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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.. 10/04/2015

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Attachments: Our_Other_Drinking_Problem_Roberto_A._Ferdman_Huff_Post_August_28,_2015.docx;
It's_Time_to_Close_the_Carried_Interest_Loophole_Bill_de_Blassio_Huff_Post_09.11.15.docx;
Otis_Redding_bio.docx;
Fiorina's_falsehoods_Editorial_Board_September_26,_2015.docx;
Likely_House_Speaker_Praises_Benghazi_Committee_For_Hurting_Hillary_Clinton_Politically_Sam_Levine_Huff_Post_09.30.15.docx

Inline-Images: image.png; image(1).png; image(2).png; image(3).png; image(4).png; image(5).png;
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DEAR FRIEND.....

BLOODBATH USA

Guns Kill An Average 36 People Per Day... PATHETIC: Politicians Tweet Prayers Instead Of Acting... Obama's Sickened And Angered Response To Oregon Shooting: 'We Should Politicize' This... Guns Kill An Average Of 36 People Every Day, And The Nation Doesn't Even Blink... and since 9/11 more than 150,000 Americans have been killed in gun homicides, and we have done . . . nothing.



Inline image 1

The nation was once again confronted with the horror of a deadly school shooting on Thursday, this time a massacre at a community college in Roseburg, Oregon where 26 year-old gunman, Chris Harper-Mercer, killed at least 10 people and wounded seven before police fatally shot him. This latest tragedy marked the 45th shooting on a school campus this year, according to ***Everytown for Gun Safety***, a group pushing for legislative reforms to reduce gun violence. It was the 142nd shooting at a school since the December 2012 rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut where 27 people were killed, including 20 young children, six faculty members.

Those numbers alone may come as a surprise, because we typically don't talk about school shootings unless they inflict a level of devastation that makes them impossible to ignore. Most people are familiar with Columbine and Sandy Hook. When we look at the bigger picture, however, those mass shootings are revealed as tragic outliers in the overall trend of gun violence that has infiltrated American schools.

On-campus shootings are themselves just a small part of U.S. gun violence. School shootings and even mass shootings -- of which there have already been hundreds in 2015, according to some counts -- are overshadowed, at least statistically, by the hail of bullets that rip through the nation each day, claiming an average of 36 lives.

These victims, more often than not, die without much public attention outside their communities. They are men and women like Annoqunette Starr, who was killed on Wednesday. People who knew her called her Ann. They say the 41-year-old was endlessly compassionate, and that her community in Louisville, Kentucky, adored her. "*We've known her for years, grew up together,*" one of Starr's friends told WHAS on Thursday. "*She was a sweet person. She'd give you the shirt off her back if she had it. Food, if you need it, she was there. Ann was just Ann.*"

Starr's 10-year-old niece was in an apartment on Wednesday morning when her aunt's boyfriend allegedly pulled a gun and started shooting. Police arrived a short time later to find Starr dead from multiple gunshot wounds. Starr's niece was uninjured, and her boyfriend later surrendered. Starr would end up being one of at least 13 people killed by gunfire on Wednesday, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a not-for-profit corporation that tracks U.S. shootings.

That toll makes Wednesday a relatively peaceful day in the U.S. An average of more than three times that many people have been killed by guns each day this year, which has seen more than 9,900 gun deaths so far. More than 20,000 people have been injured by guns in 2015. Attention seems to gravitate toward high-profile instances of gun violence, whether they take place at a church, a political campaign event or a community college. And it's not hard to see why.

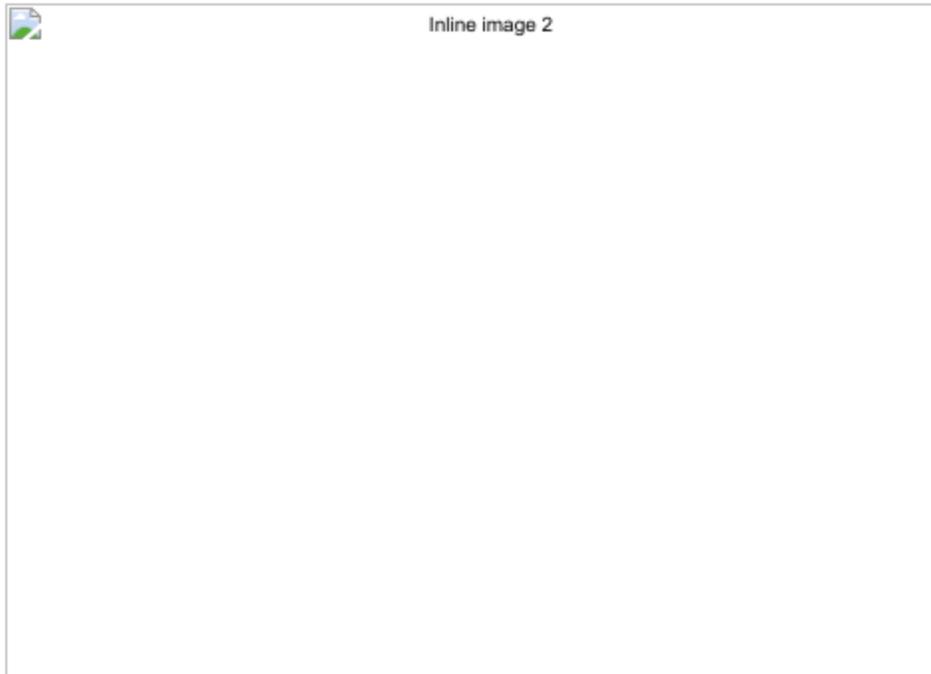
School shootings serve as a flashpoint for otherwise uncomfortable conversations about gun violence. These episodes terrorize students everywhere, because they can happen anywhere. They terrify the parents and families, who entrust the safety of their children and loved ones to schools every day. They disgust anyone who believes that people should be able to obtain an education without fear of being gunned down in the process. But when, or perhaps if, we decide to discuss how to address gun violence, we should keep people like Annoqunette Starr in mind, along with the victims at Umpqua Community College.

Thirteen weapons were recovered, six from the school and seven from Mercer's residence, said Celinez Nunez, assistant special agent in charge at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives and all of the weapons were purchased legally and traced to a federal firearms dealer. Seven of the weapons were purchased by the shooter or his family members in the last three years, Nunez said. Law enforcement also recovered a jacket with steel plates and additional magazines. According to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, the weapons recovered were pistols, rifles and a shotgun were all purchased legally as federal law only prohibits felons, drug users, domestic violence misdemeanants and people involuntarily committed to mental institutions from possessing firearms.

After a question from the audience about the massacre on Thursday, Republican Presidential candidate and former Governor of the state of Florida, Jeb Bush said, *"We're in a difficult time in our country and I don't think more government is necessarily the answer to this. I think we need to reconnect ourselves with everyone else. It's very sad to see."* **If that answer wasn't clueless enough** on Friday Bush said, *"But I resist the notion—and I had this challenge as governor—because we had—look, stuff happens, there's always a crisis. And the impulse is always to do something and it's not necessarily the right thing to do."* And for those of you who feel that Bush's "stuff happens" was taken out of context, I counter by suggesting that it is indicative of the GOP's indifference to find a solution that includes any expansion of gun control.

Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, said in 2012 that *"the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."* His point is often repeated by gun control opponents. Except that Oregon allows concealed carry on postsecondary campuses and there was at least one armed civilian on campus at the time of the shooting. This latest atrocity serves as another reason why America needs to ramp up firearm restrictions. But as President Obama said on Thursday, *"As I said just a few months ago, and I said a few months before that, and I said each time we see one of these mass shootings, our thoughts and prayers are not enough."*

AGAIN: Since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in which 27 people were killed, including 20 young children, six faculty members and the shooter and the 45th shooting at a school in 2015 and this latest mass shooting at a community college in Oregon also marks the 142nd shooting at a school since Newtown.



As Fareed Zakaria wrote in an op-ed on Friday in *The Washington Post* – Since 9/11, the United States has responded aggressively to the danger of terrorism, taking extraordinary measures, invading two countries, launching military operations in many others, and spending more than \$800 billion on homeland security. Americans have accepted an unprecedented expansion of government powers and invasions of their privacy to prevent such attacks. Since 9/11, 74 people have been killed in the United States by terrorists, according to the think tank *New America*. In that same period, more than 150,000 Americans have been killed in gun homicides, and we have done . . . nothing.

Our attitude seems to be one of fatalism. Another day, another mass shooting. Which is almost literally true. The Web site shootingtracker.com documents that in the first 207 days of 2015, the nation had 207 mass shootings. After one of these takes place now, everyone goes through a ritual of shock and horror, and then moves on, aware that nothing will change, accepting that this is just one of those quirks of American life. But it is 150,000 deaths. Almost three Vietnams.

After last week's incident in Lafayette, La., the governor of the state and Republican presidential candidate, Bobby Jindal, pointed his finger at what has now become the standard explanation for these events: "Look, every time this happens, it seems like the person has a history of mental illness."

But it makes little sense to focus on mental health. The United States has a gun homicide rate that is at least a dozen times higher than those of most other industrialized countries. It is 50 times higher than Germany's, for instance. We don't have 50 times as many mentally disturbed people as Germany does — but we do have many, many more guns.

At least we have stopped blaming gun violence on video games. Perhaps someone noticed that other countries have lots of violence in their pop culture but don't have this tsunami of gun deaths. Japan, for example, is consumed by macabre video games and other forms of gory entertainment. In 2008, Japan had just 11 gun homicides. Eleven. Why? Hint: It has very tough gun-control laws.

Jindal at least suggested that states follow or even strengthen laws to make sure that mentally unstable people can't buy guns, but this has placed him beyond the pale for the gun lobby. Former Texas governor Rick Perry's solution is to loosen the few restrictions on guns that do exist so that, in the Lafayette movie theater, other patrons could have been armed and would have shot the gunman.

