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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.. 06/28/2015

Date: Sun, 28 Jun 2015 07:22:32 +0000

Attachments: The_long-term_power_of_the_'War_on_Drugs,'_in_two_graphs_Phillip_Bump_TWP_April_14,_2015.docx; Percy_Sledge_bio.docx; A_War_Diary_Soars_Over_Rome_Andrew_Curry_National_Geographic_April_16,_2015.docx; The_Ivy_League's_favorite_war_crim_=?UTF-8?Q?inal_Why_the_atrocities_of_Henry_K?_issinger_should_be_mandatory_reading_Omar_Aziz_The_Salon-04.17.15.docx; Crimes_against_Humanity_Why_Is_Henry_Kissinger_Walking_Around_Free_Andy_Piasci_k_Global_Research_Jan._29,_2015.docx; MELTDOWN_-_The_Story_About_the_2008-2009_Financ_ial_Crisis_\u2013_Weekly_Reading_=?UTF-8?Q?MELTDOWN_-_The_Story_About_the_2008-2009_Financ_ial_Crisis_\u2013_Weekly_Reading_=?UTF-8?Q?Here's_How_Big_of_a_Deal_the_World_Cup_Is_to_Qatar_Dashiell_Bennett_&_Joe_Weise_nthal_BloombergBusiness_05.28.15.docx

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DEAR FRIEND.....

MELTDOWN

The Story About the 2008/2009 Financial Crisis



Inline image 1

Episode 1 Web Link: https://youtu.be/k5q6z_FpxIY

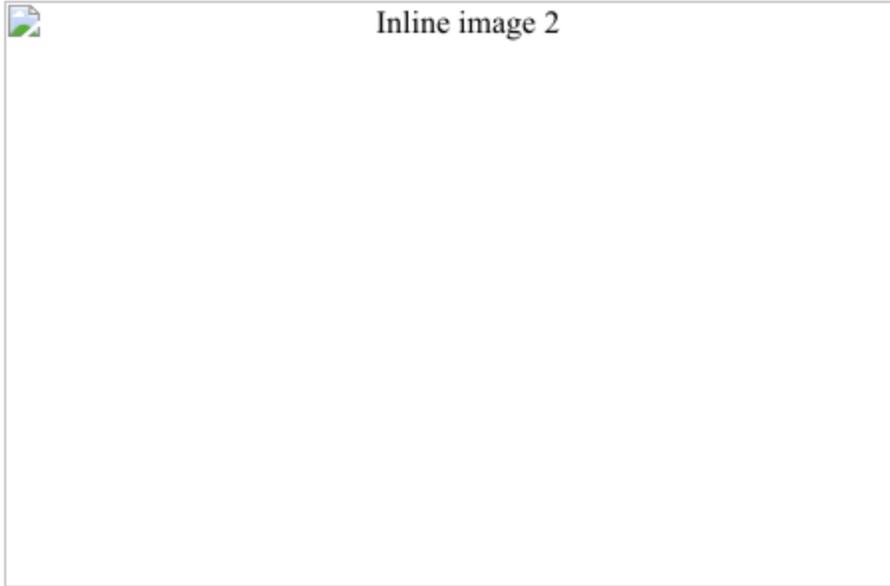
Episode 2 Web Link: <https://youtu.be/Bp7c2Wo9YDc>

Episode 3 Web Link: <https://youtu.be/L2oDhfgPugE>

Episode 4 Web Link: <https://youtu.be/osAYMnqZyZc>

If you haven't seen the documentary **MELTDOWN** I strongly suggest that you do, as it is a great 4-part series on the greed and reckless business practices on Wall Street and by the Big Banks, with little to no government over-sight and missteps that might have ease the crash. Intertwined in the series are personal portraits showing the pain and suffering of the people who suffered as the result of the Meltdown. Millions of people lost their jobs and millions of families lost their homes as a result of the **Financial Crisis**, while the government spent hundreds of billions of dollars bailing out the banks and Big Three Automakers.

Over the following four weeks the ***Weekend Offerings*** will include a partial transcript *with a few add-ins* of each episode of Meltdown, starting with Episode 1, next Sunday on June 28, 2015. To whet your appetite please read the overview below and if you decide to not wait for the transcripts and video links the following weeks, I will understand.



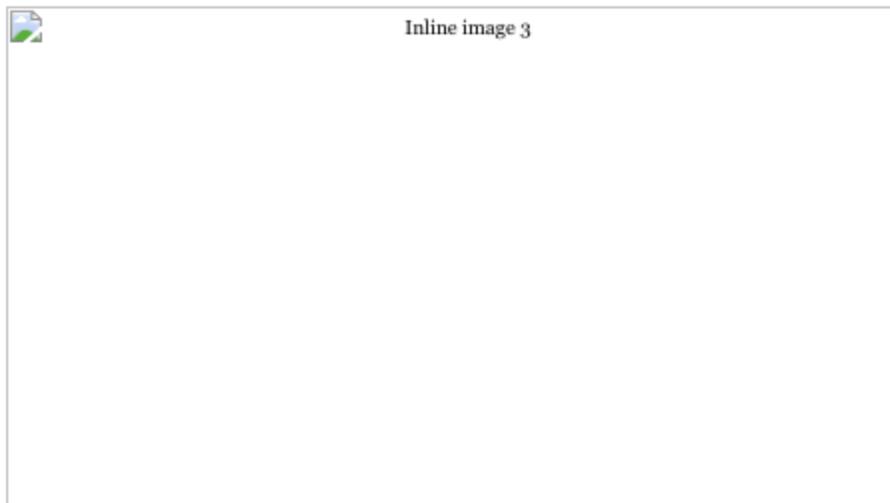
Dick Fuld

ABOUT THE SERIES

Doc Zone (the producers of Meltdown) has traveled the world - from Wall Street to Dubai to China - to investigate **The Secret History of the Global Financial Collapse**. Meltdown is the story of the bankers who crashed the world, the leaders who struggled to save it and the ordinary families who got crushed.

September 2008 launched an extraordinary chain of events:

- **General Motors**, the world's largest company, went bust.
- **Washington Mutual** became the world's largest bank failure.
- **Lehman Brothers** became the world's largest bankruptcy ever.
- The damage quickly spread around the world, shattering global confidence in the fundamental structures of the international economy.



Evicted homeowner in California

The CBC's Terence McKenna takes viewers behind the headlines and into the backrooms at the highest levels of world governments and banking institutions, revealing the astonishing level of backstabbing and tension behind the scenes as the world came dangerously close to another Great Depression.

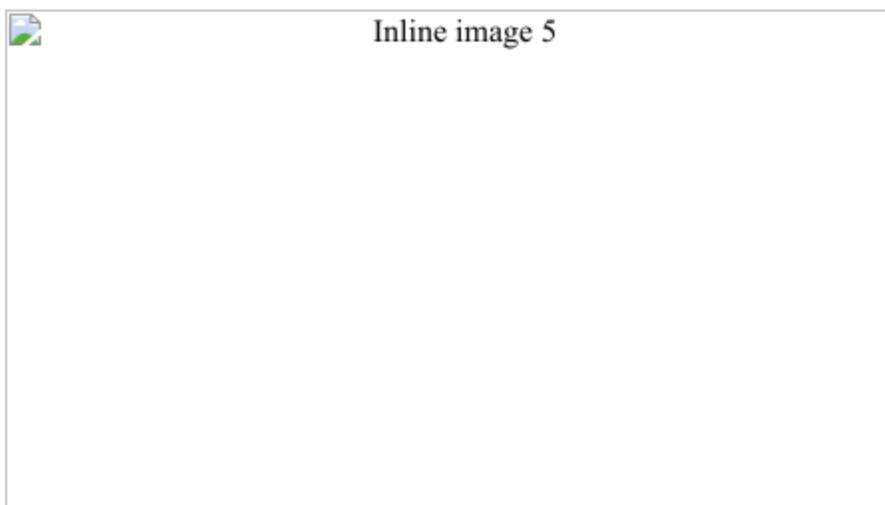
Meltdown's cast of characters includes:

- **Geraint Anderson**, aka "*City Boy*" – This hippie-turned-stockbroker in England reveals the dirty secrets of high finance. He says lying and cheating were all part of the high-stakes game.
- **Dick Fuld** – A true Wall Street predator. As CEO of Lehman Brothers, Fuld boasted he'd rip out and eat his enemies' hearts. Instead, he watched his own empire collapse beneath his feet.
- **Hank Paulson** – As US Treasury Secretary, he lurched from crisis to crisis during the meltdown. On his watch, the U.S. spent trillions to bail out Wall Street companies, including Paulson's old firm, Goldman Sachs.
- **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum** – The self-styled CEO of Dubai, Inc built an astonishing real estate empire. Bigger was always better, until it turned out to be largely a mirage
- **Marcy Kaptur** – This Congresswoman from Ohio is an outspoken voice for the families decimated by the Great Recession. She's demanding that the bankers responsible pay up.

Meltdown also tells the stories of desperate foreclosed homeowners in California, disillusioned autoworkers at the end of the line in Ontario and furious workers in France who shocked the world by kidnapping their own bosses.

Since the financial meltdown began, trillions of dollars have been spent rescuing banks and jumpstarting economies, yet recovery remains fragile. Fears abound of a "double-dip" return to recession. The millions around the world who lost homes and jobs are demanding answers: How did it all go so wrong? Who is to blame? They are angry because to date, only a few small-time players have been held to account. No major banking, regulatory or government figures have yet been convicted of any wrongdoing.

Meltdown is the first comprehensive documentary portrait of the worst economic crisis of a generation.



Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange

HOUR 1: *The Men Who Crashed the World*

Greed and recklessness by the titans of Wall Street triggers the largest financial crash since the Great Depression. It's left to US Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, himself a former Wall Street banker, to try and avert further disaster.

HOOR 2: *A Global Tsunami*

The meltdown's devastation ripples around the world from California to Iceland and China. Facing economic ruin, desperate world leaders are at each other's throats.

HOOR 3: *Paying the Price*

The victims of the meltdown fight back. In Iceland, protestors force a government to fall. In Canada, ripped off autoworkers occupy their plant. And in France, furious union members kidnap their bosses.

HOOR 4: *After the Fall*

Investigators begin to sift through the meltdown's rubble. Shaken world leaders question the very foundations of modern capitalism while asking: could it all happen again?

