to look for other causes.

The final diagnosis: Jauregui-Baza had stage IV lung cancer, the most advanced form of the disease; it had spread into the bones of her spinal column. *"I thought the doctors had to be kidding,"* says Jauregui-Baza, now 32. *"I've never even smoked, and I had just hiked to the base camp of Mount*

Everest. How could I have lung cancer?" The prognosis was grim: More than 95 percent of stage IV lung cancer patients succumb to the disease within five years of diagnosis. Jauregui-Baza was given just six months to live.

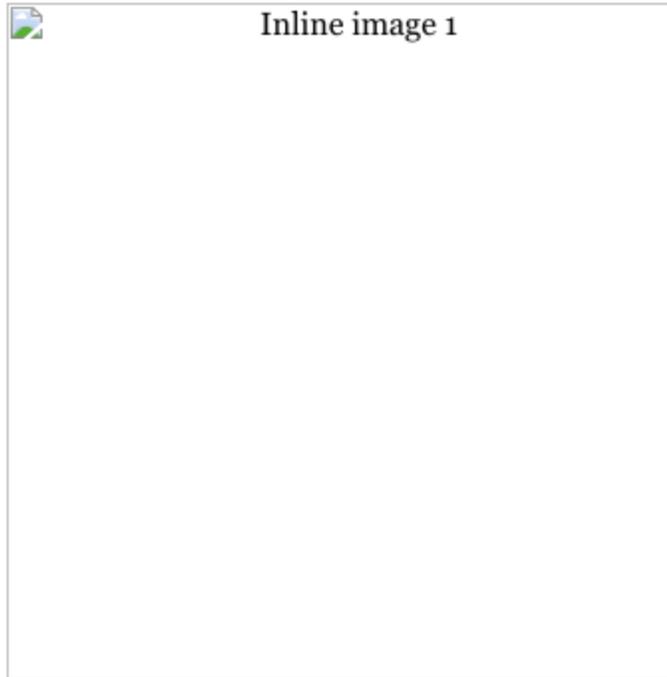
\That's also what happened to Natalie DiMarco, another nonsmoker who was diagnosed at age 32. During a personal-training session one day, she was so winded, *"it stopped me in my tracks,"* she says. *"It didn't seem like I was just tired from exercise."* She made an appointment to see her primary care physician, who thought allergies were to blame. When she developed a nagging cough, she sought another opinion and was diagnosed with pneumonia. By the time her cancer was discovered through a biopsy six months later, DiMarco could no longer climb a flight of stairs without stopping to catch her breath. Like Jauregui-Baza, she had stage IV lung cancer.

If cigarettes aren't to blame, what is? Certainly, secondhand smoke plays a role, as do other environmental factors: According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers is exposure to radon, a radioactive gas, and in 2013, the World Health Organization officially recognized outdoor air pollution as another cause. But experts believe these factors account for only a fraction of lung cancer cases among young never-smokers. *"These patients just aren't old enough to have had the degree of exposure we would typically associate with cancer,"* says Pasi A. Jänne, MD, PhD, director of the Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Though studies have linked lung cancer in never-smokers to other factors, from estrogen to viral infections like HPV, none has emerged as a definitive cause.

Researchers are having success looking for answers in the very place where cancer begins -- our DNA. Advances in gene-sequencing technologies have helped doctors discover that certain cancer-causing mutations occur about two to six times more often in tumors of never-smokers than in tumors of those who have a history of lighting up. The good news: The FDA has approved drugs that can home in on these mutations and deactivate them. Although the meds are not a cure, they can buy some patients more time -- sometimes years -- before the cancer returns; in one clinical trial, a drug called Xalkori was found to slow the progression of a type of lung cancer more than twice as long as chemo.

Jauregui-Baza had been on Xalkori for more than two years and says it allowed her to live *"almost the same life as before cancer."* Recently, however, it stopped working. Now on a new drug, she's also taking part in a first-of-its-kind study by the Addario Lung Cancer Medical Institute that's looking specifically at the DNA of young people with lung cancer. The hope is to identify additional mutations that could point the way to better treatments. Jauregui-Baza remains optimistic: *"If I can stay alive until the next treatment comes, I have a good shot at beating this."* The cool thing is that our scientists are getting closer to developing a real cure for a number of the different forms of cancer (including lung) and have already developed new medicines that add quality and years to the lives of cancer patients.