The notion that the solution — in dark, crowded movie theaters — is a mass shoot-out is so dangerous that it should rule out Perry as a serious Republican presidential candidate. When asked about such proposals after the mass shooting in a movie theater in Aurora, Colo., William Bratton, who has now been police chief in three major U.S. cities, dismissed the idea. To him the solution is obvious. “[We need] some sanity in our gun control laws. . . . Gun control can reduce these numbers of incidents,” he told CNN.

We have become so inured to the catastrophic levels of violence in our cities that we gloss over them. People often ask me if I think it's safe for them to travel to countries such as Egypt or Morocco. The reality is that many major U.S. cities have homicide rates that are many times higher than those in places such as Cairo or Casablanca. (And it's worth noting that non-Islamic terrorists — as in Charleston, S.C. — have killed almost twice as many people as jihadis have in the United States since 9/11.)

In the wake of this ongoing tragedy, we have actually loosened restraints on the ability and ease with which people can buy, own and carry guns. This is partly because in June 2008, the Supreme Court broke with 200 years of precedent and — in a 5-to-4 decision written by Justice Antonin Scalia — created an individual right to gun ownership that has made common-sense regulation of guns much harder.

In his powerful dissent in that case (*District of Columbia v. Heller*), Justice John Paul Stevens pointed out that Scalia's opinion was an act of extreme judicial activism — that for two centuries, federal courts had recognized that the government had the power to regulate the sale of firearms, and that the Supreme Court in particular had for at least seven decades consistently affirmed that interpretation. It is not an act of fate that has caused 150,000 Americans to die over the past 14 years. It is a product of laws, court decisions, lobbying and pandering politicians. We can change it.

Who's Pulling the Strings

10 Presidents & Politicians Who Told Us That A “*Secret Government*” Controls The World & What They Said



Inline image 1

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.”

Edward Bernays (*“the father of public relations”*)

If you told somebody 10 years ago that there existed some sort of secret group or “***secret government***” pulling the strings behind the scenes of government policy, international law, various global rules/regulations, and more, they would have called you a “*conspiracy theorist*.” Today things have changed, largely as a result of information leaked by Edward Snowden, Julian Assange, and various other whistleblowers and activists in recent years. Their bravery has shed light on the world of secrecy that’s been blinding the masses since its inception.

By the way did you know that the U.S. Government classifies more than 500 million pages of documents each year? Did you know that the United States has a history of government agencies existing in secret? For example, the National Security Agency (*NSA*) was founded in 1952, but its existence was hidden until the mid-1960’s. Even more secretive is the National Reconnaissance Office, it was founded in 1960 but remained completely secret for 30 years. Then we have the entire black budget world, a world dominated by secrecy that was officially revealed by Edward Snowden a couple of years ago. This deals with what are known as “*Special Access Programs*.”

It’s not just statements that these “*high-level*” people are making. It’s all of the proof and evidence that goes along with it.

Canadian Defense Minister Paul Hellyer

Former Minister of National Defense, Paul Hellyer, is one of Canada's best known and most controversial politicians. He was first elected in 1949, and was the youngest cabinet minister appointed to Louis S. St. Laurent's government eight years later. He held senior posts in the governments of Lester B. Pearson and Pierre E. Trudeau. He achieved the rank of senior master (Deputy Prime Minister), and went on to become the Canadian Defence Minister. He is best known for the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces, and in September 2005 he became the first person of cabinet rank in the G8 group of countries to state unequivocally that *"UFOs are as real as the airplanes flying overhead."*

Here's what he had to say about the world of secrecy:

It is ironic that the U.S. would begin a devastating war, allegedly in search of weapons of mass destruction, when the most worrisome developments in this field are occurring in your own backyard. It is ironic that the U.S. should be fighting monstrously expensive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, allegedly to bring democracy to those countries, when it itself can no longer claim to be called a democracy, when trillions, and I mean thousands of billions of dollars have been spent on projects about which both the Congress and the Commander in Chief have been kept deliberately in the dark.

The 28th U.S. President Woodrow Wilson

Woodrow Wilson, an American academic, politician, and the 28th president of the United States, had this to say (among other things) in his book *The New*

Freedom. The book also contains several other, similarly eye-opening statements:

Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men's views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacture, are afraid of somebody, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they had better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it.

The 35th U.S. President John F. Kennedy

Here's what JFK had to say in one of his most famous speeches:

The very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it. Even today, there is little value in opposing the threat of a closed society by imitating its arbitrary restrictions. Even today, there is little value in insuring the survival of

our nation if our traditions do not survive with it. And there is very grave danger that an announced need for increased security will be seized upon by those anxious to expand its meaning to the very limits of official censorship and concealment. That I do not intend to permit to the extent that it is in my control. ... For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day. It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations. Its preparations are concealed, not published. Its mistakes are buried, not headlined. Its dissenters are silenced, not praised. No expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed.

John C. Calhoun, 7th Vice President of The United States

John C. Calhoun was the 7th Vice President of the United States, from 1825-1832. He was also a political theorist during the first half of the 19th century.

Here's what he had to say:

A power has risen up in the government greater than the people themselves, consisting of many, and various, and powerful interests, combined into one mass, and held together by the cohesive power of the vast surplus in the banks.

This quote reminds me of a great clip from the Thrive documentary by Foster Gamble, heir to the Proctor Gamble Corporation. He was groomed for the establishment, but chose a different path.

New York City Mayor John F. Hylan

John F. Hylan was Mayor of New York City from 1918-1925. He has been famously quoted as saying:

The real menace of our Republic is the invisible government, which like a giant octopus sprawls its slimy legs over our cities, states and nation ... The little coterie of powerful international bankers virtually run the United States government for their own selfish purposes. They practically control both parties ... [and] control the majority of the newspapers and magazines in this country. They use the columns of these papers to club into submission or drive out of office public officials who refuse to do the bidding of the powerful corrupt cliques which compose the invisible government. It operates under cover of a self-created screen [and] seizes our executive officers, legislative bodies, schools, courts, newspapers and every agency created for the public protection.

Senator William Jenner

A United States senator who said this to Congress in 1954:

Today the path to total dictatorship in the U.S. can be laid by strictly legal means ... We have a well-organized political-action group in this country, determined to destroy our Constitution and establish a one-party state ... It operates secretly, silently, continuously to transform our Government ... This ruthless power-seeking elite is a disease of our century... This group ... is answerable neither to the President, the Congress, nor the courts. It is practically irremovable.

Senator Daniel K. Inouye

Inouye was the highest ranking Asian-American politician in United States history, serving the Democratic Party from 1963 until his death in 2012.

There exists a shadowy government with its own Air Force, its own Navy, its own fundraising mechanism, and the ability to pursue its own ideas of the national interest, free from all checks and balances, and free from the law itself.

34th U.S. President And 5 Star General, Dwight Eisenhower

In his farewell address to the nation, President Eisenhower offered these words of caution:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist. ... Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defence with our peaceful message and goals.

This speech is relevant to share here, because the disastrous rise of misplaced power within the military industrial complex has indeed occurred...

Benjamin Disraeli, First British MP

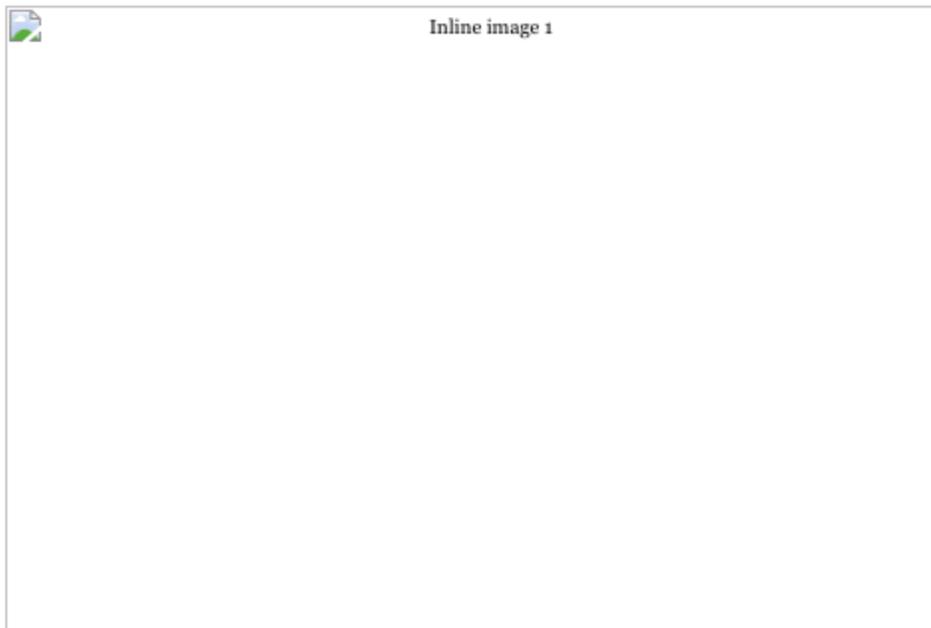
The world is governed by very different personages to what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes. (Coningsby, Book 4, Chap. 15.) – Page 131

26th U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt

Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.

Let's think about it, we know that politicians are at the beck and call to billionaires, corporations and special interest group – but do they work together or is it that many of their interest coincide and they are willing to accommodate the trade-offs of other equals which allows them to operate as an amorphous living organ somehow interconnected across the planet at will.

Liar Liar Pants on Fire



Last Sunday in an interview on **NBC's *Meet The Press***, I watched in amazement Carly Fiorina doubling down on a lie when confronted by Andrea Mitchell about something she said. Arguing during the Sept. 16 GOP debate to defund Planned Parenthood, Ms. Fiorina offered this description of a disturbing scene that was supposedly captured on controversial undercover videos of the organization: *"Watch a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, its legs kicking while someone says we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain."* Except, no such scene exists, as even some of her defenders have had to admit, but she wouldn't back down. Later in the day, Ms. Fiorina was also challenged by **Fox News Sunday** anchor Chris Wallace to acknowledge *"what every fact checker has found"*: that the scene was only described by someone who claimed to have witnessed it but was not shown in the video.