THE HARD FACTS

- **The Bottom Half** of America owns only **2.5%** of country's wealth. While the Top **1%** owns a third of it.
- The gap between the top **0.01%** and everyone else hasn't been this bad since the Roaring Twenties.
- In 1950, the ratio of the average executive's paycheque to the average worker's paycheque was about **30 to 1**. Since the year 2000, that ratio has exploded to between **300 to 500 to one**.
- In 2008, the total national household debt in Canada has reached an all-time high of **\$1.3 trillion**. A survey found that **42%** of respondents said their personal debt was rising in the past three years, and **21%** said they couldn't manage their debt.
- **61%** of Americans "*always or usually*" live paycheck to paycheck, which was up from **49%** in 2008 and **43%** in 2007. The numbers are similar in Canada.
- A staggering **43%** of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved up for retirement.
- In America today, the average time needed to find a job has risen to a record **35.2 weeks**.
- In 2008, the World Economic Forum rated Canada's banking system **No. 1** in the world. The U.S. came in right behind — **Namibia**.
- It is being projected that the U.S. government will have a budget deficit of approximately **1.6 trillion** dollars in 2010. How much is that? If you went out and spent one dollar every single second, it would take you more than 31,000 years to spend a trillion dollars.
- In February 2010, there were **5.5** unemployed Americans for every job opening.
- In California's Central Valley, **1 out of every 16** homes is in some phase of foreclosure.
- U.S. banks repossessed nearly **258,000** homes nationwide in the first quarter of 2010, a **35%** jump from the first quarter of 2009.
- In May 2009, the number of Canadians getting regular employment insurance benefits in reached **778,700**, the highest level on comparable records going back 12 years. During the month, the number of people getting EI benefits grew by **9.2%**, from April.

- More than **24%** of all homes with mortgages in the United States were underwater (the mortgage is more than the current market value of the home) as of the end of 2009.
- This recession has erased **8 million** private sector jobs in the United States.
- **39.68 million** Americans are now on food stamps, which represents a new all-time record. But things look like they are going to get even worse. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is forecasting that enrollment in the food stamp program will exceed **43 million** Americans in 2011.
- The Dow Jones Industrial Average just experienced the **worst** May it has seen since 1940.
- If you only make the minimum payment each and every time, a **\$6,000** credit card bill can end up costing you over **\$30,000** (depending on the interest rate).
- Approximately 21% of all children in the United States are living below the poverty line in 2010 - the highest rate in **20 years**.
- In 2010 the U.S. government is projected to issue almost as much new debt as the rest of the governments of the world **combined**.
- In 2009, U.S. banks posted their **sharpest decline** in private lending since **1942**.
- During the first quarter of 2010, the total number of loans that are at least three months past due in the United States increased for the **16th** consecutive quarter.
- As of February 2009, there were **111,500** employees working in motor vehicle assembly and parts, down **37%** from its peak in 2001, according to a Stats Canada report.
- According to a Pew Research Center study, approximately **37%** of all Americans between the ages of **18** and **29** have either been unemployed or underemployed at some point during the recession.
- For the first time in U.S. history, banks own a greater share of residential housing net worth in the United States than **all individual Americans** put together.

I hope that you will enjoy the series and again, I will understand it if you don't wait for the weekly installments.

Obamacare Is Here To Stay

The Supreme Court Got It Right



Inline image 1

For proponents of the Affordable Care Act, the Supreme Court decision on June 25, 2015 upholding federal subsidies on federally created exchanges is cause to celebrate. Because once again, the ACA has survived a potentially fatal challenge. But more importantly, the significance of the decision, also extends into the future. Because of how the Supreme Court reasoned in the case, a future president opposed to the ACA (including all of the current crop of GOP contenders) will not be able to reinterpret the law to deny subsidies to low- and middle-income taxpayers in the future.

One of the arguments rejected by Chief Justice John Roberts' majority decision is that the ACA is ambiguous and that, as a result, the Court should defer to the construction of the relevant administrative agency, here the Internal Revenue Service. (The IRS read the statute to allow subsidies.) Robert said it was the justices' job to read the statute for themselves without deference to the IRS. While the court rejected the administration's argument on this point, Obama's loss bodes well for the long-term viability of the Affordable Care Act.

If the court had deferred to the IRS construction of the statute, the next president, should he or she be opposed to subsidies, could have pushed the IRS to reconsider the law. The IRS could have determined then that the ACA did not make subsidies available on the federally created exchanges. That would have gutted the law -- even without opponents having to pass anything from Congress.

Chief Justice Roberts' decision eliminates the possibility. By insisting that the subsidy question was too important for the court to defer to the agency's interpretation, Roberts betrays his usual preference for judicial supremacy and skepticism of the executive branch. Yet in doing so he takes the subsidy question off the table for future presidents. A President Rubio or Bush won't be able to reinterpret the ACA to deny subsidies on the federally created exchanges. The ACA has now been authoritatively and conclusively read by the Supreme Court to allow subsidies.

Writing the majority opinion, Justice Roberts said, "*Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them.*" Chief Justice Roberts has not only saved Obamacare once again. He's also given the law strong protection against future attacks. Bravo to Justice Roberts and to the other Justices who voted along with him as it was the absolute right thing to do. *Bravo... Bravo.... Bravo....*

What A Week!!!

This was the best week of Obama's presidency..... And a great week for America....



Inline image 1

When President Obama neared the end of his eulogy Friday for the late South Carolina state Sen. Clementa Pinckney (D), a victim of the shootings at a Charleston church last week, he paused. A long pause. It was a moment of genuine drama. Had he lost his place? Were his emotions getting to him? Then, he started to sing -- the opening bars to "*Amazing Grace*." Soon, the entire congregation at the AME Emanuel Church joined him in song. President Obama brought mourners to their feet during his eulogy of South Carolina state Sen. Clementa Pinckney as he sang a verse from the song "*Amazing Grace*."

It was a moment of considerable weight and significance: A black president leading a congregation in song at a place where nine black people were murdered by a man with the apparent goal of starting a race war. And, it served as the coda to Obama's single best week as president -- a week filled with developments, both practical and symbolic, that will reverberate well beyond not only this week or month but his entire presidency.

The week began with Obama winning a trade fight over fast-track negotiating authority that looked to be on thin ice even a week ago. He did so by pulling off something even more remarkable and unlikely: successfully collaborating with Republican congressional leaders to find a path to passage of a rare shared priority.

While fast-track authority for Obama is not the same thing as a successfully negotiated Trans Pacific Partnership (get smart on all the trade deals here) it preserves the possibility of that 12-nation deal coming to fruition and provides Obama a bit of momentum stateside as well. If Obama is able to help make TPP happen, that will be a major foreign policy achievement with consequences lasting well beyond his presidency.

Then came the Supreme Court's ruling Thursday that upheld the subsidies for low- and middle-income Americans using the federal marketplace under the Affordable Care Act. That judgment, the second time the court had upheld a provision of Obamacare, ended perhaps the last major hope of anti-ACA forces to defund or discredit the bill.

Speaking at the White House, President Obama declared the Supreme Court ruling on health-care subsidies a win but said there is still work to be done. Here are key moments from his reaction to the ruling. Obama did everything he could to avoid spiking the football in a statement following the court's decision. But whether he came out and said it or not, the court's ruling on Obamacare validated what is, without question, the defining policy accomplishment of Obama's time in office. Had the court decided the other way, the legacy of Obamacare would have been deeply muddled -- and it might

not have even survived in anything close to a recognizable form. Given how much Obama and his party had lost in the fight for the law, that would have been disastrous. Winning, on the other hand, was a massive affirmation. Most of all, the ruling has almost insured the fact that Obamacare is here to stay.

Twenty four hours later, the court was back at it -- legalizing same sex marriage nationwide. Obama was a late-arriver on the issue, without question. He supported only civil unions during his 2008 campaign and it wasn't until May 2012 -- as his race for reelection neared -- that Obama finally came out in support of gay marriage. But even prior to Obama's own public statement in support of same-sex marriage, his administration was taking actions that led to Friday's ruling. In 2011, the Justice Department announced it would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act; in June 2013, the Court struck DOMA -- a decision that set things in motion for Friday's ruling. Obama on marriage ruling: *"America should be very proud."*

President Obama lauded the Supreme Court ruling in favor of same-sex marriage at the White House Friday. Here are key moments from President Obama's speech. And Obama carved out time in his second inaugural address to express his belief that allowing gays and lesbians to marry was part of the greater American movement to freedom and equality. *"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well,"* he said that day. On Friday, in remarks delivered after the marriage ruling, Obama returned to that theme. *"Today we can say, in no uncertain terms, that we have made our union a little more perfect,"* Obama declared.

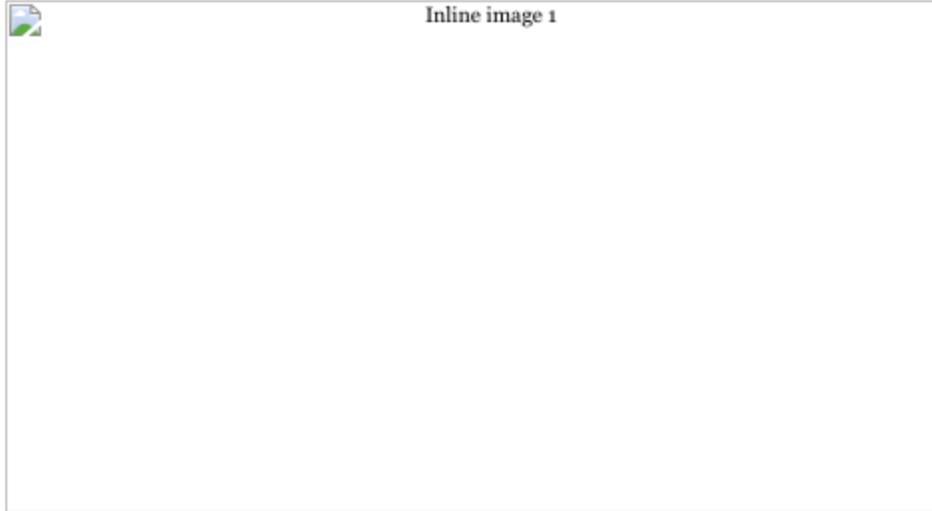
Then Obama got on a plane bound for Charleston where, nine days earlier, the latest in a string of mass shootings during his time in office had been committed in the basement of a famous African American church. The speech Obama delivered, easily one of his best few as president, was a stirring appeal to the redemptive power of grace. It was about how finding grace -- even in tragedies like those visited on the church where he spoke -- was at the essence of who we all are. Obama touched on gun control, on race relations, on how what divides us is dwarfed by what unites us.