THE 8 MOST OVERRATED THINGS TO DO IN LOS ANGELES



Many Angelenos have blissfully allowed the outside world to think of our city as overrated, but ■ going to let you in on a little secret: in addition to the wonderful Southern California weather it's pretty much the best place on the planet — if you know how to do it right. That means avoiding tourist traps at all costs, indulging like a local, and adhering to the advice of a native. Here are some of the places that **Krista Simmons** recently wrote in **Travel & Leisure** — to avoid in Los Angeles at all costs, as well as some excellent alternatives to check out instead.

1. The Hollywood Walk of Fame

Unless you're a celebrity getting your own star, Angelenos wouldn't dare step foot anywhere near Hollywood Boulevard, especially during awards season. If you want to get a better handle on our city and its tastemakers by foot, try one of the amazing walking tours that celebrate historic architecture, like the L.A. Conservancy walks through Downtown's Art Deco buildings, instead.

2. Pink's Hot Dogs

Having grown up in L.A., it always blows my mind how long the line is at this La Brea Avenue dog shop. It doesn't matter what time of day it is, there's always a wait. And while in a major metropolis I value the consistency, there could hardly be anything more over-hyped than these wieners.

■ get better sausages at Korean-inspired Seoul Sausage or BierBeisl Imbiss, which serves Austrian bangers, both of which are much more representative of the multicultural patchwork of L.A. Better yet, opt for a Danger Dog, L.A.'s official signature street food — *made by wrapping a hot dog in bacon and smothering it in grilled onions and red peppers* — after a good show at one of the city's great music venues.

3. Santa Monica Pier

Though the beaches on the Westside are certainly better than nothing, the Santa Monica Pier, especially in the summertime, is the epitome of a tourist trap. Save for the Malibu Farm outpost, pier food is mediocre at best. If you're staying in SaMo, opt for a ride down the Strand, riding through for a pit stop on ultra-hip Abbott Kinney and then southbound toward Manhattan Beach, where there's a pier and some great new bars and restaurants.

4. L.A. Live

To Angelenos, this eyesore is the equivalent of New York City's Times Square. There's no good reason to eat at any of the chain restaurants or bars there, unless there's a great show going on at the Club Nokia, or you've got courtside seats to a Laker game. There are so many other great spots for live music and comedy in DTLA, like the Orpheum or the Ace Hotel's United Artists Theater, which also offers incredible 1920s architecture. And the same goes for Universal City Walk: Avoid it at all costs.

5. Umami Burger

It might come as a bit of a shock, considering our reputation as a city full of health nuts, but L.A. has always had a strong burger culture. This is the birthplace of In-N-Out, after all. While it's impressive that Umami has become a national chain since its inception in 2009, the burgers have never truly been as epic as those at Plan Check (get the blueprint burger, with smoked blue cheese, pig candy, fried onions, roasted garlic steak sauce, and peppercress), The Oaks, or Oinkster. Be sure to give those a try when you're in town, too.

6. Chinatown

While this corner of Downtown L.A. has certainly seen a renaissance as of late, with restaurants like Pok Pok, Chego, and Burgerlords opening up shop, if you want real, authentic Chinese food, head out to the San Gabriel Valley: it's worth the trek up the 110 Freeway. Brace yourself for the best dim sum and dumplings you can find outside the motherland.