Ms. Fiorina could have acknowledged her error while maintaining, fairly, that the tapes contain other disturbing images and language and while affirming her objections to Planned Parenthood. Instead she insisted: *"No, I don't accept that at all. I've seen the footage."* She went on the attack against the mainstream media, and her supporters concocted a video that splices video and audio from different places in an effort to buttress her claims. Most deceptive in the CARLY for America video is use of an

image (also used in the videos produced by the Center for Medical Progress) of a fetus born prematurely, not aborted, at 19 weeks of development. The premature birth by a Pennsylvania woman had no connection to Planned Parenthood or to abortion. That, though, didn't stop Ms. Fiorina's supporters from using it — with the voice-over and caption of "*Here's a stomach, heart, kidney, and adrenal*" — to support specious allegations of Planned Parenthood selling fetal tissue for profit.

Ms. Fiorina may have deeply felt objections to abortion. But that doesn't excuse her use of mistruths to justify her willingness to shut down the government, which by the way she seems to consider no big deal. "*I'm not aware of any hardship to anyone, other than the veterans trying to get to the World War II memorial,*" she said of the last shutdown. When it comes to character and capability, that kind of blithe ignorance is another worrying sign.

As The Washington Post pointed out in an editorial, "*ONE OF the benefits of a presidential campaign is the character and capability, judgment and temperament of every single one of us is revealed over time and under pressure.*" Since presidential hopeful Carly Fiorina made that comment at the start of the second Republican debate, there have been a number of other telling revelations about her character and her judgment. Caught making a false claim, like some of her other Republican competitors, she couldn't just admit she made a mistake but instead doubled down and worsened the falsehood. Again as for Fiorina who has called Hillary Clinton a liar, she is definitely the pot calling the kettle black -- and if she is willing to lie to the American public during the courtship do you really think that she is going to change after the marriage.

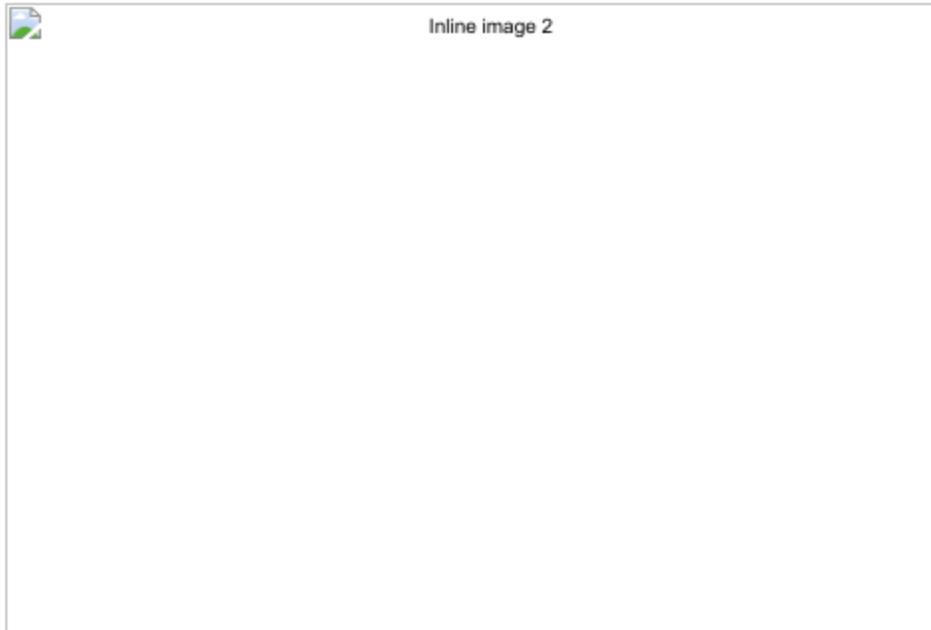
The Real Drug Epidemic in America

Prescription Drugs Now Kill More People In The US Than Heroin And Cocaine Combined



Inline image 1

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), prescription opioid painkillers are responsible for more fatal overdoses in the U.S. than heroin and cocaine combined. Opioid painkillers include prescription narcotics such as like **Vicodin** (hydrocodone), **OxyContin** (oxycodone), **Opana** (oxymorphone) and methadone, all are approved by the FDA and basically are pharmaceutical grades of heroin. More importantly they actually don't not treat pain but act as an anesthesia blocking the feelings of pain (symptoms) — which often leads to the pain getting worse. As a result, they are as addictive as either heroin or cocaine. Yet, medical doctors in America are prescribing opioids like aspirins.



"An epidemic of prescription drug abuse is devastating American families and draining state and federal time, money and manpower," Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said in a press release. The authors recommended that prescription drug monitoring programs "shift from a reactive to a proactive approach" by actions such as collecting prescribing data for all controlled substances, sending alerts about possible abuse to physicians and pharmacists, analyzing trend data to help law enforcement agencies identify "pill mills" that illicitly distribute prescription painkillers. Finally, if banned, these "killers" could easily be replaced by other drugs.

Below is a presentation from the Pew Health Group that lays out the extent of the problem:

Based on data from the drug enforcement agency, sales of prescription painkillers to pharmacies and healthcare providers have increased by more than 300% since 1999.

In 2009, the number of people killed by drug poisoning, driven by large increases of painkiller abuse, surpassed motor vehicle without fatalities for the first time ever.

And 2010, more people age 12 and older abused or were dependent on prescription painkillers than cocaine, however, this stimulants and sedatives combine.

That's from prescription painkiller overdose in the United States have more than tripled between 1999 and 2008.

"Overdoses involving prescription painkillers are at epidemic epidemic levels and now two more Americans than heroin and come back and cocaine combine."

Dr. Thomas Frieden

Director of Center of Disease Control and Prevention

Nearly 500,000; the number of emergency room visits in 2009 due to people abusing prescription painkillers.

The annual cost to health insurance in the United States due to nonmedical abuse of prescription painkillers is \$72.5 billion.

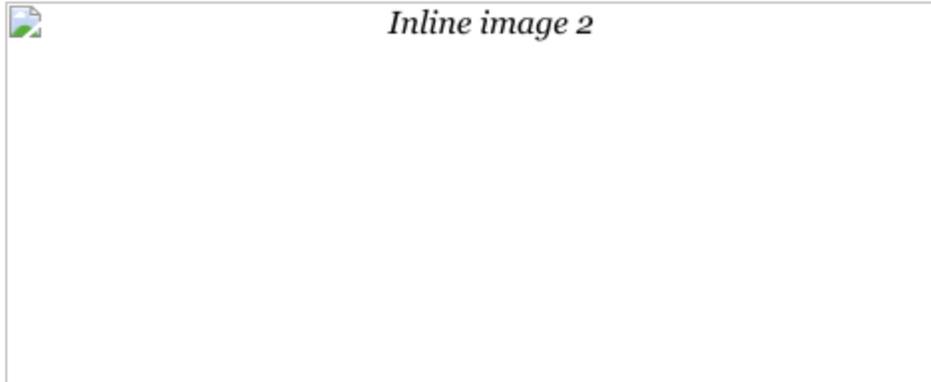
Into 2010, 1 in every 20 people in the United States age 12 and older reported using prescription painkillers nonmedically. That is 12 million people and more than the population of the state of Ohio.

One in five high school students reported to have abused prescription drugs.

If the above does not suggest that prescription drug abuse isn't an epidemic, then nothing is. While awareness of the dangers of illegal drugs has increased, many Americans, especially teens are still ignorant of the significant physical danger posed by legally prescribed drugs, according to a new study in *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*. The same study says that prescription drug use and abuse has increased in direct proportion to psychological states such as anxiety, and use of other restricted substances such as alcohol. Under some conditions, however, prescription drug abuse accelerated exponentially, such as when the level of anxiety or desire to be popular was at its very highest. Both teens and adults need help before they reach these tipping points for prescription drug abuse.

Spotting potential abusers, especially teens with very high levels of anxiety and at least moderate use of other restricted substances should realize that these are students with a high likelihood of prescription drug abuse. Teens with a high need to be popular and teens in general appear to be at exceptional risk. Campaigns must target all Americans, including government, since it is clear that the population as a whole has underestimated both the physical risks of prescription drugs and the likelihood that from children to elders every age of Americans are now abusing drugs.

Another Admission



"Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right?"

I have been saying this since it became the focal point of the GOP that the Benghazi investigation was a bogus witch hunt perpetuated by Conservative Republicans to discredit the reputation damaging the political future of Hillary Clinton. And as recently as last weekend even media pundits were castigating Bill Clinton for suggesting that the Benghazi investigation was essentially a conspiracy, with even mainstream media suggesting that the Clintons had dusted off the "old conspiracy card." Well bot Bill Clinton and I were right as Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), the man likely to become the next speaker of the House, applauded the Select Committee on Benghazi for damaging the poll numbers of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. McCarthy said last Tuesday that Clinton would have remained "unbeatable," had it not been for the committee. "Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee, what are her numbers today?" McCarthy told Fox News' Sean Hannity. "Her numbers are dropping, why? Because she's untrustable. But no one would have known any of that had happened."

Clinton responded to McCarthy's comments last Wednesday, calling them "deeply distressing." "When I hear a statement like that, which demonstrates unequivocally that this was always meant to be a partisan political exercise," Clinton said in an interview with **MSNBC**, which aired in full on "**PoliticsNation**" last Sunday. "I feel like it does a grave disservice and dishonors not just the memory of the four that we lost but of everybody who has served our country." Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), the ranking member on the committee, said McCarthy's comments were just further evidence that the Benghazi Committee was a waste of taxpayer money. "This stunning concession from Rep. McCarthy reveals the truth that Republicans never dared admit in public: the core Republican goal in establishing the Benghazi Committee was always to damage Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and never to conduct an even-handed search for the facts," Cummings said in a statement. "It is shameful that Republicans have used this tragedy and the deaths of our fellow Americans for political gain. Republicans have blatantly abused their authority in Congress by spending more than \$4.5 million in taxpayer funds to pay for a political campaign against Hillary Clinton."