And then he broke into song. It was a genuine moment that will be remembered long after the 2016 election decides who will follow Obama into office. The most powerful person in the country, singing the words *"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound...that saved a wretch like me"* with the eyes of the country on him. It was deeply stirring and emotional -- not just for Democrats or African Americans but for Americans, period. This was a week that will define not only Obama's second term and his presidency. This is a week that will leave profound implications on our society, setting off ripples that we may not fully grasp for years if not decades. Obama ran as a change agent. And this is the week, his supporters and the country realized that he truly is what he promised. By the way.... *Kudos to the Supreme Court who got it right this week....*

For those who thought after the disastrous midterm elections that our lame-duck President would at most be relegated to small victories if not out-right repudiation... boy were they wrong. Since the midterms, through executive action, the President has made solid gains on immigration, wage discrimination, climate change, and foreign-policy issues, including an opening, after more than a half century of Cold War and embargo, to Cuba. These accomplishments—and potential accomplishments, like a rigorous, well-regulated nuclear arrangement with Iran — will help shape the country for years to come. ***Again, this was probably the best week of Obama's presidency.... And a great week for America....***

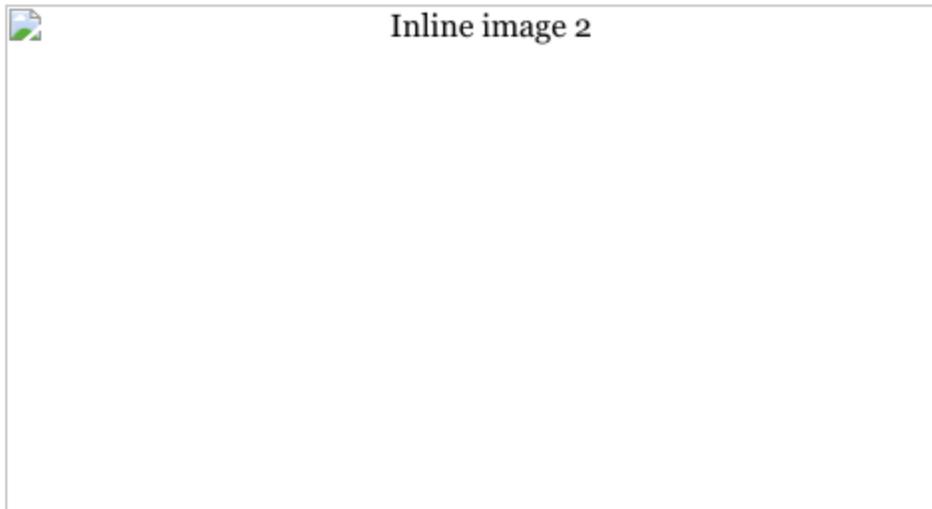
Here's How Big of a Deal the World Cup Is to Qatar

Check out what happened to it's stock market



The Khalifa International Stadium, one of the venues of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, in Doha.

In most of the world "football" means "soccer" and to understand how big the sport is, the news of the arrest of nine top officials at soccer's global governing body in late May as a result of criminal charges that are just one part of a wide-ranging corruption probe at FIFA that includes a Swiss investigation into bribery related to the awarding of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, the latter of which will be hosted in Qatar caused Qatar's stock exchange to fall more than four percent in just two days.



Although FIFA insists the Qatari tournament will go on as planned, their bid to host the games is under new scrutiny and there are already calls for a revote in order to select a new host for the 2018 and 2022 Cups. If the scandal didn't spread to reach as high as FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who was forced to retire after winning an unprecident fifth re-election, the possibility of a new vote won't happen. A re-vote would almost certainly result in the Cup being moved to another country. But with more than \$200 billion committed, Qatar will get its games.

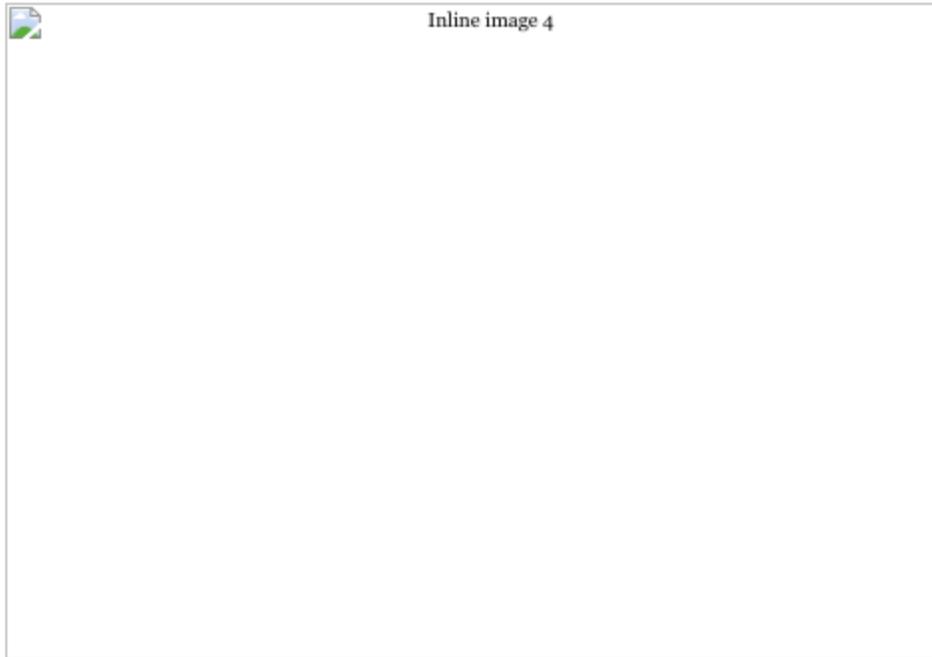
That would be a huge blow to Qatar's future. The Middle Eastern nation is reportedly spending close to \$200 billion on various infrastructure projects before 2022, including the construction of nine new air conditioned stadiums and major renovations to three more. That's about 18 times more than has been spent by any previous World Cup host and ten times more than what Russia plans to spend on their World Cup in 2018. The entire Qatari GDP in 2013 was a little over \$203 billion.



Inline image 3

The corruption scandal is not the only controversy facing the 2022 World Cup. Fans are already up in arms that the traditional mid-year tournament will have to be held in December — interrupting the regular season of most of the world's professional soccer leagues — in order to avoid playing games in the punishing summer heat. Even more damaging to the Qatari cause are multiple reports that most of the World Cup construction is being completed with the use of cheap or unpaid migrant laborers, hundreds of whom have already died working on various projects.

Internationally, soccer revenues overshadow even the most profitable sports in the US. Here is the breakdown of worldwide sports event market.

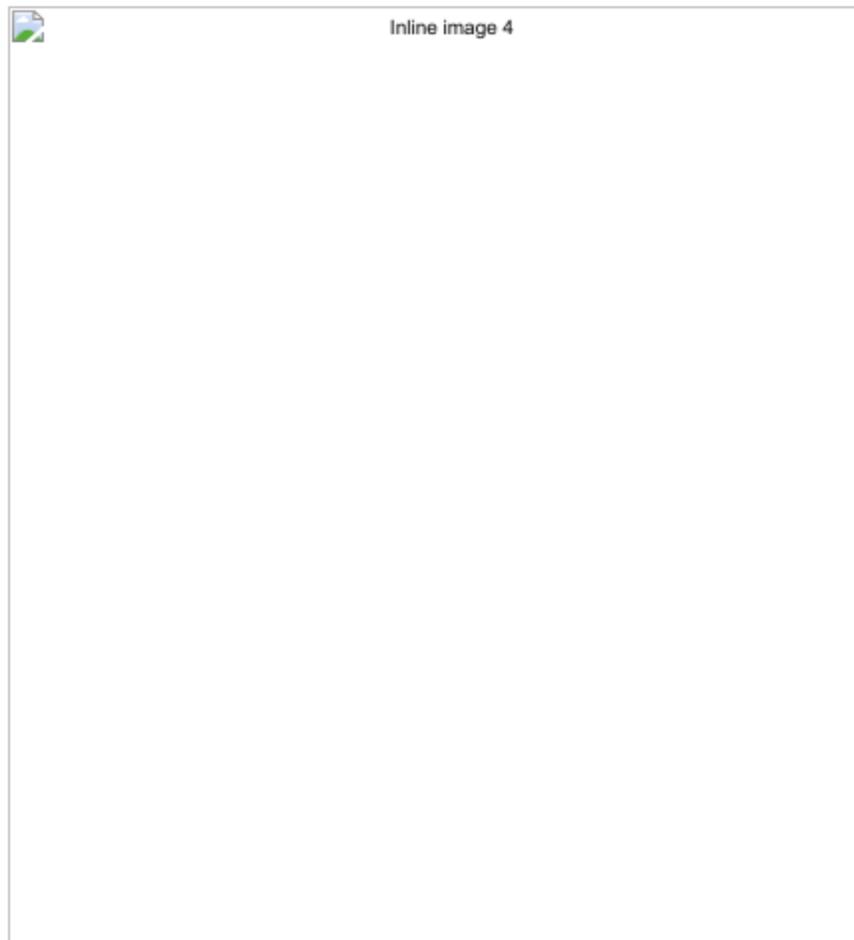
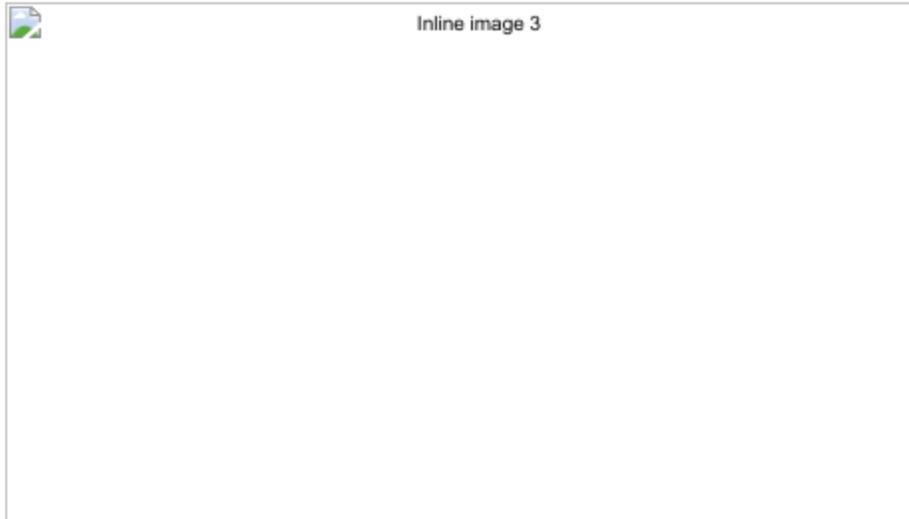


The Big Ugly



We can forget the corruption in FIFA because it is not going to be addressed this year if at all. But more importantly the Big Ugly is that slave labor is being used to construct the stadiums and other infrastructure being built by Qatar for the 2022 World Cup. Based on current estimates, it looks that more than 4000 workers will lose their lives by the time that the World Cup games start in 2022. Clearly there must be a magic number of slave deaths in the world's richest country that would render the Qatar World Cup a moral and political no-no. But what is that number? What is the ballpark figure where deaths in the construction of ballparks become unacceptable? As dozens of foreign workers are being sent home in caskets each week, (and lets understand that not one Qatari worker has died), so why isn't there any outcry or even concern?

Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers come to Qatar each year, and there could be hundreds of deaths even without a World Cup -- figures from the Indian embassy show, for instance, that 200 plus Indian workers died in Qatar in 2010, before the World Cup announcement. But the numbers could also be worse: as mentioned earlier, a report by the International Trade Union Confederation has estimated 1,200 deaths in recent years. If current trends continue, the ITUC estimates that 4,000 workers will die in Qatar by the time the World Cup is actually held in 2022.



Earlier this year saw the launch of a campaign by the International Trade Union Confederation, Play Fair Qatar and the NewFifaNow group to shame them with the appalling conditions endured by laborers building tournament infrastructure for 2022. *“As things stand,”* declares Play Fair Qatar,

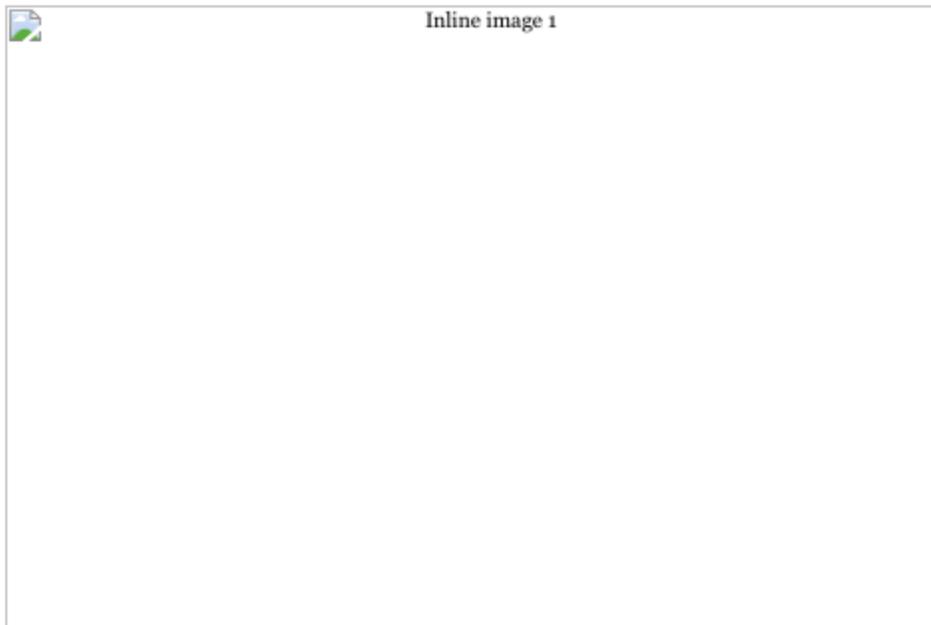
“more than 62 workers will die for each game played during the 2022 tournament.” To repeat: more than 62 per game. Perhaps players in every match could each wear 62 black armbands. Then again, that would probably contravene FIFA’s strict rules on what constitutes official kit, infringements of which it punishes ferociously. On infringements such as mass slave death, however, the evidence suggests it is more relaxed.

Like he ignored the blatant corruption in FIFA, its former President Sepp Blatter, who unceremoniously resigned earlier this month, ignored the fact that the workers who are being imported mostly from the Indian Sub-Continent are working under slave liked conditions, living often in 20, 30, 40, 50 and more to a room with poor ventilation in 115 plus temperatures, few toilets and no showers, often one kitchen for hundreds of men, as chattel unable to leave the country, while making less than \$5 a day.

Qatar officials have previously pledged to address worker safety concerns. *“We believe that the people helping us build our country deserve to be fairly paid, humanely treated and protected against exploitation,”* the country’s labor ministry told the Guardian. *“That is why we are reforming our labor laws and practices.”* Still, it’s clear that Qatar has a troubled record when it comes to poor worker safety. The International Trade Union Confederation has called the state *“a country without a conscience.”* Many of the abuses of migrant workers in Qatar and other Gulf countries are related to a governing system called *“kafala,”* which dictates how migrant workers may enter the country. The system has been criticized for essentially placing workers under the complete control of their employers and leaving the door wide open for exploitation and abuse. Again treating workers like chattel.... *and nothing has changed....*

This Is Truly Stupid

Pentagon weighs placing additional equipment along Russia’s borders



Leopard 2A4 tanks Company of Polish 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade goes for exercise Noble Jump, in Swietoszow, western Poland on June 13, 2015.

Earlier this year I did a piece on this when first exposed by the New York Times because I feel that this is beyond reckless and dangerous – The Pentagon is considering positioning heavy weaponry and equipment in Baltic States and Eastern Europe to support training with regional allies, officials said Saturday, a move that could heighten tensions with Russia over the conflict in Ukraine. Capt. Greg Hicks, a military spokesman, said that Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, the commander of U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO Europe, had made a recommendation related to pre-positioning of equipment to Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter. *“The decision rests with [Carter],”* Hicks said.

Hicks declined to characterize Breedlove’s recommendation. But officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said that the proposal, if approved, would put equipment such as Humvees or Bradley fighting vehicles at sites in countries that might include Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria or Hungary. Officials said no decision has been made, but they suggested that Carter could approve the proposal ahead of a NATO ministerial meeting later this month. The conflict in Ukraine will be an important subject at that NATO meeting, as European nations warn of the dangerous transformation that the West’s standoff with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, which began with Russia’s annexation of Crimea last year, has had on regional security.

Provocative military maneuvers by Russian aircraft and ships have created alarm in European capitals. In response, NATO nations have launched exercises and other activities near Russia’s borders. While President Obama has issued stark warnings about the dangers of Russian aggression in Ukraine, he has so far not chosen to provide lethal weapons to Ukrainian forces facing off against Russian-backed separatists. At the same time, as it warns of further retaliation over Ukraine, the Obama administration must also engage with Moscow over Iranian nuclear talks and other issues.

I can’t emphasize how stupid this is. Imagine if the Mexicans or Cuban allow Russia to place new battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and other heavy weapons for as many as 5,000 troops like the Pentagon is proposing to deploy in several Baltic and eastern European countries. The hawks in Washington would go ballistic.... So how do you think the hawks in Moscow will react? Conservatives in Washington keep castigating Vladimir Putin as a warmonger. So why antagonize him and his hawkish supporters.

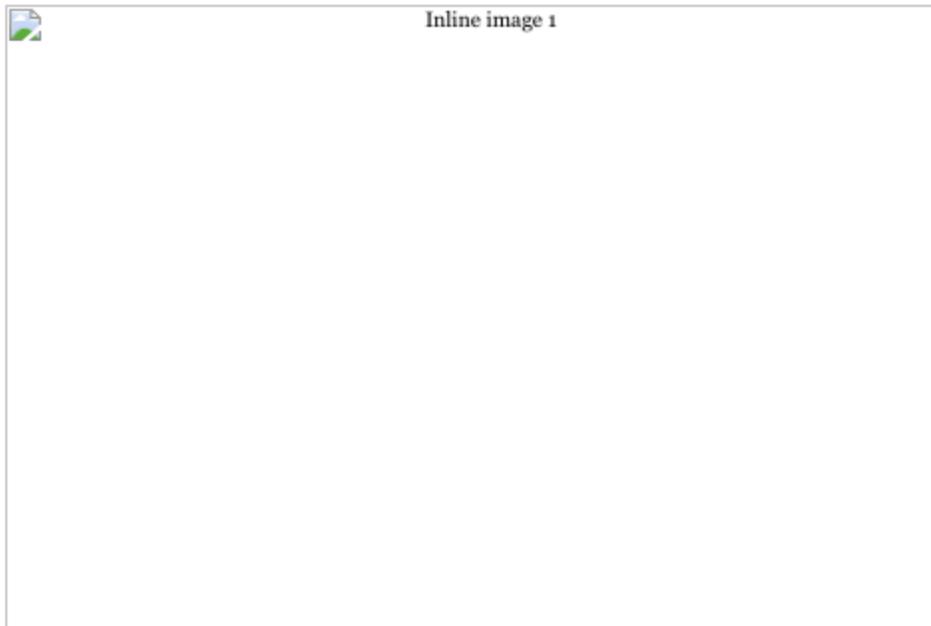
Citing US and allied officials, The New York Times and others say that if approved, the proposal would mark the first time since the Cold War that Washington has stationed heavy military equipment in the newer NATO member states in Eastern Europe that were once part of the Soviet sphere of influence. Al Jazeera’s Daniel Lak, reporting from Washington, said that “someone at the Pentagon off the record has confirmed to Al Jazeera that this is indeed an active proposal”. “It’s an incremental change from earlier policies where Eastern Europe and several Baltic states were pretty much out of bounds for sending weaponry for possibly deploying troops,” he said. “It’s a response to what’s seen as increasing tension with Russia and also to requests by all those Baltic states for extra military assistance. They are nervous about Russia’s intention along their mutual borders,” Lak said.

So we have to ask who thinks that it is a good idea to get into a land war with Russia. Remember this will be the first time, if it happens, since the Cold War that heavy weaponry like this has been reintroduced in Eastern Europe since their removed from Europe during the 1990s and up to early 2000s as NATO and Russia became allies. And the excuse that this proposal is meant to reassure European allies in the wake of Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea in March 2014, is a weak of an excuse as the flimsy evidence that was used to get us into the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Let's remember that nineteen of the twenty 9/11 terrorists were from Saudi Arabia and Iraq didn't have any WMDs at the time that we attacked them in the second Iraq war.

These military exercises are not defensive as claimed by the provocateurs in the Pentagon and in NATO. And like the Second Iraq War and the West's meddling in the Ukraine there could be serious unintended consequences that could turn this military game of chicken into a worldwide catastrophe. The fact that we are claiming that Putin is an aggressive saber-rattler, is not an excuse to do the same. This is dangerous and this is beyond stupid and the fact that our military leaders in the Pentagon don't understand.... **is my rant of the week...**

WEEK'S READINGS

Is He Really A War Criminal?



I recently read an article in **Salon Magazine** by Omer Aziz – ***The Ivy League's favorite war criminal: Why the atrocities of Henry Kissinger should be mandatory reading*** – which blew me away because I had never thought of the architect of *Shuttle Diplomacy* as a war criminal even though I knew that he supported Nixon's bombing of North Vietnam during the final period of US

involvement in the Vietnam War officially called **Operation Linebacker II** and informally referred to as "**The December Raids**" and "*The Christmas Bombings*" and had a hand in the 1973 coup in Chile among other misdeeds.