7. Rodeo Drive

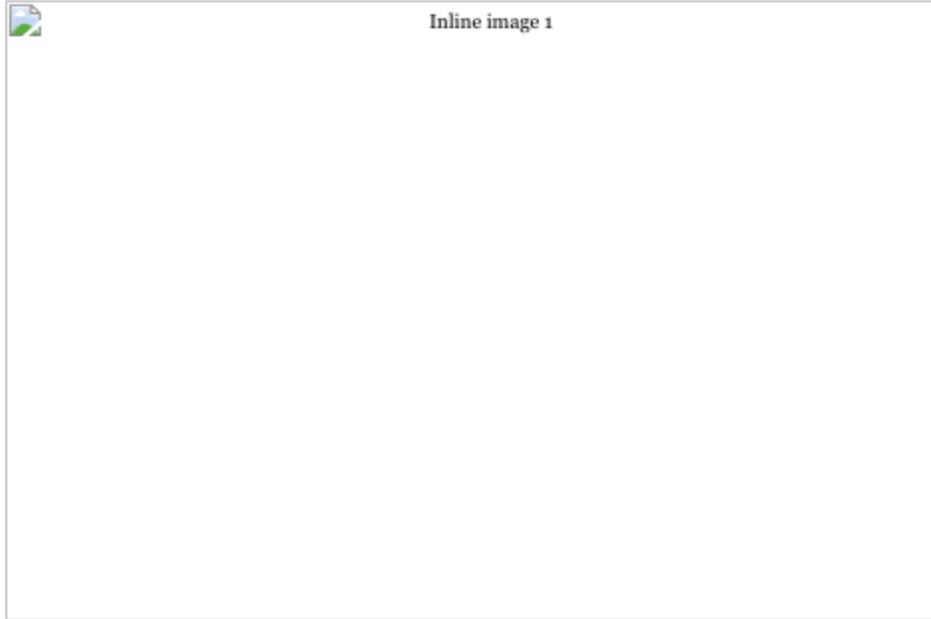
Big box luxury brands abound on this iconic street in Beverly Hills, but if you want to shop where the upper echelons do, it's not in 90210. Spend your wad over in Silverlake or Abbot Kinney. And if you're really after brand names — you know, the kind that celebs really wear — head down Robertson Boulevard for some window-shopping.

8. Sunset Strip

There's nothing that pains me more than hearing someone complain about our nightlife scene based on their trip down the Strip. Sure, our bars might not stay open til 2 ■■■, but most of the credible nightlife and bar action has moved to DTLA and the Eastside. If you must visit this godforsaken part of our city, please, please do not do it on a Star Tours bus — although for unknown curiosity reasons and even though I have lived in LA for years and am a regular on some of the places that they stop by.... one day I am sure that I am going to break down and take a tour.

Oregano – the super herb/oil

Oregano, the fragrant herb commonly used to flavor pasta and meat dishes, is renowned for its versatility in the kitchen. But did you know that it can also be transformed into an herbal oil with a wide range of benefits? Read on to learn more about oregano oil



As someone who love to put Oregano on my pizza and in my pasta sauces, I was drawn to an article that I ran across in a health & lifestyle magazine praising Oregano oil/herb as the ultimate anti-biotic with unique healing properties. The article stated that oregano has eight times more antioxidants than apples three times more than blueberries which are supposed to protect our body against free radical damage, as they boost the immune system naturally.

The distribution of oregano oil started in ancient Greece. And Greek the word oregano is translated as '*joy of the mountains*'. The Greeks were first to use oil for medical purposes – such as powerful antiviral, antibacterial, anti-septic, anti-fungal agent and also as a remedy for pain, and influence inflammation. And that it was the main anti-bacterial to use by Hippocrates. The article said that Oregano leaves are traditionally used to treat illnesses related to the respiratory and digestive systems.

Main ingredients.

Oregano essential oil is a mineral density powerhouse. It contains calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, potassium, copper, Biron, manganese, vitamins C, S (beta-carotene), Niacin.

Oregano oil contains for a main groups of chemicals which are active healing agents. Phenols including carvacrol and thymol. They act as anti-septic's and antioxidants. Terpenes

including pinene and terpinene which process antiseptic, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties. Linalool oil and bonreol are two long-chain alcohols also found in oregano oil which again exhibits antiviral and antiseptic properties. Esters include linalyl acetate and geranyl acetate which exhibit antifungal properties. As a result, the article claims that although these compounds possess healing properties, the most significant primary compound found in oregano oil carvacrol which it said – scientific research has proved carvacrol to be one of the most effective antibiotics known to science.