Jamal Ware, a spokesman for the Benghazi Committee, disputed that the committee's work was politically motivated. "People view the Benghazi Committee through whatever lens or spin they choose, meanwhile, the Benghazi Committee is focused on, and our work is driven, by the facts,"

Ware said in a statement. In a different interview with CNN, McCarthy touted that the committee's work had exposed Clinton's use of a private email address while she was secretary of state, an issue that has dogged Clinton on the campaign trail. *"They don't trust her because of what they found out about the server and everything else. Would you have ever found that out had you not gathered the information from the Benghazi Select Committee,"* he said.

But Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), a member of the Benghazi Committee, noted earlier this month in a New York Times op-ed that none of the emails the committee has seen have revealed *"anything of consequence"* about Clinton's role in Benghazi. *"The Select Committee became little more than a partisan tool to influence the presidential race, a dangerous precedent that will haunt Congress for decades,"* Schiff wrote. *"The committee is solely concerned with damaging [Clinton's] candidacy, searching for something, anything that can be insinuated against her."* Critics say the committee, charged with understanding all of the *"policies, decisions and activities"* related to the 2012 attacks on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, is just a way to attack Clinton politically. Even though other committees have cleared the Obama administration of wrongdoing in the attacks, the Benghazi Committee will not release its final report until 2016.

McCarthy's comments are reminiscent of Pennsylvania Republican House Leader Mike Turzai (R-PA) who in 2015 admitted what so many had speculated: Voter identification efforts are meant to suppress Democratic votes in this year's election. – At a Republican State Committee meeting, Turzai took the stage and let slip the truth about why Republicans are so insistent on voter identification efforts – *"it will win Romney the election,"* he said. And Carly Fiorina's description of a disturbing scene that was supposedly captured on controversial undercover videos of Plan Parenthood: *"Watch a fully formed fetus on the table, its heart beating, its legs kicking while someone says we have to keep it alive to harvest its brain."* Except, no such scene exists and what she described was stock footage without sound that had nothing to do with Plan Parenthood. More disturbing is that when confronted with the evidence, she still refused to back down. Aren't these types of misinformation which led us into the unnecessary and disastrous War in Iraq? We have to ask ourselves why are these politicians so cavalier about instigating non-issues for partisan gain based on innuendos, mischaracterization and lies. And the fact that mainstream media are so willing to follow these charlatans down any road.... ***is my rant of the week....***

WEEK'S READINGS

Volkswagen's appalling clean diesel scandal, explained

Volkswagen couldn't balance performance with low pollution. So it cheated.



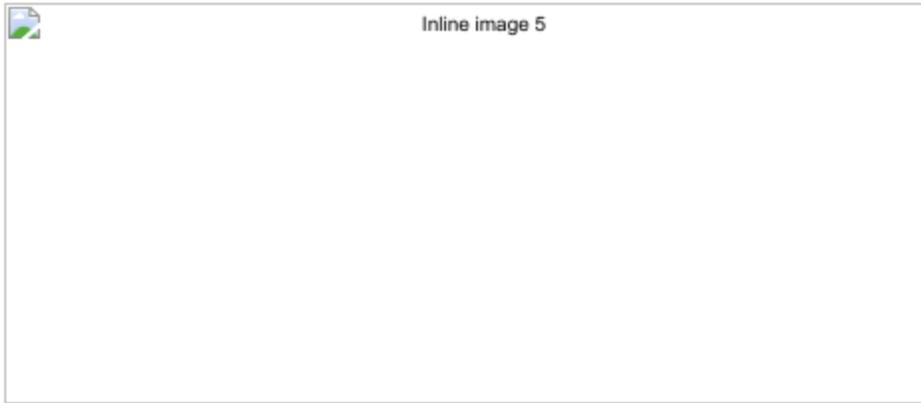
Inline image 3

It sounds like the sinister plot of some straight-to-DVD movie. Since 2009, Volkswagen had been installing elaborate software in 482,000 "*clean diesel*" vehicles sold in the US, so that the cars' pollution controls only worked when being tested for emissions. The rest of the time, the vehicles could freely spew hazardous, smog-forming compounds. Suffice to say, regulators were livid once they caught on. On September 18, 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that Volkswagen had very flagrantly violated the Clean Air Act. Not only did the EPA order the German firm to fix the affected vehicles — which include diesel TDI versions of the Golf, Jetta, Beetle, and Passat — but the agency could end up levying fines as high as \$18 billion. The Department of Justice is also contemplating criminal charges.

The scandal has only widened from there. On Tuesday, Volkswagen admitted that some 11 million clean diesel cars sold worldwide contain "*defeat devices*" meant to fool regulators, with the vast majority of cars likely to be in Europe. The company has so far set aside \$7 billion in the third quarter to deal with the problem. Volkswagen, in other words, is in deep shit. The CEO, Martin Winterkorn, is apologizing profusely and pledging an external probe to find out what happened. The company has halted US sales of its 2015 and 2016 clean diesel vehicles and now has to fix millions of existing cars. Meanwhile, VW's stock price has plummeted, with the company losing one-third of its market cap in the last week:



Inline image 4



This scandal raises a few larger questions, though: Why did Volkswagen cheat in the first place? And why was it so easy for the company to evade regulators for years? To get a better handle on the story, we need to take a brief trip through the tangled history of clean diesel vehicles — the specific cars that VW was selling.

Clean diesel cars were supposed to offer great mileage and low pollution — a tricky task

One basic fact to understand here is that there are two main types of combustion engines widely available today: diesel and gasoline. And there are real trade-offs to each. Diesel engines have long been popular in Europe, and one of their major advantages is fuel economy. Diesel fuel contains more energy per gallon than gasoline, and the diesel engines work more efficiently. Put it together, and the typical diesel car can travel up to 30 percent farther on a gallon of fuel than its gasoline counterpart. But there's a catch. While diesel cars get better mileage and emit fewer carbon-dioxide emissions, they also emit more nitrogen oxides (NOx), which help form smog, and particulate matter, which can damage lungs. Both types of pollution can have serious health effects.

DUE TO HIGHER NOX EMISSIONS, DIESEL CARS DIDN'T CATCH ON IN THE US FOR MANY YEARS

Historically, Europe has dealt with this trade-off by imposing relatively looser emissions standards on diesel cars in the pursuit of better fuel economy. Roughly one-third the passenger cars in Europe now run on diesel, and its one reason cities like Paris have a serious smog problem. In the United States, by contrast, we've imposed far stricter rules around smog and other conventional pollutants since the 1970s, which is why diesel cars haven't caught on widely here: until recently, few could pass America's stringent NOx standards.

Since 2009, however, things have changed. The Obama administration has been ratcheting up fuel-economy standards in the United States, which puts a higher premium on mileage. At the same time, diesel technology has been gradually getting cleaner through a combination of lower-sulfur fuel, advanced engines, and new emission-control technology. So automakers have shown a renewed

interest in "clean diesel" cars that, in theory, don't suffer from that trade-off between performance and pollution.

These vehicles have proved increasingly popular in the United States, even if they still represent less than 1 percent of the market. Since 2009, Volkswagen has sold more than 482,000 clean diesel cars containing a four-cylinder turbocharged direct injection engine. This included versions of the Passat, Jetta, Golf, Beetle, and Audi's A3.

Except, as it turns out, VW was lying about its clean diesel cars.

Volkswagen couldn't balance performance with low pollution. So it cheated.

Since 2009, we now know, Volkswagen had been inserting intricate code in its vehicle software that tracked steering and pedal movements. When those movements suggested that the car was being tested for nitrogen-oxide emissions in a lab, the car automatically turned its pollution controls on. The rest of the time, the pollution controls switched off.

Regulators didn't notice this ruse for years. The problem was only uncovered by an independent group, the International Council on Clean Transportation, which wanted to investigate why there was such a discrepancy between laboratory tests and real-road performance for several of VW's diesel cars in Europe. So they worked with researchers at West Virginia University, who stuck a probe up the exhaust pipe of VW's clean diesel cars and drove them from San Diego to Seattle.

What the researchers found was shocking. On the road, VW's Jetta was emitting 15 to 35 times as much nitrogen oxide as the allowable limit. The VW Passat was emitting 5 to 20 times as much. These cars were emitting much more pollution than they had in the labs.

In May 2014, both California's air-pollution regulator and the EPA ordered Volkswagen to investigate and fix the problem, and the company claimed that it had done so. Once again, the cars performed well in testing, but real-world performance still didn't match up. At that point, EPA regulators really started grilling Volkswagen about the discrepancy, even threatening not to approve the company's 2016 line of clean diesel cars. VW finally cracked and admitted the existence of these defeat devices, which had been carefully hidden in the software code. Scandal ensued.

Volkswagen hasn't explained exactly why it cheated, but outside analysts have a good guess. The NOx emission controls likely degraded the cars' performance when they were switched on — the engines ran hotter, wore out more quickly, and got poorer mileage. Some experts have suggested that the emission controls may have affected the cars' torque and acceleration, making them less fun to drive. (Indeed, some individual car owners have been known to disable their cars' emission controls to boost performance, though this is against the law.)

In other words, Volkswagen wasn't able to produce diesel cars that had the ideal mix of performance, fuel economy, and low pollution. (Or, at least, they couldn't do this profitably.) So they "solved" this trade-off by sacrificing cleanliness and loosening the pollution controls. And they accomplished this via software designed to deceive regulators. This was wildly illegal, and they got caught.