With "*Peace is at hand*" in October 1972 as **U.S. National Security Advisor Dr. Henry Kissinger** and North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho met in Paris to reach a peace settlement for the decade-old Vietnam war, the United States embarked on one of the most savage "*all-out*" bombing campaigns of the entire war. Nixon came to office thinking that the war in Vietnam was winnable, but soon he and Kissinger, knew they could not win the war, says Historian Mel Small, author of ***The Presidency of Richard Nixon***. And employing "*Newspeak*" they embarked on what they called "***Bombing for Peace.***"

During this same period, Henry Kissinger was also one of the principle architects – perhaps the principle architect – of the coup in Chile overthrowing the democratically-elected government of the moderate socialist President, Salvador Allende. And although US-instigated coups were nothing new in the 1970s, certainly not in Latin America, Kissinger and his boss Richard Nixon carried on the violent tradition that spanned the breadth of the 20th century and continues in the 21st – for example, Venezuela in 2002 (failed) and Honduras in 2009 (successful). Where possible, such as in Guatemala in 1954 and Brazil in 1964, coups were the preferred method for dealing with popular insurgencies. In other instances, direct invasion by US forces such as happened on numerous occasions in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and many other places, was the fallback option.

But the coup in Santiago occurred as US aggression in Indochina was finally winding down after more than a decade. From 1969 through 1973, it was Kissinger again, along with Nixon, who oversaw the slaughter in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It is impossible to know with precision how many were killed during those four years; all the victims were considered enemies, including the vast majority who were non-combatants, and the US has never been much interested in calculating the deaths of enemies. Estimates of Indochinese killed by the US for the war as a whole start at four million and are likely more, perhaps far more. It can thus be reasonably extrapolated that probably more than a million, and certainly hundreds of thousands, were killed while Kissinger and Nixon were in power.

In addition, countless thousands of Indochinese have died in the years since from the affects of the massive doses of Agent Orange and other Chemical Weapons of Mass Destruction unleashed by the US. Many of us here know (or, sadly, knew) soldiers who suffered from exposure to such chemicals; multiply their numbers by 1,000 or 10,000 or 50,000 – again, it's impossible to know with accuracy – and we can begin to understand the impact on those who live in and on the land that was so thoroughly poisoned as a matter of US policy.

Studies by a variety of organizations including the United Nations also indicate that at least 25,000 people have died in Indochina since war's end from unexploded US bombs that pocket the countryside, with an equivalent number maimed. As with Agent Orange, deaths and ruined lives from such explosions continue to this day. So 40 years on, the war quite literally goes on for the people of Indochina, and it is likely it will go on for decades more.

Near the end of his time in office, Kissinger and his new boss Gerald Ford pre-approved the Indonesian dictator Suharto's invasion of East Timor in 1975, an illegal act of aggression again carried

out with weapons made in and furnished by the US. Suharto had a long history as a bagman for US business interests; he ascended to power in a 1965 coup, also with decisive support and weapons from Washington, and undertook a year-long reign of terror in which security forces and the army killed more than a million people (Amnesty International, which rarely has much to say about the crimes of US imperialism, put the number at 1.5 million).

In addition to providing the essential on-the-ground support, Kissinger and Ford blocked efforts by the global community to stop the bloodshed when the terrible scale of Indonesian violence became known, something UN ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan openly bragged about. Again, the guiding principle of empire, one that Kissinger and his kind accept as naturally as breathing, is that independence cannot be allowed. That's true even in a country as small as East Timor where investment opportunities are slight, for independence is contagious and can spread to places where far more is at stake, like resource-rich Indonesia. By the time the Indonesian occupation finally ended in 1999, 200,000 Timorese – 30 percent of the population – had been wiped out. Such is Kissinger's legacy and it is a legacy well understood by residents of the global South no matter the denial, ignorance or obfuscation of the intelligentsia here.

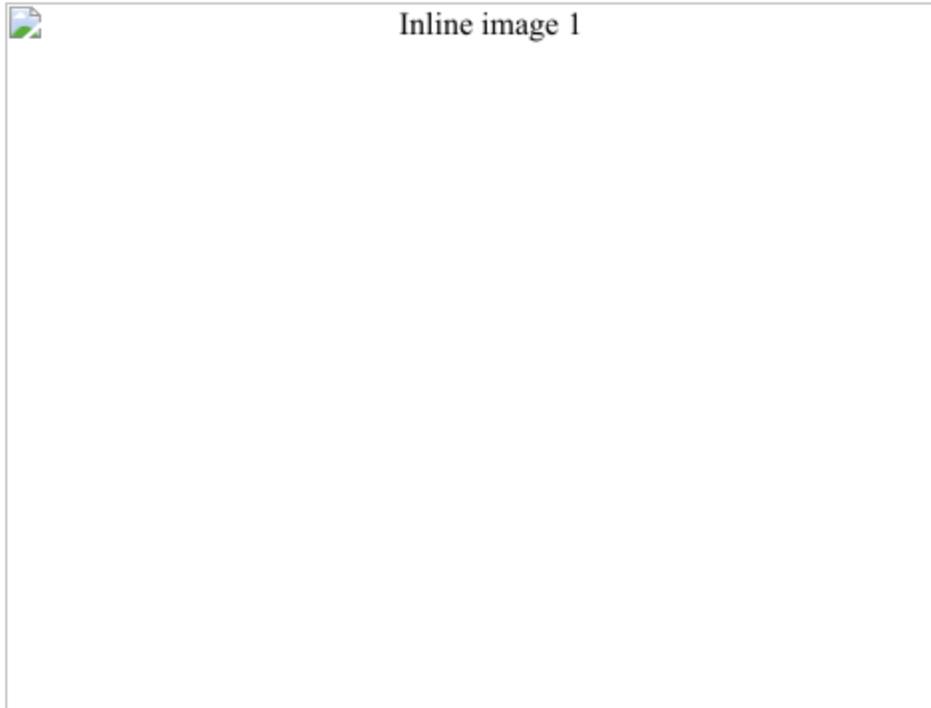
If the United States is ever to become a democratic society, and if we are ever to enter the international community as a responsible party willing to wage peace instead of war, to foster cooperation and mutual aid rather than domination, we will have to account for the crimes of those who claim to act in our names like Kissinger. Our outrage at the crimes of murderous thugs who are official enemies like Pol Pot is not enough. A cabal of American mis-leaders from Kennedy on caused for far more Indochinese deaths than the Khmer Rouge, after all, and those responsible should be judged and treated accordingly.

So when in April 2015, Henry Kissinger spoke at Yale — to which he has donated an archive of personal documents, where he occasionally participates in a course with Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis, and where he gave an invite-only talk just a year ago — one has to ask why he and sitting proudly in the third row, Paul Bremer, the “*Administrator*” of the **Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq**, the man who de-Baathified the country, threw millions of people out of work, and helped destroy the Iraqi state, which spurred the insurgency, the Sunni-Shia civil war, and later the transmogrification of al Qaeda in Mesopotamia into the Islamic State — weren't at The Haig defending their transgressions.

I don't have a problem with Kissinger speaking at Yale University, in fact I think that he should. Kissinger “**conversation**” was moderated by Harvard Professor Niall Ferguson, who is also his official biographer. My problem is that the forum he was given allowed him to continue to “*rewrite*” history without any serious challenges, as all questions were pre-screened (ahead of time), therefore the questions Mr. Kissinger received were the intellectual equivalent of underhand softballs. There was a discussion of “**World Order**,” Kissinger's latest book, questions about Iran and the Middle East, ruminations on China. But every question Ferguson asked could have been competently answered by an undergraduate, according to Aziz. As a result, there were no questions that challenged Kissinger on his public record or dispute the wrongheaded assessment of the US-Iran nuclear deal that he penned in the **Wall Street Journal** just days prior. My father use to say, “**History is always written by the winners**” and every day I realize how true these words are..... Getting back to the initial question is Henry Kissinger's past actions of those of a war criminal.... and if so, why is there no discussion? And if not, why is there still no discussion?

A War Diary Soars Over Rome

The story of Emperor Trajan's victory over a mighty barbarian empire isn't just one for the books. It's also told in 155 scenes carved in a spiral frieze on a monumental column.



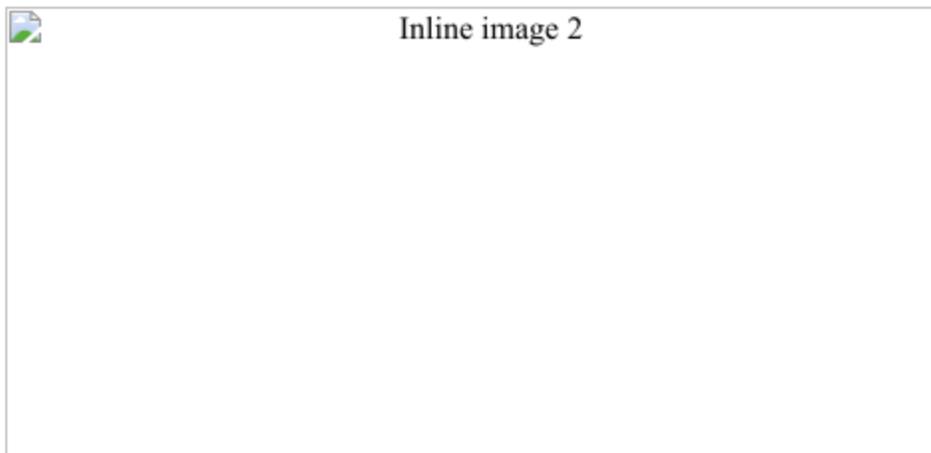
As someone who remembers growing up before television was ubiquitous one of the ways one experienced life beyond one's neighborhood was through magazines and if you wanted to see the natural or historic wonders of the world the magazine to do it was **National Geographic**. Feeling a bit nostalgic while recently perusing the latest issue of National Geographic I ran across a wonderful article about **Trajan's Column** which has a statue of St. Peter installed on it's by a Renaissance pope on top that towers over the ruins of **Trajan's Forum** which once included two libraries and a grand civic space paid for by war spoils from Dacia.

The column is 126 feet in height, made a stone and was originally crowned with a bronze statue of the conqueror. What is special about the column is – spiraling around it like a modern-day comic strip is a narrative of the Dacian campaigns: Thousands of intricately carved Romans and Dacians march, build, fight, sail, sneak, negotiate, plead, and perish in 155 scenes. Completed in 113, the column has stood for more than 1,900 years. Trajan, who ruled from A.D. 98 until 117, when he fell ill and died, expanded the Roman Empire to its farthest boundaries. In this marble statue he wears armor typically used in triumphal parades.

Today tourists crane their necks up at it as guides explain its history. The eroded carvings are hard to make out above the first few twists of the story. All around are ruins—empty pedestals, cracked flagstones, broken pillars, and shattered sculptures hint at the magnificence of Trajan's Forum, now fenced off and closed to the public, a testament to past imperial glory.