The article points out that not all oregano oil is created equal. There are over 40 oregano species, but the most therapeutically beneficial is the oil produced from wild oregano or *Origanum vulgare* that's native to Mediterranean regions. And Beware, though, as many of the oregano oils sold in grocery stores are not made from this variety, and may have little to no therapeutic value. Opt only for oregano oil made from *Origanum vulgare* and *Thymus capitatus*, a variety that grows in Spain. And that it is very important to make sure the oil of oregano is derived from these two kinds and should be carvacrol concentration of 70% or more. The article said that one of the most important attributes is that oregano essential oil does not create harmful stains in the body and as a result, does not have side effects the pharmaceutical antibiotics do. Moreover, it is effective against a dangerous and even deadly bacteria, but does not produce biological changes in the body. Also, Oregano essential oil nourishes the body and doesn't depleted of nutrients like conventional anti-biotics do.

Uses of Oregano Oil

It is recommend, adding oregano oil to your arsenal of natural healing tools, as it has a wide range of uses. This herbal oil is a powerful antimicrobial that can help fight off infections. Again, Oregano oil also has antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal properties.

Other ideal uses for oregano oil are:

- **Treating foot or nail fungus.** Put a few teaspoons of oregano oil in a basin of water and soak your feet in it. You can also dilute the oil (mix a drop with a teaspoon of olive or coconut oil), and then apply it on your nails or skin.
- **Killing parasites and infections.** Dilute the oil (mix a drop with a drop of a carrier oil such as coconut oil), and place it under your tongue. Hold it there for a few minutes, and then rinse it out. Repeat this at least four times a day.
- **Alleviating sinus infections and colds.** Put a few drops of oregano oil in a pot of steaming water, and then inhale the steam.

You can also use the antiseptic powers of this herbal oil to clean your home. Here's one way how: combine four drops of oregano oil with 10 drops of lemon oil and a quarter-cup of white vinegar, and then add to a bucket of water. Use this mixture to wipe and clean surfaces.

Benefits of Oregano Oil

Oregano oil has wide-reaching health benefits, but is most associated with respiratory and immune system health. It is known for helping prevent and treat infections, such as:

- **Urinary tract infections (UTIs)** caused by bacteria like E. coli, Proteus, and Pseudomonas aeruginosa.
- **Respiratory infections** brought on by Klebsiella pneumoniae and Staphylococcus aureus bacteria strains.
- **Yeast infections**, even those that are resistant to the commonly used antifungal drug Diflucan.
- **Parasitic infections** caused by the amoeba giardia – it was even found to be more effective than antibiotics like Tinidazol.
- **Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection** – A team of Indian and British researchers found that oregano oil has strong antibacterial properties that can kill this deadly superbug.

Oregano oil has also shown promise in preventing food-borne illnesses caused by pathogens like listeria, salmonella, E. coli, and Shigella dysenteria. Adding it to foods not only helps kill the bacteria, but may also alleviate food poisoning symptoms. An animal study from University of Arizona researchers also found that oregano oil can help kill norovirus, which causes gastroenteritis.

Oregano oil is also a prized antiseptic essential oil in aromatherapy because its proportion of phenols is said to be the highest of all aromatic plants. Aside from using the steam method to relieve coughs and other respiratory illnesses, you can also use it to:

- **Ward off insects.** Carvacrol in oregano oil works as a natural insect repellent. Try putting a few drops on outdoor furniture, or apply a diluted mixture on your skin when heading outdoors.
- **Relieve bug bites and rashes**, including poison ivy rash. Apply oregano oil diluted with olive oil on the affected areas.
- **Help heal cold sores, dandruff, and other skin conditions.** Some experts also advocate using a diluted version to treat acne and rosacea.
- **Ease sore throat.** Simply add a few drops to a glass of water. It can help alleviate toothache as well.
- **Relieve muscle and joint pain**, rheumatoid arthritis (RA), sprains, and cramps

The article ends with – “... if you look at the statistics, people in the Mediterranean live longer for the most part. Maybe partly because of oregano which is added to most Mediterranean dishes.” Which is probably the most convincing reason why the author says that Oregano oil is the most potent plant oil in the world.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

31 Native American Quotes About Life And Death



Inline image 2

- **“Don't be afraid to cry. It will free your mind of sorrowful thoughts.” – Hopi**
- **“Those who have one foot in the canoe, and one foot in the boat, are going to fall into the river.” – Tuscarora**
- **“Day and night cannot dwell together.” – Duwamish**
- **'It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand.' – Apache**
- **“They are not dead who live in the hearts they leave behind.” – Tuscarora**
- **"All plants are our brothers and sisters. They talk to us and if we listen, we can hear them." – Arapaho**
- **'Tell me and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand.' – Tribe Unknown**