The VW scandal exposes problems with current emission tests

Volkswagen isn't the first company to cheat on its emission tests. As Frank O'Donnell of Clean Air Watch pointed out to me, the EPA caught a number of truck manufacturers, including Caterpillar and Volvo, doing something similar back in 1998 — programming their diesel trucks to emit fewer pollutants in lab tests than they did on the road. (The trucks would slowly emit more and more NOx as they traveled longer distances at constant speed, something that labs couldn't catch.)

Part of the problem here is that regulators usually test these vehicles under laboratory conditions, placing them on giant treadmills and requiring them to do a series of maneuvers. Because this process is predictable, it's easier to game. Combined with the fact that automakers are developing ever-more-elaborate software that can control and fine-tune engines, there are ample opportunities for fraud.

EUROPEAN REGULATORS WILL SOON START REQUIRING ON-ROAD EMISSIONS TESTING

In theory, governments can find ways to make cheating harder. Starting with model year 2017 vehicles, European regulators are going to start requiring automakers to test their passenger cars on the road in addition to laboratory tests. That sort of regime would've made it harder for Volkswagen to pull its little stunt. But it's also unlikely this is the last time we'll see an automaker come up with a fiendishly clever way to cheat.

Meanwhile, the VW scandal raises another issue surrounding car regulations, as Alex Davies explains at Wired. Modern-day cars feature complex computer systems and software. And, right now, this software is protected under the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act — it's illegal to fiddle with the software. The ostensible rationale is to make it harder for consumers to tamper with emissions controls. But these protections also make it harder for independent researchers to scrutinize that code and identify problems. Some experts have proposed DMCA exemptions to allow researchers to test and evaluate these engines, but so far automakers and the EPA have resisted this. Presumably, if those exemptions had existed, Volkswagen's deception might have been caught sooner.

Volkswagen is now facing serious blowback

The US scandal wasn't the end of the story. On Tuesday, Volkswagen announced that some 11 million clean diesel cars sold worldwide contained these "defeat devices" — every car that featured a Type EA 189 diesel engine. Most of these cars are in Europe. (The company says its newest European diesel engines aren't affected and comply with EU pollution rules.)

At this point, Volkswagen has been caught red-handed and has to face the consequences. The company straight-up lied about its cars and knowingly evaded pollution limits. (Getting a precise estimate of the health damages caused by the extra pollution that resulted could be difficult, since it would depend on where the cars were located, how much extra smog actually resulted, and so forth.)

In response, the company has pledged to stop selling 2015 and 2016 Volkswagen and Audi models equipped with TDI clean diesel engines in the United States and will likely end up recalling existing cars to fix the problem.** It's still unclear how many customers will actually want to fix the problem, however, since, again, any patch might degrade gas mileage and/or performance.

Meanwhile, Volkswagen could face criminal prosecution — not to mention billions of dollars in fines. The Clean Air Act allows a fine of \$37,500 per noncompliant vehicle. If the Obama administration really wanted to lower the hammer, that could total some \$18 billion. The company's pretax net income was about \$4.7 billion last year, so that would be a crippling hit. Volkswagen is the world's biggest automaker by sales, but it's not quite as profitable as competitors like Toyota and has struggled to gain a foothold in the US market. This could be a huge deal for the company.

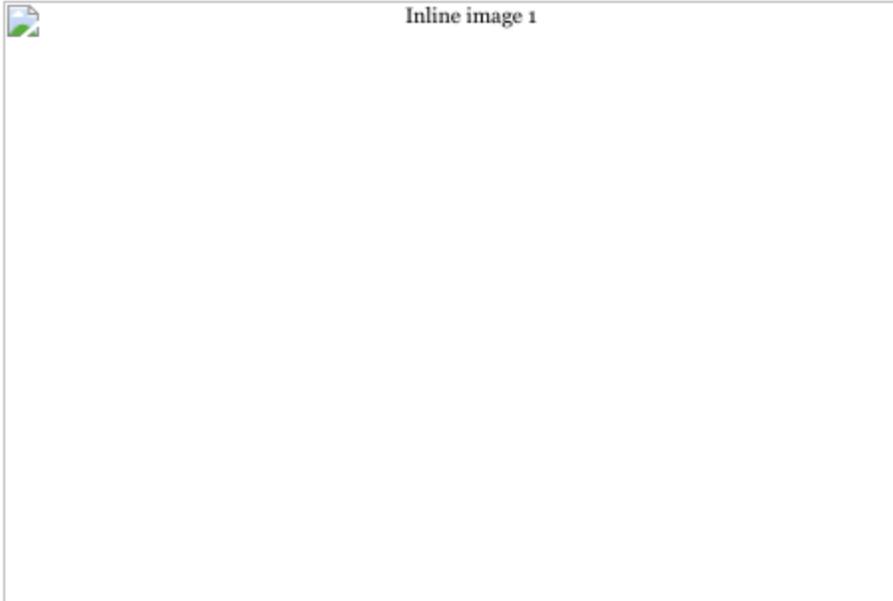
This episode also raises questions about the future of clean diesel vehicles. Clean diesel appears to be a genuinely promising technology — in theory, such vehicles could get both excellent mileage and lower emissions. But this whole scandal raises serious questions about how well automakers can actually achieve both goals in practice.

Brad Plumer — VOX — September 22, 2015

It Is Only Getting Worse

NASA: Sea Level Rise Likely To Get Much Worse

Sea levels are rising faster than they did 50 years ago, and it's only going to get worse

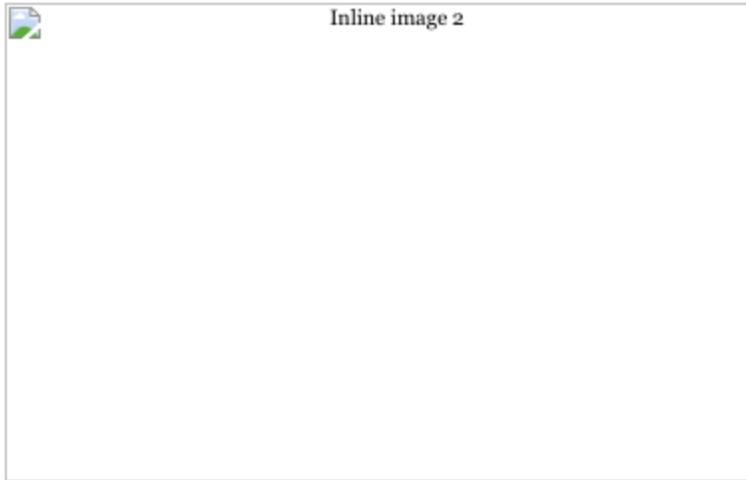


Sea levels worldwide rose an average of nearly 3 inches (8 cm) since 1992, the result of warming waters and melting ice, a panel of NASA scientists said on Wednesday. In 2013, a United Nations panel predicted sea levels would rise from 1 to 3 feet (0.3 to 0.9 meters) by the end of the century. The new research shows that sea level rise most likely will be at the high end of that range, said University of Colorado geophysicist Steve Nerem. Sea levels are rising faster than they did 50 years ago and “it’s very likely to get worse in the future,” Nerem said.

The changes are not uniform. Some areas showed sea levels rising more than 9 inches (25 cm) and other regions, such as along the U.S. West Coast, actually falling, according to an analysis of 23 years of satellite data. Scientists believe ocean currents and natural cycles are temporarily offsetting a sea level rise in the Pacific and the U.S. West Coast could see a significant hike in sea levels in the next 20 years. “People need to understand that the planet is not only changing, it’s changed,” NASA scientist Tom Wagner told reporters on a conference call. “If you’re going to put in major infrastructure like a water treatment plant or a power plant in a coastal zone ... we have data you can now use to estimate what the impacts are going to be in the next 100 years,” Wagner said.

Low-lying regions, such as Florida, are especially vulnerable, added Michael Freilich, director of NASA's Earth Science Division. “Even today, normal spring high tides cause street flooding in sections of Miami, something that didn't happen regularly just a few decades ago,” Feilich said.

This is already happening



This Sept. 21, 2009 photo shows people on motorbikes wading through floodwaters caused by heavy rainfall in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Sea levels rising because of global warming, along with increased storminess as the climate changes, will expose tens of millions of people in the world's port cities to coastal flooding, says a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

More than 150 million people, mostly in Asia, live within 3 feet (1 meter) of the sea, he added. The biggest uncertainty in forecasting sea level rise is determining how quickly the polar ice sheets will melt in response to warming temperatures. "Significant changes are taking place today on ice sheets," said Eric Rignot, a glaciologist at the University of California in Irvine. "It would take centuries to reverse the trend of ice retreat." Scientists said about one-third of the rise in sea levels is due to the expansion of warmer ocean water, one-third to ice loss from the polar ice sheets and the remaining third to melting mountain glaciers.

So for those Neanderthals who still don't accept that climate change is happening they/you don't have to examine any scientific data, just spend time in Bangladesh or in other low lying areas where flooding is an increasing normal occurrence uprooting millions of people and driving them further inland.

**The crazy reason it costs \$14,000 to treat a snakebite with \$14
medicine**



Inline image 1

Every once in a while somebody will go and get themselves bitten by a venomous snake, and come home with an outrageous hospital bill that makes headlines. Nobody expects antivenom to be cheap. Making the most common rattlesnake antivenom, for instance, involves injecting sheep with snake venom and then harvesting the antibodies produced by the animals' immune systems. But does that process, complicated as it may be, add up to the estimated \$2,300 per vial hospitals pay for the stuff? Leslie Boyer wanted to find out. She's the founding director of the VIPER Institute at the University of Arizona, a research group studying ways to improve the medical treatment of venom injuries.