The column is one of the most distinctive monumental sculptures to have survived the fall of Rome. For centuries classicists have treated the carvings as a visual history of the wars, with Trajan as the hero and Decebalus, the Dacian king, as his worthy opponent. Archaeologists have scrutinized the scenes to learn about the uniforms, weapons, equipment, and tactics the Roman Army used. And because Trajan left Dacia in ruins, the column and the remaining sculptures of defeated soldiers that once decorated the forum are treasured today by Romanians as clues to how their Dacian ancestors may have looked and dressed.

The column was deeply influential, the inspiration for later monuments in Rome and across the empire. Over the centuries, as the city's landmarks crumbled, the column continued to fascinate and awe. A Renaissance pope replaced the statue of Trajan with one of St. Peter, to sanctify the ancient artifact. Artists lowered themselves in baskets from the top to study it in detail. Later it was a favorite attraction for tourists: Goethe, the German poet, climbed the 185 internal steps in 1787 to "*enjoy that incomparable view.*" Plaster casts of the column were made starting in the 1500s, and they have preserved details that acid rain and pollution have worn away.

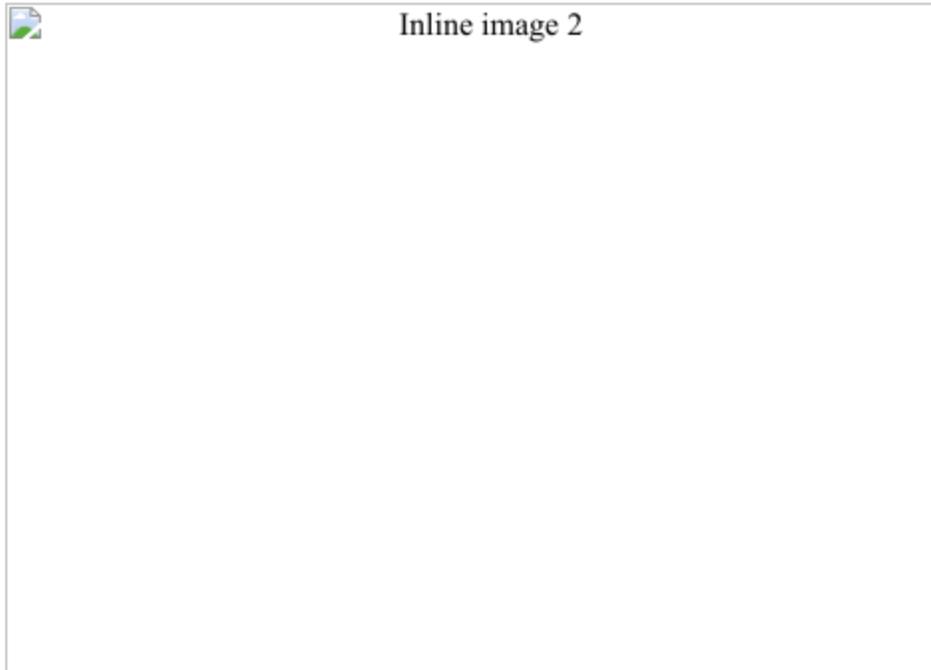


Travel in time with this stop-motion animation and see how Trajan's Column was built—according to one theory. How it was made and how accurate it is remain the subjects of spirited debate.

Web Link: [\[Redacted\]](#)

Debate still simmers over the column's construction, meaning, and most of all, historical accuracy. It sometimes seems as if there are as many interpretations as there are carved figures, and there are 2,662 of those. In the article is a stop-motion animation video that shows how Trajan's Column was built—according to one theory. Attached, is the entire article and above is a web link for the same. With this I invite you to read this most interesting piece of history and take a look at the stop-motion video.

What it's like to be a white supremacist



Todd Blodgett (right) in 1985 with Ronald Reagan's brother, Neil Reagan. Blodgett later became an informant for the FBI on white supremacist groups.

Todd Blodgett spent two years going undercover for the FBI at white supremacist meetings and conventions across the country.

Kind of like in the movies, the former Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush operative put the wires on after he got mixed up in the wrong crowd (though he emphasizes that he never did anything illegal).

Blodgett now gets called on by the media every few years -- whenever a racially or religiously motivated shooting happens -- to lend his insight behind the people who did it. His signature takeaway: Most all of these lone-wolf guys can be traced back to the indoctrination of white supremacist-leaning groups, which in turn provide the perfect scapegoat for mentally unstable people looking to blame society for their problems.

We spoke with Blodgett by phone Tuesday, a week after the most recent mass shooting in Charleston, S.C., to hear more about this underbelly of America.

Here's what he had to say (with his answers lightly edited for length and clarity).

Shooting at historic African American church in South Carolina



Inline image 1

Officials said nine people were killed and others injured by a gunman at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.

June 19, 2015 In this image from video, suspect Dylann Roof appears by closed-circuit television at his bond hearing in Charleston, S.C

FIX: Do you remember your first white supremacist meeting? Can you describe it?

(Note: Blodgett was not an informant at the time; in the 1990s he worked as an advertising salesman for a publication run by white supremacist Willis Carto, who asked Blodgett to represent him at the meeting.)

BLODGETT: It was in Southeast Georgia, with a group called "Truth At Last." The Klan conventions were wicked. This one was worse. Aryan Nation people were there. Identity people were there, racist skinheads -- mostly fellas that made Larry the Cable Guy look like George Clooney. I thought, 'What am I doing here?' They were shouting racial epithets, screaming "Heil Hitler!" wearing baseball caps with swastikas and had Nazi tattoos on their forearms. They're chain-smoking unfiltered Camels, belting beers straight from the pitcher. Here I am, around a bunch of these hateful slobs that reeked of tobacco juice embedded in their beards and wore their greasy hair tied back in a ponytail. I had a hard time with some of these people.

FIX: Did you ever go to Council of Conservative Citizens meetings? (This is the group that accused Charleston shooter Dylann Roof apparently cited in his racist manifesto. It has a long political history.)

BLODGETT: It was just as racist, but they were more skillful in cloaking their racism. The CCC and Jared Taylor [the founder of the white supremacist web magazine American Renaissance and current spokesman for CCC] would bring in people that had the imprimatur of expertise. They'd bring in people who would explain how in their view, black people are genetically inferior to whites. Jared Taylor was very careful about not being anti-Semitic. I actually saw him kick a couple anti-Semites out of there. But he was the only one like that. In the CCC, you'd hear all kinds of Jewish jokes, about how they're taking over the world.

Basically every problem they could find, they found a way to blame Israel and Jewish people for their problems.

FIX: Is there a moment that sticks with you above all others?

BLODGETT: I was at an Aryan Nation/Klan meeting in LA, and this guy Richard Butler got up and delivered a 20-minute sermon behind his lectern that had a swastika on it. He referred to minorities as mud people and said that Jewish people are the devil spawn. After putting up with that, I walked outside, and I saw a little girl, say 5-6 years old. And the mother was an attractive, well-dressed lady -- this wasn't some gal that weighed more than her trailer you'd see at other events. They were walking to their car, and the little girl, as she held her mother's hand, she turned to her mom and said, "Mommy? Why does God let Jews live?"

And I had to stop in my tracks. I thought to myself, "God, this is the kind of brainwashing that this indoctrination can do to these people."

And whether it's somebody like Dylann Roof, who kind of self-indoctrinated by logging onto a Web site and eating it up, or a little girl who had sat through this thing, this is what happens. This is an example of the way the hatred gets imbued into the youngest people out there.

FIX: You got to know a bunch of different groups on the racism spectrum all over the nation. But is there a common thread among the people who go to these kinds of things?

BLODGETT: The common thread of all these members of all these groups is their firm belief that white people are the only humans worthy of existing -- at least in the United States. They genetically believe blacks are a failure, Jewish people are evil and greedy, Hispanics are lazy and stupid and the white race deserves to be the only race that inhabits America -- and preferably the world.

FIX: What kinds of people were drawn to these?

BLODGETT: As a general rule, losers. As a general rule, people who have got a lot of problem in their own lives. They often came from unstable families ... It's often a kid -- usually a male, but sometimes a female -- who cannot make it in school. He blames all of his problems on someone else, and when they log onto a Web site like this or they go to a meeting like this or they pop in American Resistance records and it blames other people they already don't like for their problems, they think "There you go. That's why I'm a dropout. That's why I'm smoking crystal meth.

That's why my girlfriend dumped me. That's what I can't get a job and hold it. It's all because of black people. And black people are controlled by Jewish people.'

It's a very effective scapegoating technique, almost like Hitler did in the '30s. When I see these [statements from groups like CCC about Charleston] -- there very well could be older members who might feel bad. But I can assure you, most of the members of these organizations are very pleased that Dylann Roof killed those nine black people in that church.

[Editor's note: The statement from the CCC condemns the killing of nine in Charleston, but also cited Roof's "legitimate grievances."]

FIX: How much of a problem are these groups today?

BLODGETT: It's hard to say. But I can say this with total certainty: It will continue to be a problem until attitudes can be changed. That's why I'd like to see these kinds of people run out of the conservative establishment. As far as society at large, I don't see it ending. It's sad, but true.

FIX: Is there anything we can do?

BLODGETT: The best thing that people can do that are concerned about this is to get the word out, and if you see anybody who might be drawn to this kind of stuff, try to steer them the other way. It's like a drug addiction.

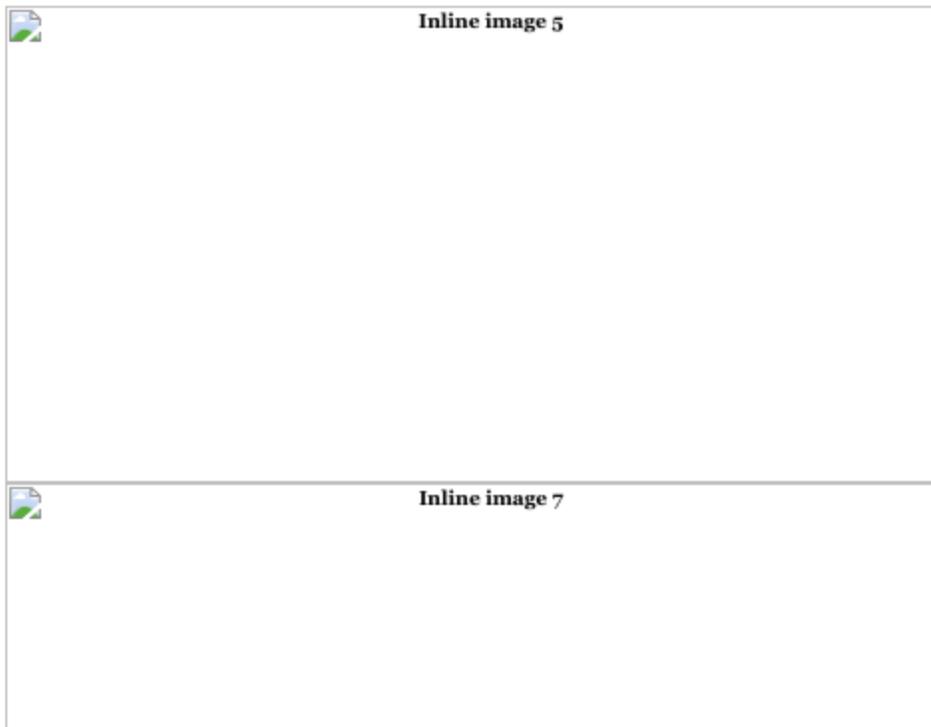
FIX: And finally, what made you want to share this story with us? Aren't you kind of worried about your safety?