- **“When we show our respect for other living things, they respond with respect for us.” – Arapaho**
- **“If we wonder often, the gift of knowledge will come.” – Arapaho**
- **“Most of us do not look as handsome to others as we do to ourselves.” – Assiniboine**
- **“What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.” – Blackfoot**
- **“When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.” – Cherokee**
- **“The weakness of the enemy makes our strength.” – Cherokee**
- **“When the white man discovered this country Indians were running it. No taxes, no debt, women did all the work. White man thought he could improve on a system like this.” – Cherokee**
- **“A good soldier is a poor scout.” – Cheyenne**
- **“We will be known forever by the tracks we leave.” – Dakota**
- **“Do not judge your neighbor until you walk two moons in his moccasins.” – Cheyenne**
- **“There is nothing as eloquent as a rattlesnake's tail.” – Navajo**
- **“Force, no matter how concealed, begets resistance.” – Lakota**

- **“Our first teacher is our own heart.” – Cheyenne**
- **“Everyone who is successful must have dreamed of something.” – Maricopa**
- **“All who have died are equal.” – Comanche**
- **“What the people believe is true.” – Anishinabe**
- **“You can't wake a person who is pretending to be asleep.” – Navajo**
- **“Beware of the man who does not talk, and the dog that does not bark.” – Cheyenne**
- **“What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.” – Crowfoot**
- **“He who would do great things should not attempt them all alone.” – Seneca**
- **“If a man is as wise as a serpent, he can afford to be as harmless as a dove.” – Cheyenne**
- **“A brave man dies but once, a coward many times.” – Iowa**
- **“When a man moves away from nature his heart becomes hard.” – Lakota**

WONDERFUL... WONDERFUL... WONDERFUL...



Inline image 1

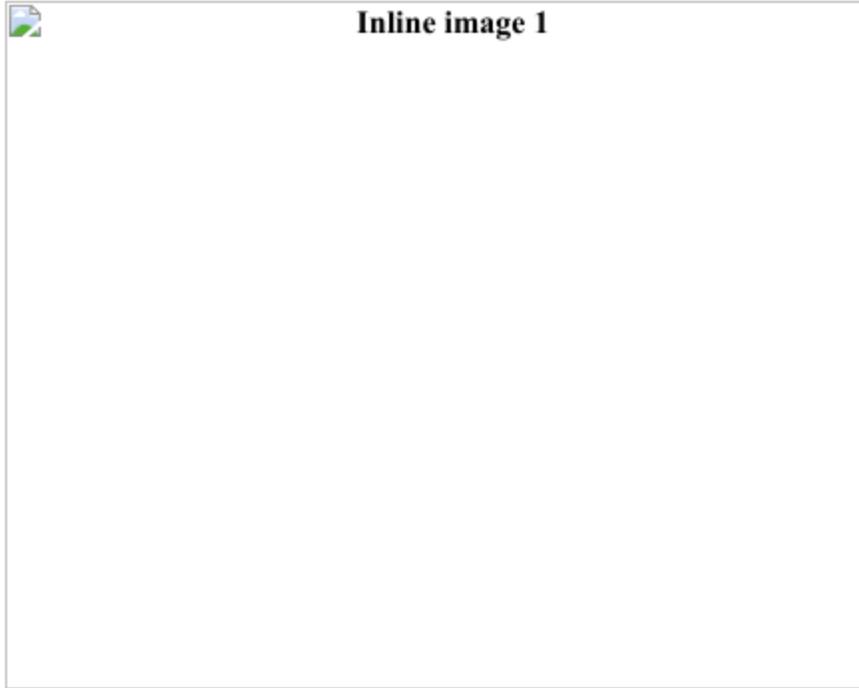
Alice Fredenham – One of my favourite Auditions on *Britian's Got Talent*

Web Link: https://youtu.be/CPm9x8i5c_Y

As someone commented on YouTube: The next minute, I'm in a gin joint nursing a love affair with a singer whose voice is a sultry tenor sax, a whiff of cognac fumes and the smoke of expensive cigars. She seems frightened at first, afraid to be touched, not knowing I wouldn't dare. You don't touch a still pond, smooth as a mirror. You don't cough or clear your throat when a deer comes into the glade. You just cease, and she pours over you like a lingering soulgasm. She croons an eighty-year-old song, and makes everything young again. How do you thank someone for that?

