

From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>

To: undisclosed-recipients;

Bcc: jeevacation@gmail.com

Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.. 05/03/2015B

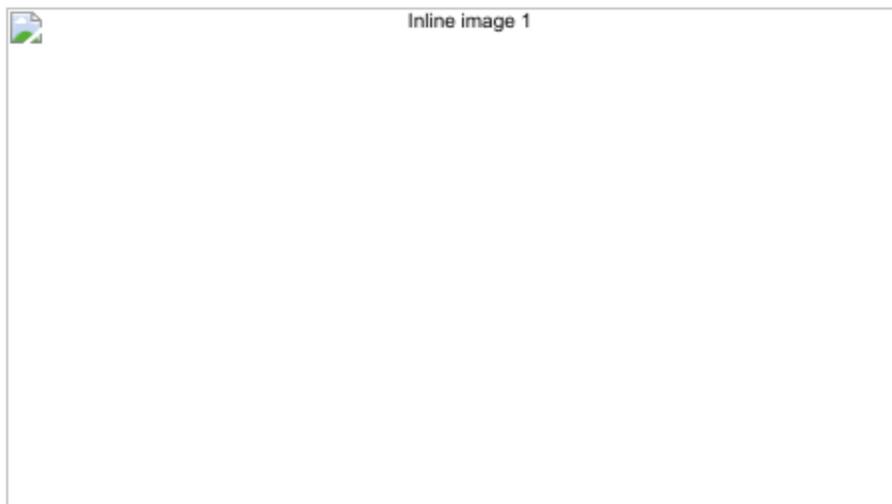
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DEAR FRIEND.....

When the Well Educated Middle Class Joins the Working Poor



Social class isn't just about how hefty a person's paycheck is. Where you live, your occupation, how educated you are and how you present yourself to the public are among the cues people use to determine your social status. We may consider airline pilots to be esteemed, highly skilled professionals, but in the fastest growing sector of the industry — regional airlines — starting pay is as

low as \$22,400 per year, or \$10.75 per hour, according to the Airlines Pilots Association. They make as much as a fry chef at a fast-food joint, but, culturally speaking, they still belong to the middle class.

With a sluggish economy, growing inequality and dwindling union clout, millions of people who work traditionally middle class jobs have joined the working poor. They still enjoy the same perceived social status, but their incomes aren't sufficient to live a middle class lifestyle. Nowhere is that trend more pronounced than in higher education. Today, around three-quarters of all US College professors are classified as "*contingent faculty*" — those who aren't on a tenure track — and about half are technically "*part-time*," even though many of them teach a full-time load of classes. They may be highly educated professionals, but most adjuncts struggle to make ends meet with low pay, limited benefits and zero job security.

In the New York Times, Brittany Bronson, an adjunct English instructor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, wrote about her double life teaching the humanities by day and slinging hash at a local chain restaurant by night: "On the first day of the fall semester, I left campus from an afternoon of teaching anxious college freshmen and headed to my second job, serving at a chain restaurant off Las Vegas Boulevard. The switch from my professional attire to a white dress shirt, black apron and tie reflected the separation I attempt to maintain between my two jobs. Naturally, sitting at the first table in my section was one of my new students, dining with her parents."

This scene is a cliché of the struggling teacher, and it surfaces repeatedly in pop culture — think of Walter White in "*Breaking Bad*," washing the wheels of a student's sports car after a full day teaching high school chemistry. Bumping into a student at the gym can be awkward, but exposing the reality that I, with my master's degree, not only have another job, but must have one, risks destroying the facade of success I present to my students as one of their university mentors.

In class Bronson says that she emphasizes the value of a degree as a means to avoid the sort of jobs that she goes to when those hours in the classroom are over. A colleague in of her's department labeled these jobs (food and beverage, retail and customer service — the only legal work in abundance in Las Vegas) as survival jobs." He tells students they need to learn that survival work will not grant them the economic security of white-collar careers. But she has never told him that she has such a job, that needed their meeting to end within the next 10 minutes or she would be late to a seven-hour shift serving drunk, needy tourists, worsening my premature back problem while getting hit on repeatedly.