VIPER was instrumental in the development of CroFab, the leading rattlesnake antivenom, as well as its upcoming competitor Anavip. Boyer knows more than just about anyone about how antivenoms work, and how to study them in the lab. But she couldn't figure out why the price was so high. So, as she writes in an upcoming issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*, she requested "cost data from factory supervisors, sales representatives, animal managers, hospital administrators, health care finance officers, hospital pharmacists, grants managers and insurance specialists representing over 20 organizations involved in antivenom work affecting Latin America and the USA." She and her colleagues at used the numbers to build a pricing model for a typical arachnid antivenom sold in the United States. Here's how that model breaks down:



Inline image 2

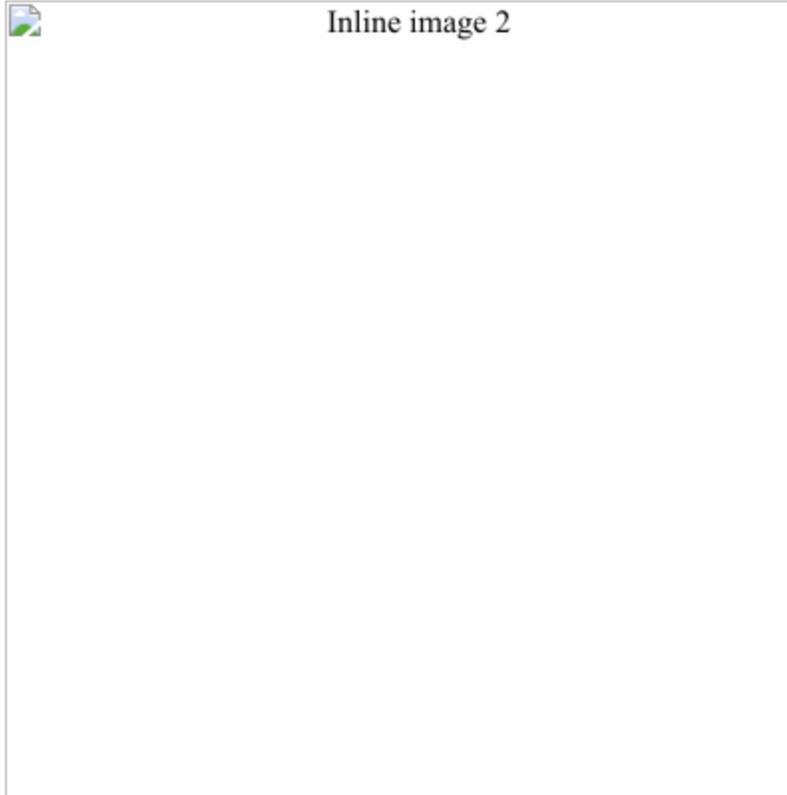
Shockingly, the cost of actually making the antivenom — of R&D, animal care, plasma harvesting, bottling, and the like — added up to roughly one tenth of one percent of the total cost. Clinical trials to evaluate the efficacy of the antivenom accounted for another 2 percent. Other miscellaneous costs, including licensing fees, wholesaler fees, regulatory, legal and office costs, and profit to medical providers, added up to 28 percent. Finally, over 70 percent of the cost — responsible for most of the "sticker shock" you see in so many stories about envenomation care — comes from hospital markups that are used as instruments in negotiation with insurance providers. Depending on the hospital and the insurer, some percentage of this amount later gets discounted during the final payment process. "It's a markup intended to be discounted back down," Boyer explained in an interview. But if you don't have insurance? The negotiating is all on you. And if you happen to have a high deductible for medications, you have to cough up the deductible amount, which can add up to thousands of dollars.

Setting aside the huge hospital markups, Boyer says there's a lot going on the "other" cost category as well. "The lion's share of expected payment on behalf of insured patients was attributable to analysts, attorneys, consultants and business activities that set the U.S. bureaucracy apart from its neighbors," she writes in the *Journal of American Medicine*. Perversely, in this field competition can sometimes drive up the cost of medication. She points to the fight between rival rattlesnake antivenoms currently winding down before the International Trade Commission. *"Rather than bringing the price of antivenom down, competition drove it up, as millions of dollars in legal costs had to be distributed across a few thousand patients,"* she writes. *"My clinical trials can only benefit future patients if they can afford the drugs,"* Boyer said. *"The U.S. needs to rethink how we manage these things, because we have reached the point where the developing world is getting more timely access to better drugs (at least in this field) than we are."*

According to Boyer's model, a single vial of antivenom that would cost more than \$14,000 in the United States would cost \$100 to \$200 in Mexico. Same medicine. Same manufacturer. But a totally different pharmaceutical market. In Mexico, Boyer says, authorities determined some time ago that treating venomous snake and spider bites was a public health issue. *"Their policy has always been that the government will provide adequate amounts of antivenom via a massive purchase of the drug which it distributes to health clinics."* We could try to implement something similar here, but it would require an act of Congress to do so. Boyer calls antivenom troubles the *"tip of the iceberg."* She goes

on: *"It sounds esoteric. It's something that happens to so few people. But the truth is the entire American system for developing, testing, licensing and paying for drugs is broken. Things like this go on every day with every drug but in a smaller way, and it adds up."*

Christopher Ingraham – The Washington Post – September 9, 2015



Once an occasional indulgence, bottled water is quickly becoming America's drink of choice spending more than \$13 billion. The average person in the United States now consumes more than 35 gallons of bottled water per year, according to data from market research firm Beverage Marketing Corp. That's about 270 bottles, and more than twice as many as people drank 15 years ago. And that number is only going to go up: By 2017, the average American is expected to drink almost 300 bottles annually. For perspective, consider that over the next two years, bottled water is expected to eclipse soda as the most consumed packaged drink in the United States. "It's not a question of whether, but when, it will happen. We see it happening in about two years," said Gary Hemphill, who is the managing director of research at Beverage Marketing.



Inline image 3

The growing popularity of bottled water, especially in a rich country like the United States, is a touchy subject. Sustainable water activists bemoan the billions of bottles that are consumed each year as an example of American excess. They point to the industry's carbon footprint and to the country's high-quality municipal water system in hopes that people will think better, buy a refillable container and leave the army of packaged H₂O on shelves. But bottled-water makers take issue with the arguments against their industry. They tout their product as a healthy alternative to sugary drinks and say that it's a safer option for those who live in areas where clean tap water is unavailable. And their message seems to be getting across, because Americans love the stuff.

Why we buy bottled water

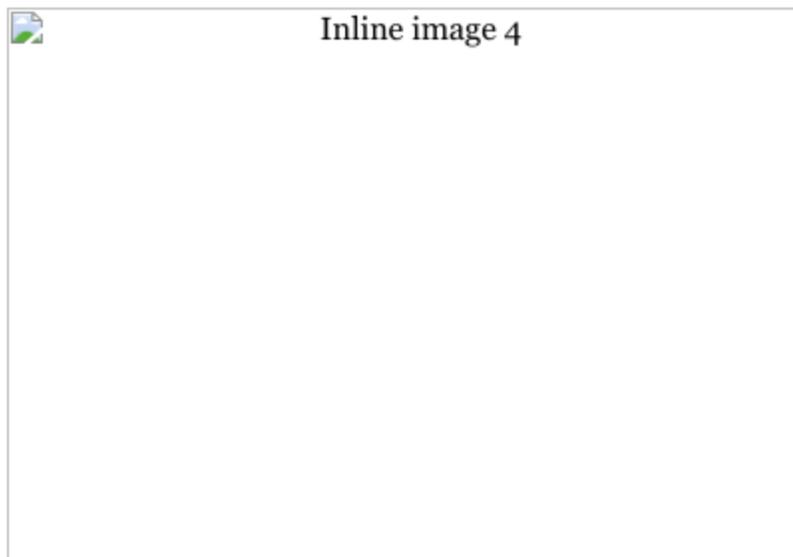
The rise of bottled water in the United States is nothing new — Americans have been drinking more of it for nearly two decades now — but its staying power says a lot about what people look for when they want something to drink. A few underlying trends stand out. The first is the ascent of health consciousness, which has helped bottled water as much as it has hurt soda. "Consumers see it as a healthy beverage alternative," Hemphill said. "People are choosing it over sugary drinks, like soda, for that very reason." The second is the ubiquity of options. "If you grew up in the '70s and you wanted something cold and refreshing to drink, you would have a carbonated soft drink because there really weren't very many other options," Hemphill said. "But now there are tons, and bottled water is kind of at the center."

Bottled water has also been marketed down Americans' throats. In order to distinguish a product that is often indistinguishable, the industry has bombarded consumers with a plethora of clever campaigns, which depict exotic springs, far-off mountains and fresh, untapped streams of natural water. Popular brands, like Evian, have embraced slogans like "Live Young," almost daring people not to be seen with a bottle. Others, like Smart Water, have relied on sleek design. In all, bottled-water brands spent upwards of \$80 million on advertising last year, according to the Wall Street Journal. "Bottled water has become this healthy, sexy thing to drink," said Peter Gleick, who is the president and founder of the Pacific Institute, and author of several books about bottled water. "Certain brands, like Fiji Water, have become so chic that there's a real cachet associated with them."

Bottled-water manufacturers have also launched a subtle but highly successful blurring of consumer choice, positioning their product as an alternative to sugary drinks, rather than an alternative to water

available from the tap. Nestlé Pure Life's 2010 campaign, in which the company asks mothers to switch out a sugary drink for one of their bottled waters each day, is a perfect example. This, Gleick says, is one of their biggest triumphs, because of how the conversation affects the way in which people view their habit of drinking bottled water. "I think it definitely makes people feel better about buying bottled water instead of drinking from the tap," he said.

But bottled water is, perhaps more than anything else, wildly convenient. It's sold at supermarkets and convenience stores, Starbucks and New York City bodegas. At any given moment, it's probably easier to locate the nearest place where a bottle of water can be had, or bought, than it is to find a water fountain. "People who buy water bottles tend to be young and active," Hemphill said. "They like that the bottles are portable, that they can be brought and had while on the go." All of this has been great for bottled-water makers' bottom lines. Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Nestlé, which sell billions of dollars in packaged H₂O each year, have profited handsomely from the beverage's ascent, and they will continue to reap the benefit as consumption grows. A quick glance at bottled-water consumption since 1970, when the average American drank only a gallon per year, gives a sense of how much the market has ballooned over the years. The chart below comes courtesy of the sustainable-water research institute the Pacific Institute.