THINK ABOUT THIS

Fareed Zakaria's Takedown of Donald Trump



Web Link:



I urge you to view the video on the above video link....

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Martha Steward Shows Her Street Creds....



Inline image 1

Web Link:



Funny..... Funny..... Funny.....

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Some of My Favorite Live Performances



Inline image 1



Inline image 2

This time in my life when I often awake in the middle of the night and have trouble going back to sleep then usually I turn on the television if it is not already on and this puts me back to sleep but on a more than a rare occasion I go on the Internet to check messages and then cruise Facebook to review the latest postings from friends... So when a friend posted a video of *Heatwave* singing their monster smash "*Always and Forever*" it brought back memories of meeting them in 1976 at their sound check at the Club Papagayo in St. Tropez and them playing it for me. I went on to look at a number of other music videos on Facebook which led to my decision to instead of doing a count-down of some sort, I would just list some of my favorite live performance videos for your enjoyment. **With this..... please enjoy.....**

Michael Jackson – *Man In The Mirror* --
[REDACTED]

Neil Young – *Old Man* -- https://youtu.be/An2a1_Do_fc

Celine Dion & Brian McKnight – *Beauty and the Beast* --
[REDACTED]

The Temptations – *I Wish It Would Rain* -- [REDACTED]

Jackie Wilson – *Baby Workout* -- [REDACTED]

The Spinners with Philippé Wynne – *Sadie* -- [REDACTED]

Luther Vandross – *A House Is Not A Home* -- <https://youtu.be/gQ9ZVGM7smE>

Heatwave – *Always and Forever* -- [REDACTED]

and <https://youtu.be/qjI42aZ5F40>

Big mama Thornton accompanied by Buddy Guy – *You Ain't Nothin But A Hound Dog* --
[REDACTED]

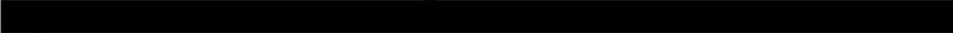
Wes Montgomery – *West Coast Blues* --
[REDACTED]

Frank Zappa – *playing the Blues* -- [REDACTED]

Eddie & Gerald Levert – *Wind Beneath My Wings* -- <https://youtu.be/wSxblTzc53M>
[REDACTED]

Nat King Cole & Natalie Cole – *Unforgettable* --
[REDACTED]

Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller & Victor Wooten – **Thunder** -- 
[story_fbid=1663946803820329&id=1605844102963933&_rdr](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1663946803820329&id=1605844102963933&_rdr)

Pattie LaBelle – **You Are My Friend** --


Heart – **Stairway to Heaven** -- <https://youtu.be/LFxOaDeJmXk>

Dave Matthews Band – **Proudest Monkey** -- <https://youtu.be/0Rx3-EdkjwA>

James Brown & Luciano Pavarotti – **It's a Man's World** -- https://youtu.be/Febr_t_qa9U

Zucchero & Pavarotti – **Miserere** -- <https://youtu.be/cP1NgW6GS-Q>

Johnny Guitar Watson – **A real mother for Ya** -- <https://youtu.be/x-f5iOHYcW4>

Miles Davis John Coltrane – **So What** -- <https://youtu.be/6w4FI0Jq0II>

Lucio Dalla – **Cara** -- <https://youtu.be/zUyQkutesl0>

Les McCann & Eddie Harris – **Compared to What** -- <https://youtu.be/Jv0fnSBf0Do>

John Lennon – **Imagine** -- <https://youtu.be/WB0vN1qGKCU>

Louis Armstrong – **What a Wonderful World** -- <https://youtu.be/E2VCwBzGdPM>

Tina Turner – **Simply The Best** -- 

*I hope that you have enjoyed this weekend's offerings and wish you
and yours a great New Year's.....*

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--
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