BLODGETT: If I can do my part to kind of run this crap out of the GOP, I'll feel good about it. And -- I hope [these groups] read this -- I have a conceal and carry permit in 32 states. So I'm always armed and ready for them.

By Amber Phillips -- The Washington Post -- June 24, 2015

White Supremacists More Dangerous To America Than Foreign Terrorists, Study Says





Nine people were added to a long list of lives taken by domestic terrorism when Dylann Roof allegedly began shooting inside a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17.

At least 48 people have been killed stateside by right-wing extremists in the 14 years since the September 11 attacks -- almost twice as many as were killed by self-identified jihadists in that time, according to a study released Wednesday by the New America Foundation, a Washington, D.C., research center. The study found that radical anti-government groups or white supremacists were responsible for most of the terror attacks.

The data counters many conventional thoughts on what terrorism is and isn't. Since Sept. 11, many Americans attribute terror attacks to Islamic extremists instead of those in the right wing. But the numbers don't back up this popular conception, said Charles Kurzman, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Kurzman is co-authoring a study with David Schanzer of Duke University, set to be published Thursday, that asks police departments to rank the three biggest threats from violent extremism in their jurisdiction.

Law enforcement agencies reported they were more concerned about the activities of right-wing extremist groups than Islamic extremists in their jurisdictions (about 74 percent versus 39 percent) due to the "menacing" rhetoric used by some of these groups -- and that they were training officers to take caution when they saw signs of potentially violent individuals, Kurzman and Schanzer found.

"Muslim extremism was taken seriously in many of these jurisdictions that we surveyed... but overall, they did not see as **much of an issue with Muslim extremism as with right-wing extremism in their locations,**" Kurzman told **The Huffington Post**. He added that it's hard to get a definitive statistical picture of plots and acts of violent extremism since that definition tends to vary and data for incidents nationwide is hard to come by.

The accused Charleston shooter is currently being investigated under domestic terrorism charges by the Department of Justice -- a move that acknowledges the long history of anti-black terrorist attacks.

America's first federal anti-terrorism law, known as the Third Force Act or the Ku Klux Klan Act, which was passed by Congress in 1871, caused nine counties in South Carolina to be placed under martial law and led to thousands of arrests. The Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in 1882.

David Pilgrim, the founder and director of the Jim Crow Museum at Ferris State University, told HuffPost in February that the actions of foreign extremist groups are no better or worse than the historic violence against African-Americans by domestic actors.

"There's nothing you're going to see today that's not going to have already occurred in the U.S.," he said. "If you think of these groups that behead now -- first of all, beheading is barbaric but it's no more or less barbaric than some of the lynchings that occurred in the U.S."

Pilgrim said he found it offensive that, after Sept. 11, some Americans bemoaned that terrorism had finally breached U.S. borders.

"That is ignoring and trivializing -- if not just summarily dismissing -- all the people, especially the peoples of color in this country, who were lynched in this country; who had their homes bombed in this country; who were victims of race riots," he said evoking lynching victims who were often burned, castrated, shot, stabbed -- and in some cases beheaded.

And while most officially acknowledged anti-black terrorism cases occurred during the eras of slavery, Reconstruction and Jim Crow, as recent news demonstrate, this type of terrorism is still an ongoing concern.

Want A Healthy Brain? Better Avoid These 7 Habits



Inline image 1

If you are like me, middle-aged and at times struggling to remember things, you might wonder why some people sharp as a tack at 95 years old, while others like myself are struggling with mental clarity which may have started while in their 50s. Obviously, a lot of it has to do with genetics, but certain lifestyle factors also play an important role in how our brain ages. Carolyn Gregoire who is a senior writer at **The Huffington Post** says that while you can't control your genes, you can take advantage of the latest science and avoid these seven big brain mistakes:

Mistake No. 1: Eating a standard American diet

Foods high in sugar, unhealthy fats and processed foods -- i.e., the typical American diet -- can wreak havoc on your brain over time. Studies have shown that excess sugar consumption can impair learning and memory, and increase your vulnerability to neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Some scientists have even referred to Alzheimer's as "Type 3 Diabetes," suggesting that diet may have some role in an individual's risk for developing the disease.

A Mediterranean-based diet, on the other hand, can help protect the brain from signs of aging and ward off cognitive decline. A recent study showed that following this type of diet -- which is a good source of brain-healthy nutrients and includes a lot of fish, healthy fats, whole grains and vegetables -- could slash Alzheimer's risk by up to 50 percent.

Mistake No. 2: Living next to a highway

Living in a smoggy city might be bad news for your brain. According to research published this month in the journal *Stroke*, exposure to air pollution is linked with premature aging of the brain. The researchers found that people who lived closer to a major highway had greater markers of pollution in their lungs and blood, which increased their risk for a form of brain damage known as "*silent strokes*," or symptomless strokes. Increased pollution volume was also linked to decreased brain volume -- a major sign of aging.

Mistake No. 3: Drinking a few evening cocktails

Don Draper's daily cigarettes and two-martini lunches might seem glamorous on "Mad Men," but research suggests that they're a fast track to neurodegeneration. And it should come as no surprise that excessive drinking and cigarette smoking at any stage of life can have a negative effect on the brain, damaging brain tissue and leading to cognitive impairment. Alcoholism can cause or accelerate aging of the brain.

Gregoire says that just a couple of glasses of wine a night could pose a risk to brain health, even though there are some cardiovascular benefits. A 2012 Rutgers University study found that moderate to binge drinking -- drinking relatively lightly during the week and then more on the weekends -- can decrease adult brain cell production by 40 percent.

"In the short term there may not be any noticeable motor skills or overall functioning problems, but in the long term this type of behavior could have an adverse effect on learning and memory," one of the study's authors, Rutgers neuroscience graduate student Megan Anderson, said in a statement.

Mistake No. 4: Giving in to stress

Living a stressful lifestyle may be the worst thing you can do for your health as you age. Chronic stress is known to shorten the length of telomeres, the sequences at the end of DNA strands that help determine how fast (or slow) the cells in our body age. By shortening telomeres, stress can accelerate the onset of age-related health problems. Researcher say that high levels of stress hormones can increase an individual's risk for age-related brain damage.

"Over the course of a lifetime, the effects of chronic stress can accumulate and become a risk factor for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease," Howard Fillit, a clinical professor of geriatric medicine at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine, wrote in Psychology Today. *"Several studies have shown that stress, and particularly one's individual way of reacting to stress (the propensity to become 'distressed' often found in neurotic people for example), increases the risk for Alzheimer's disease."*

Mistake No. 5: Getting by on less sleep than you need

There are a number of scary health effects associated with sleep deprivation, from a higher risk of stroke and diabetes to impaired cognitive functioning. Over the years, losing shut-eye can also accelerate brain aging. In a study conducted last year, researchers from Singapore found that the less that older adults slept, the faster their brains aged. The study's lead author explained in a statement that among older adults, "sleeping less will increase the rate their brain ages and speed up the decline in their cognitive functions."

Mistake No. 6: Sitting all day

It's a well-established fact that sitting for long periods is terrible for your health. A growing body of research has linked a sedentary lifestyle with health risks including heart disease, diabetes, cancer and early death, even among people who get the recommended daily amount of exercise. And it turns out that sitting is also pretty bad for your brain. Research has linked physical inactivity with cognitive decline. Moreover, weight gain in older adults -- which may result from too much sitting -- has been linked with shrinkage in brain areas associated with memory. So when in doubt, move around. Physical activity has been linked with a number of brain health benefits, including improved learning and memory.

Mistake No. 7: Zoning out

Use it or lose it! If you want to keep your brain sharp, keep it engaged. It doesn't have to be a challenging intellectual task or a brain-training game, either -- simply engaging in everyday activities like reading, cooking or having a conversation (as opposed to vegging out in front of the TV or computer) can make a difference. But mental exercises like crossword puzzles and sudoku can help, too. A 2013 study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal found that brain exercises are more effective than drugs in preventing cognitive decline.

The bottom line? Doing new and novel things promotes neurogenesis, the creation of new neurons in the brain. So the recommendation is that you get outside, learn, discover and try something new to keep your brain sharp through the decades.

5 Tasty Inflammation-Fighters



Inflammation has gotten a bad rap recently -- it has been identified as a contributor to a variety of diseases, from heart disease to Alzheimer's to cancer. But it's important to note that there are two different types of inflammation: acute and chronic.

Acute inflammation is an essential part of the healing -- from a scrape or bruise to a pulled muscle, burn or bronchitis. This type of inflammation is beneficial to the body.

Chronic or systemic inflammation, on the other hand, can wreak havoc on healthy tissues. This type of inflammation, which can last for months or even years, is associated with the diseases mentioned above as well as autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, Type 2 diabetes and allergies.

The good news is that you have the power to help prevent this immune response. How? Your first step is to avoid pro-inflammatory triggers, which include excess body fat; smoking; eating a diet rich in added sugars, trans and saturated fats; and insufficient sleep. Second, you can load up your diet with foods that have been shown to fight inflammation, specifically plant-based foods containing bioactive compounds that help turn down the immune response.

Here are five anti-inflammatory foods to toss into your shopping cart:

Sweet Cherries

Available all summer long, sweet cherries, are a powerful inflammation fighter. A recent study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that eating sweet cherry significantly decreased several markers of inflammation including C-reactive protein and Interleukin-18. A cup of cherries (about 21) has 90 calories and 3 grams of filling fiber. To enjoy this super fruit all year long, simply rinse fresh cherries, pack in plastic freezer bags or in freezer-proof containers and freeze.

Legumes

Lentils, chickpeas, peas and beans are protein- and fiber-rich and research conducted at Penn State University reported that adding 1.5 cups of legumes per day (to a calorie-controlled, low glycemic index diet) helped reduce inflammatory markers and improved insulin resistance. Another bonus? They're inexpensive. Use versatile legumes in dips, salads, main dishes and soups.