The true cost of convenience

All those empty water bottles aren't disappearing into thin air. "The bottled water industry says correctly, but misleadingly, that the plastic the water comes in is recyclable," Gleick said. "It's misleading, because recyclable is not the same thing as recycled." By Gleick's estimate, only about a third of all bottles of water consumed in the United States are recycled, meaning that about two-thirds end up in the garbage. "There is no comparison with the environmental footprint of bottled water," he added. "Of course, the plastic footprint is the same as it is with other drinks which come in bottles. But that argument is disingenuous, because for bottled water the alternative isn't soda, it's tap water. And the environmental footprint of bottled water vastly exceeds the environmental footprint of cheap, high-quality tap water. It's not even close."

As of 2006, it took 3 liters of water to produce 1 liter of bottled water, according to the Pacific Institute. In other words, before even including the energy required to produce the actual bottles — which is

significant — bottled water was already three times as inefficient as its unpackaged alternative. To be fair, the United States isn't the only country where people are obsessed with bottled water when they needn't be. Much of Europe, including the United Kingdom, has similar problems. As does Canada, where choosing bottled water "is a matter of taste or convenience, not health."

Gleick says that it's important not to discount the existence of an irrational fear associated with municipal water systems. People, he says, are unsure, skeptical and sometimes even fearful of what comes out of their tap. They don't know how good it is, which is unfortunate, because, for the most part, it's exceptionally good. Tap water faces far more rigorous bacteria testing in cities than any water bottling company in the country faces. And a quarter of all bottled water comes from a tap anyway. "It is remarkable to me that sales of bottled water are continuing to rise in a country where we have cheap, incredibly safe, incredibly reliable tap water that's available to basically everyone," Gleick said. "We have one of if not the most incredible municipal water system in the world."

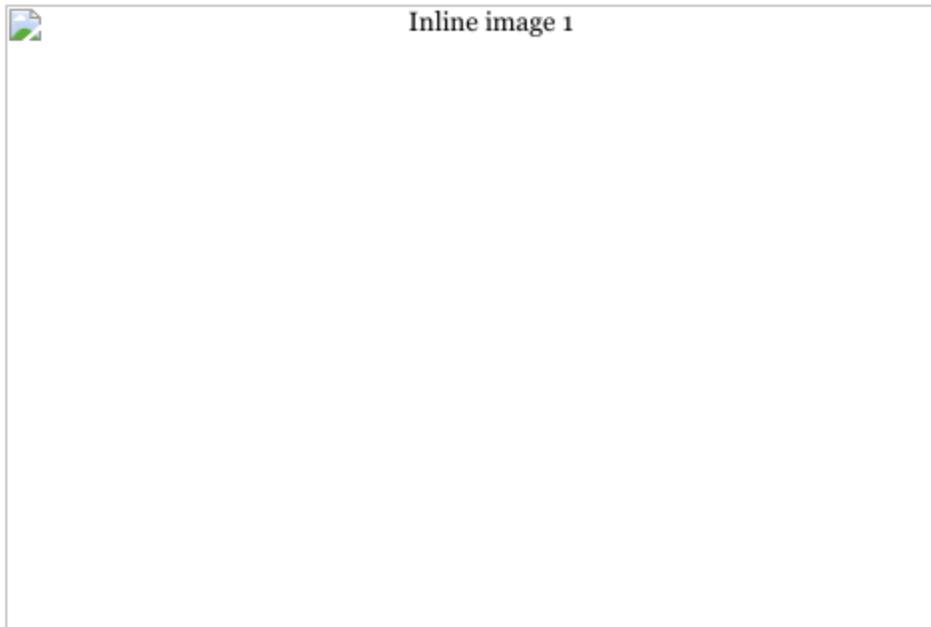
So we have to ask ourselves why so many Americans buying bottled water which does not have the level of scrutiny that most municipalities impose. No one should assume that just because he or she purchases water in a bottle that it is necessarily any better regulated, purer, or safer than most tap water. National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) completed a four-year study of the bottled water industry, including its bacterial and chemical contamination problems. While most bottled water apparently is of good quality. They found the following.

- Nearly one in four of the waters tested (23 of the 103 waters, or 22 percent) violated strict applicable state (California) limits for bottled water in at least one sample, most commonly for arsenic or certain cancer-causing man-made ("synthetic") organic compounds.
- Nearly one in five tested waters (18 of the 103, or 17 percent) contained, in at least one sample, more bacteria than allowed under microbiological-purity "guidelines" (unenforceable sanitation guidelines based on heterotrophic plate count [HPC] bacteria levels in the water) adopted by some states, the industry, and the EU.
- In sum, approximately one third of the tested waters (34 of 103 waters, or 33 percent) violated an enforceable state standard or exceeded microbiological-purity guidelines, or both, in at least one sample.
- Four waters (4 percent) violated the generally weak federal bottled water standards (two for excessive fluoride and two for excessive coliform bacteria; neither of the two latter waters were found to be contaminated with coliform bacteria in our testing of a different lot of the same brand).
- About one fifth of the waters contained synthetic organic chemicals -- such as industrial chemicals (e.g., toluene or xylene) or chemicals used in manufacturing plastic (e.g., phthalate, adipate, or styrene) -- in at least one sample, but generally at levels below state and federal standards.
- In addition, many waters contained arsenic, nitrates, or other inorganic contaminants at levels below current standards. While in most cases the levels found were not surprising, in eight cases arsenic was found in at least one test at a level of potential health concern.
- For purposes of comparison, that EPA recently reported that in 1996 about 1 in 10 community tap water systems (serving about one seventh of the U.S. population) violated EPA's tap water treatment or contaminant standards, and 28 percent of tap water systems violated significant water-monitoring or reporting requirements. In addition, the tap water of more than 32 million Americans (and perhaps more) exceeds 2 parts per billion (ppb) arsenic (the California Proposition 65 warning level, applicable to bottled water, is 5 ppb); and 80 to 100 million Americans drink tap water that contains very significant trihalomethane levels (over 40 ppb).

Thus, while much tap water is supplied by systems that have violated EPA standards or that serve water containing substantial levels of risky contaminants, apparently the majority of the country's tap water passes EPA standards. Therefore, while much tap water is indeed risky, having compared available data NRDC concluded that there is no assurance that bottled water is any safer than tap water.

There May Be A Mental Health Reason To Eat More Fish

Mmm, omega-3 fatty acids...



People who eat a lot of fish may have a slightly lower risk of depression, according to a new analysis of previous studies. In their analysis, researchers looked at 26 studies that involved a total of 150,278 people and examined the relationship between depression and the consumption of fish. Ten of the studies were conducted in Europe and seven were done in North America, with the remaining ones conducted in Asia, Oceania and South America. When the researchers analyzed the studies conducted in Europe, they found that the people who consumed the most fish had a 17 percent lower risk of depression than those who ate the least amount of fish. *"Higher fish consumption may be beneficial in the primary prevention of depression,"* the researchers wrote in the study. [7 Ways Depression Differs in Men and Women] When the researchers analyzed all the data by gender, they found that the men who ate the most fish had a 20 percent lower risk of depression than those who ate the least amount of fish. In women who ate the most fish, their risk of depression was reduced by 16 percent, compared to the women who ate the least fish.

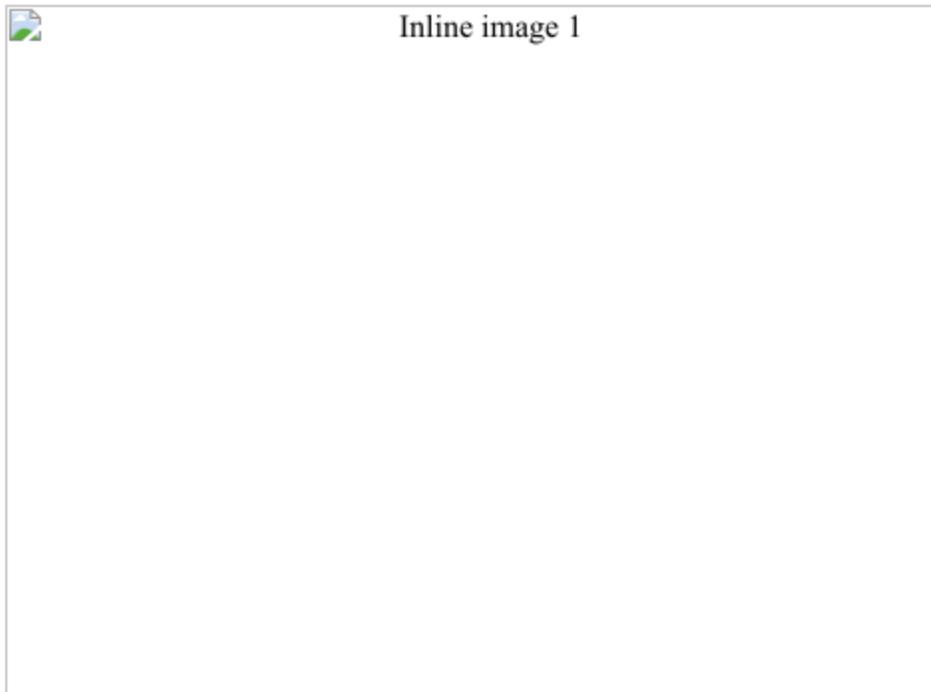
Although the associations between high fish consumption and lower depression risk were found for the studies conducted in Europe, they were not found for the studies conducted in the other continents, the researchers noted. *"This might [be] because a smaller number of participants cannot reach*

statistical significance easily," said study author Fang Li of Qingdao University in Shandong, China. Because the studies included in the analysis were observational (the researchers did not, for example, ask people to start eating more fish and measure the effects), a cause-and-effect relationship between fish consumption and the risk of depression could not be established, the researchers said. Moreover, the researchers did not have information about the types of fish the people in the studies ate, Li said. More research is needed to see if the association between depression risk and fish consumption varies according to the type of fish consumed, the researchers said.