Mangos

Mangos are not just nutrient-packed and bursting with color and flavor, research indicates that this tropical fruit may also be a powerful inflammation fighter. One study reported that polyphenols present in mangos might inhibit the inflammatory response in both cancerous and non-cancerous breast cells. In addition to their potential anti-inflammatory benefits, mangos are a source of over 20 vitamins and minerals, including several lacking in the typical US diet including vitamins A and C, folate, and potassium. Enjoy fresh mango on its own, in smoothies or make a mango salsa to serve with fish or poultry.

Dried Plums

Deeply colored dried plums (*aka prunes*) are a source of polyphenols that are known to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Mounting research suggests that dried plums may help improve bone mineral density by reducing markers of inflammation that increase the rate at which bone cells resorb or breakdown. Boosting these compounds in one's diet has been shown to improve bone health. In fact, findings from a study conducted at San Diego State University reported at the 2015 Experimental Biology meeting indicated that postmenopausal women given one serving (4-5 prunes) daily experienced improved bone health and a slowing of bone loss.

Ginger

While many herbs and spices have anti-inflammatory properties, there are more than 2,000 published papers about ginger in the medical literature, making it the most extensively-studied spice. Ginger's ability to temper the body's immune response is one of its well-known health-promoting properties. One study compared the effects of ginger extract to placebo in patients with osteoarthritis. The ginger helped reduce pain and stiffness in joints by 40 percent over the placebo. Ongoing research is also investigating the role of ginger to help lessen neuronal inflammation and related declines in memory and cognition. Add ginger to your stir-fries, smoothies, roasted vegetables, whole grain salads or make ginger-based glazes for seafood and poultry.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

The New Generation

Daughter: "Daddy, I am coming home to get married. Take out your cheque book. I'm in love with a boy who is far away from me. I am in California and he lives in New York. We met on a dating website, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on WhatsApp, he proposed to me on Skype and now we've had two months of relationship through Viper. Dad, I need your blessings, good wishes, and a really big wedding."

Father: "Wow! Really!! Then get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon and pay through Paypal. And if you get fed up with your husband....sell him on Ebay."

THE TRUTH ABOUT PRIVILEGE

This Comic Should Forever Change the Way You Look at Privilege

Toby Morris describes himself as “an Auckland-based illustrator, art director, comic artist and recently the author of *Don't Puke On Your Dad: A Year in the Life of a New Father*.”

His recent comic, The Pencilword's “*On a Plate*” illustrates the concept of privilege, and delivers the truth with a punchline that literally hits you in the gut.

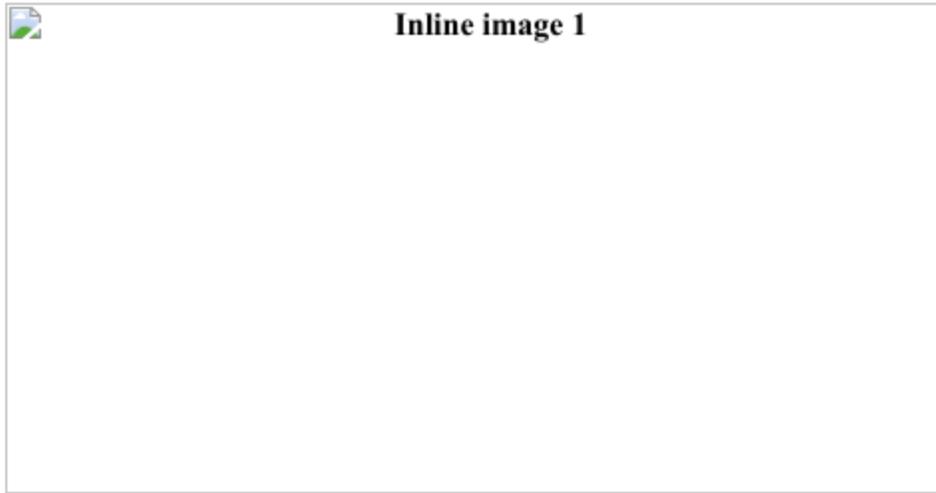
He places two individuals side by side, showing how financial security and benefits, or the lack of it, affects them even if they come from households that love and support them, leading to two completely different outcomes.

Web Link:

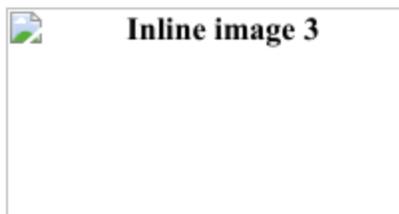
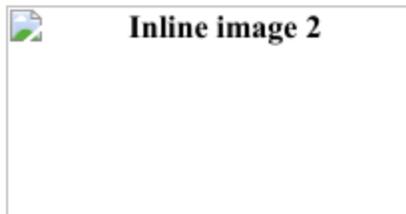


BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Simply Impossible



Web Link: [REDACTED]



A friend sent this to me.... Is not your average workout..... WOW!!!

THIS WEEK's MUSIC

Percy Sledge



Inline image 1

Percy Sledge is pictured performing at the Joy Theater on Jan. 28, 2012 in New Orleans, LA

Famed American R&B legend and soul singer Percy Sledge died on April 14, 2015 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana at the age of 73 after a long battle with cancer. He is best known for the song **"When a Man Loves a Woman"**, a No. 1 Pop and Soul hit in 1966. It was awarded a million-selling, Gold-certified disc from the RIAA. Having previously worked as a hospital nurse in the early 1960s, he achieved his strongest success in the late 1960s and early 1970s with a series of emotional soul songs. In later years, Percy received the Rhythm and Blues Foundation's Career Achievement Award. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2005.

Sledge had been singing for the past 50 years and music was released under his name all the way till 2013 with "The Gospel of Percy Sledge." According to Sledge's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame bio, his hit "'When a Man Loves a Woman' topped the R&B and pop charts for multiple weeks and raised the bar for soul balladeering for all time. Yet Sledge's career didn't end with that momentous first single. Over the years he racked up a dozen hits at Atlantic, including 'Warm and Tender Love,' 'It Tears Me Up,' 'Out of Left Field' and 'Take Time to Know Her.'"

Percy Tyrone Sledge was born on November 25, 1940 in Leighton, Alabama. Sledge worked in a series of agricultural jobs in the fields in Leighton before taking a job as an orderly at Colbert County Hospital in Sheffield, Alabama. Through the mid-1960s, he toured the Southeast with the Esquires Combo on weekends, playing clubs and frat parties and while working at the hospital during the week. A former patient and mutual friend of Sledge and record producer Quin Ivy introduced the two. An audition followed, and Sledge was signed to a recording contract.

Sledge's soulful voice was perfect for the series of soul ballads produced by Ivy and Marlin Greene, which rock critic Dave Marsh called "emotional classics for romantics of all ages". "When a Man Loves a Woman" was Sledge's first song recorded under the contract, and was released in March 1966. According to Sledge, the song's inspiration came when his girlfriend left him for a modelling career after he was laid off from a construction job in late 1965, and, because bassist Calvin Lewis and organist Andrew Wright helped him with the song, he gave all the songwriting credits to them. It reached No. 1 in the U.S. and went on to become an international hit.

"When A Man Loves A Woman" was a hit twice in the UK, reaching No. 4 in 1966 and, on reissue, peaked at No. 2 in 1987. The song was also the first gold record released by Atlantic Records. The soul anthem became the cornerstone of Sledge's career, and was followed by "Warm and Tender Love" (covered by British singer Elkie Brooks in 1981), "It Tears Me Up", "Take Time to Know Her" (his second biggest U.S. hit, reaching No. 11; the song's lyric was written by Steve Davis), "Love Me Tender", and "Cover Me". Sledge charted with "I'll Be Your Everything" and "Ain't No Sunshine" during the 1970s, and became an international concert favorite throughout the world, especially in the Netherlands, Germany, and on the African continent; he averaged 100 concerts a year in South Africa.

Sledge's career enjoyed a renaissance in the 1980s when "When a Man Loves a Woman" re-entered the UK Singles Chart, peaking at No. 2 behind the reissued Ben E. King classic "Stand by Me," after being used in a Levi's commercial. In the early 1990s, Michael Bolton brought "When a Man Loves a Woman" back into the limelight again on his hit album Time, Love, & Tenderness. On the week of November 17, 1991, Bolton's version also hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart, exactly 25 and 1/2 years to the week after Percy's did in 1966.

Sledge continued record until a couple of years ago and in 2011 Sledge toured with Sir Cliff Richard during his *Soulicious* tour, performing "I'm Your Puppet". "An inspiration as an artist & one of the most gracious human beings. We sang together. Forever grateful! Love MB," Michael Bolton tweeted after the news of Sledge's death broke. Sledge married twice and was survived by his second wife, Rosa Sledge, whom he married in 1980. He had 12 children, two of whom became singers. With this I invite you to enjoy the soulful music of Mr. Percy Sledge.....

Percy Sledge – ***When A Man Loves A Woman*** -- <https://youtu.be/rq2P8pTrDvw>

Percy Sledge – ***Take Time to Know Her*** -- <https://youtu.be/tUOkBvxSoHw>

Percy Sledge – ***First You Cry*** -- <https://youtu.be/oCMdjgaTLDs>

Percy Sledge – ***A Whiter Shade Of Pale*** -- <https://youtu.be/TFs43EaTTAU>

Percy Sledge – ***If Loving You Is Wrong*** -- <https://youtu.be/ADFCF4I4y5U>

Percy Sledge – ***Faithful and True*** -- https://youtu.be/Z_BhqXsOd40

Percy Sledge – ***I Wish That It Would Rain*** -- <https://youtu.be/JdG7njT0UU0>

Percy Sledge – ***I'll Be Your Everything*** -- <https://youtu.be/rwzSmMtDTZM>

Percy Sledge – ***Misty Morning*** -- <https://youtu.be/hS37-zgyz5Y>

Percy Sledge – ***I've Been Loving You Too Long*** -- <https://youtu.be/7tgYOCxxiAE>

Percy Sledge – ***Change My Mind*** -- https://youtu.be/09b3msV_OLg

Percy Sledge – ***My Girl*** -- <https://youtu.be/r9wuPHs6fvc>

Percy Sledge – ***Warm and Tender Love*** -- <https://youtu.be/EfG7A5JLSg8>

Percy Sledge – ***My Special Prayer*** -- <https://youtu.be/uNi76RjIG9I>

Percy Sledge – **Cover Me** -- <https://youtu.be/1IE0oGYXUwY>

Percy Sledge – **It Tears Me Up** -- <https://youtu.be/v4hIRfQX9cw>

Percy Sledge & Cliff Richard – **I'm your Puppet** -- <https://youtu.be/V2-y68HxaWk>

Michael Bolton & Percy Sledge – **When a Man Loves a Woman** -- <https://youtu.be/0sgTkpTWFAw>

*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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Gregory Brown
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US:
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