It is not clear why eating more fish may lower the risk of depression, but there are several mechanisms that could be at work in the link, the researchers said. For instance, previous research has suggested that omega-3 fatty acids in fish could alter the structure of brain cell membranes. It could also be that other fatty acids in fish modify the activity of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, which are thought to be involved in depression, the researchers said. But it could also be that people who eat more fish are generally healthier. *"High fish consumption may also be related to a healthier diet and better nutritional status, which could contribute to the lower risk of depression,"* Li told Live Science. The new study was published (Sep. 10) in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*.

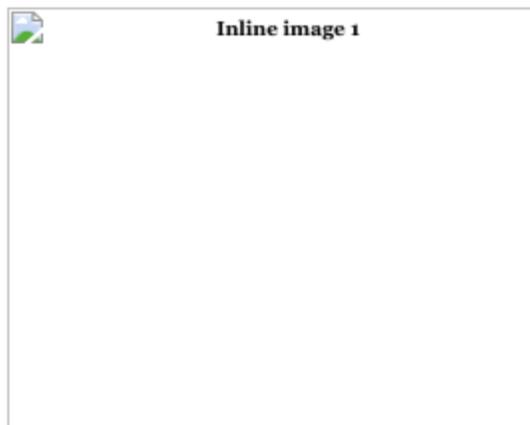
Agata Blaszcak Boxe – LiveScience – September 11, 2015

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE



THIS IS PRETTY COOL

Calculator That Estimates Your Life Expectancy, mine was 92



Go on the web link below, answer questions and watch your age in the upper right corner!

Web Link: <http://media.nmfn.com/tnetwork/lifespan>

Kind of fun to watch your age go up and down as you answer the questions.

Now this is interesting, give it a try.... How long will you live? This is a calculator that estimates your life expectancy. It was developed by Northwestern Mutual Life. It's interesting that there are only 13 questions in 13 slides. Yet, they can predict how long you're likely to live. *Don't cheat and enjoy.....*

THINK ABOUT THIS

What Dr. King said then is true today



Inline image 1

The American government has been helping immigrants (European) since its beginning and to suggest that giving our new immigrants from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean a helping hand is unique, is to deny our history. One example is homesteading, which lifted millions of recently arrived European immigrants out of poverty by providing the resources that enabled them to become farmers. By 1900, out of a total population of 75,994,266, the farm population was estimated to be 29,414,000, 38% of labor force, on approximately 5,740,000 farms with an average 147 acres per farm. During this very same time that the US government refused to give black Americans any land while through an act of Congress the government give away millions of acres of land in the West and in the Midwest. The American government willingly provided an undergird for white peasants from Europe with an economic floor, including free land, land-grant colleges built with government money to teach them how to farm as well as providing county agents to further their expertise in farming, in addition the government provided low interest rates so that they could mechanize their farms. And today many farmers are still receiving millions of dollars in federal subsidies to not the farm while claiming that any aid to today's immigrants is some sort of unique giveaway. The real hypocrisy is that some of these same people, like rancher Clyde Bundy and his supporter like to tell today's immigrants that they should be able to lift themselves by their own bootstraps. And no one pointed this out better than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he used it as an example of how in the 1950s/1960s America ignored its history in response to African Americans demands at the time....

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. video on farming web link:

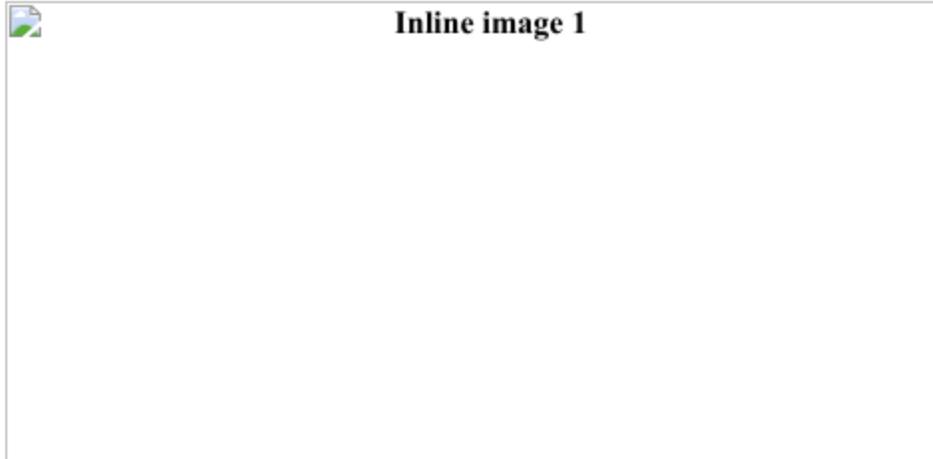
<https://www.facebook.com/harold.lee.rush/videos/10151509033171237/>

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

How to Age Gracefully

Advice from kids to kids and beyond

Elders Offer Life Advice to their Younger Counterparts (Age 7 – 93)



Web Link: https://youtu.be/sycgL3Qg_Ak

People of all ages offer words of wisdom to their younger counterparts in this WireTap farewell video, from CBC Radio One. Directed and edited by Andrew Norton

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Otis Redding



Inline image 7

Otis Ray Redding, Jr. (September 9, 1941 – December 10, 1967) was an American singer-songwriter, record producer, arranger, and talent scout. He is considered one of the greatest singers in the history of American popular music and a seminal artist in soul and rhythm and blues. His singing style was powerfully influential among soul artists of 1960s and helped exemplify the *Stax Sound*. Born and raised in the US state of Georgia, Redding quit school at age 15 to support his family, working with Little Richard's backing band, the *Upsetters*, and also performing at talent shows for prize money. In 1958, he joined Johnny Jenkins's band, the *Pinetoppers*, and toured the Southern states as a driver and musician. An unscheduled appearance on a Stax recording session led to a contract and his first single, "*These Arms of Mine*," in 1962. Stax released Redding's debut album *Pain in My Heart* two years later.

Initially popular mainly with African Americans, Redding later reached a wider American popular music audience. Along with his group, he first played small gigs in the American South, then performed in the western states at the popular Los Angeles night club *Whisky a Go Go*. European appearances included London, Paris and other major cities. After appearing at the 1967 *Monterey Pop Festival*, Redding wrote and recorded his iconic "*(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay*" with Steve Cropper. The song became the first posthumous number-one record on both the **Billboard** Hot 100 and R&B charts after his death in a plane crash. *The Dock of the Bay* became the first posthumous album to reach number one on the **UK Albums Chart**. Redding's premature death devastated Stax. Already on the verge of bankruptcy, the label soon discovered that Atlantic Records owned the rights to his entire song catalog.

Dying at the age of 26, Redding received many posthumous accolades, including the **Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award** and induction into **the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** and the **Songwriters Hall of Fame**. He received the honorific nickname *King of Soul*. In addition to "*(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay*," "*Respect*" and "*Try a Little Tenderness*" are among his best-known songs.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted him in 1989, declaring Redding's name to be "*synonymous with the term soul, music that arose out of the black experience in America through the transmutation of gospel and rhythm and blues into a form of funky, secular testifying.*" Readers of the British music newspaper *Melody Maker* voted him as the top vocalist of 1967, superseding Elvis Presley, who had topped the list for the prior 10 years. In 1988, he was inducted into the **Georgia Music Hall of Fame**. Five years later, the **United States Post Office** issued a 29-cent commemorative postage stamp in his honor. Redding was inducted into the **Songwriters Hall of Fame** in 1994, and in 1999 he received the Grammy **Lifetime Achievement Award**. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame listed three Redding recordings, "*Shake*", "*(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay*", and

"Try a Little Tenderness," among its list of "**The 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll.**" American music magazine Rolling Stone ranked Redding at number **21** on their list of the "**100 Greatest Artists of All Time**" and eighth on their list of the "**100 Greatest Singers of All Time**". Q ranked Redding fourth among "**100 Greatest Singers**", after only Frank Sinatra, Franklin and Presley. Again, not bad for someone who died at the age of 26? As such, this week I invite you to enjoy the **King of Soul..... Mr. Otis Redding...**

Otis Redding – **Try A Little Tenderness** -- <https://youtu.be/P29E7YYMD70>

Otis Redding – **I've Been Loving You Too Long** -- <https://youtu.be/ovUc17AoSNY>

Otis Redding – **Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa (Sad Song)** -- <https://youtu.be/rkWIAcCeJ1o>

Otis Redding – **Lover's Prayer** -- <https://youtu.be/Jo-klvIKdjM>

Otis Redding – **(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay** -- <https://youtu.be/rTVjnBo96Ug>

Otis Redding – **That's What My Heart Needs** -- <https://youtu.be/Eprv6ek8N-I>

Otis Redding – **Satisfaction** -- <https://youtu.be/yvtbiHYa-LI>

Otis Redding – **Pain In My Heart** -- <https://youtu.be/Zohx8SR6K9U>

Otis Redding – **My Girl/Respect** -- <https://youtu.be/LjpluTCICO4>

Otis Redding – **When a man loves a woman** -- <https://youtu.be/A-hAYM5KQ8Y>

Otis Redding – **For Your Precious Love** -- <https://youtu.be/RjISISGyz1A>

Otis Redding – **I Got Dreams To Remember** -- <https://youtu.be/Ooqqj6q1MeU>

Otis Redding & Carla Thomas – **When Something Is Wrong With My Baby** -- <https://youtu.be/vRnX7fpZNU>

Otis Redding & Carla Thomas – **Bring it on home to me** -- <https://youtu.be/iZgMqOCkc4I>

Otis Redding, Eric Burdon & Chris Farlowe – **Shake** -- <https://youtu.be/RUcTKjOQWII>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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