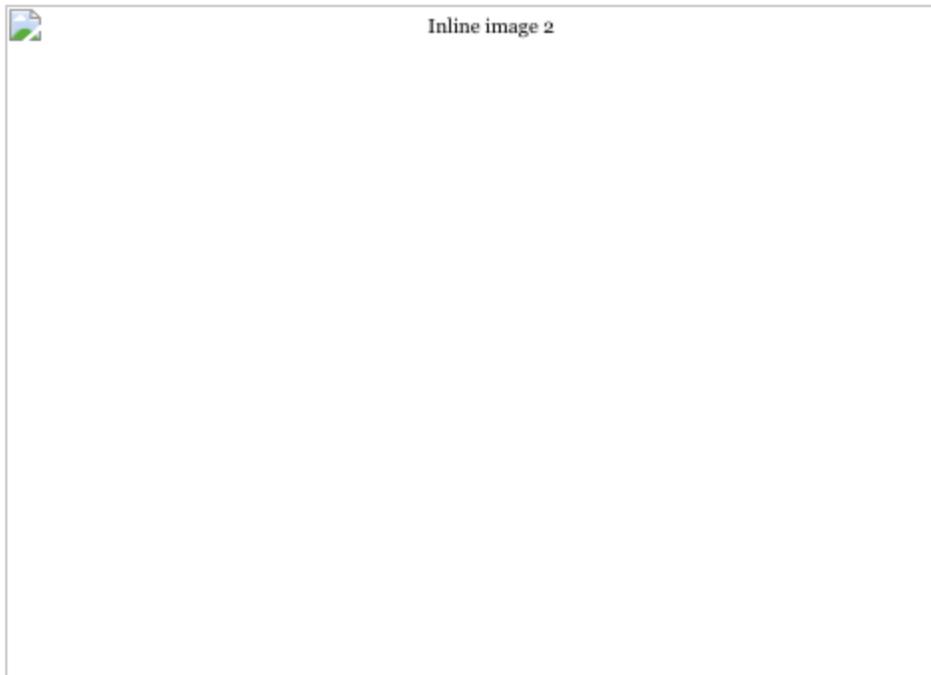
Bronson says that the line between these two worlds is thinner in Las Vegas than it might be elsewhere. And that the majority of her students hold part-time survival jobs, and some of them will remain in those jobs for the rest of their working lives. About 60 percent of the college freshmen she teaches will not finish their degree. They will turn 21 and then forgo a bachelor's degree for the instant gratification of a cash based income, whether parking cars in Vegas hotels, serving in high end restaurants or dealing cards in the casinos. In a city like Las Vegas, many customer service jobs generate far more cash (with fewer work hours) than entry level, office dwelling, degree requiring jobs. It can be hard to convince my 19 year old students that the latter is more profitable or of greater personal value.

She says that her adjunct teaching colleagues have large course loads and, mostly, graduate level educations, but live just above the poverty line. In contrast, her part time work in the Vegas service

industry has produced three times more income than my university teaching. In fact she passed up the health benefits that come with full time teaching, a luxury foreign to the majority of adjuncts at other universities, to make time for her blue collar work. For many academics, the job market is bleak. They often pursue advanced degrees and careers in the academy despite the lack of employment prospects, because of a love for learning. And often, it will take earning a doctorate — before they can earn a sustainable income in their chosen pursuit.

The fact that she has a Master degree and feels like a failure is now a new normal. And that not all for Bronson's restaurant co-workers are college dropouts, and none are failures. Many have bachelor's degrees; others have real estate licenses, freelancing projects or extraordinary musical and artistic abilities. Others are nontraditional students, having entered the work force before attending college and making the wise decision not to "find themselves" and come out with \$40,000 in debt, at 4.6 percent interest. Most of them are parents who have bought homes, raised children and made financial investments off their modest incomes. They often are hard working people living in two different lives. So should these older students feel shameful that they are blue collar workers and don't have the skills necessary to acquire something better. Again this is becoming the new normal, yet there is still a belief held by a majority of undergraduates that they can beat the odds even though an academic degrees no longer guarantees a Middle Class quality of life even if you have a job as a pilot or a college professor.

Does it have to be so hard to fix errors on your credit report?



Ever try to get a correction made to your credit report and feel like you've fallen down the same rabbit hole that frustrated Alice in Wonderland? Under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, credit bureaus and the companies supplying credit information to them have to correct inaccurate or incomplete information in your files. You have to tell the bureaus and the creditors you have a problem with what has been reported. An investigation is supposed to straighten it all out. The Consumer Data Industry

Association, a trade organization, says the vast majority of credit reports are error free. Consumer advocates say that's not good enough.

They are both right. In 2013, the Federal Trade Commission, after having 1,001 randomly selected consumers look at their credit files, found that 5 percent of participants had errors on one of their three major credit reports and that the mistakes could have resulted in their paying more for credit products such as auto loans.

In a follow-up study released this year that focused on a smaller group of the same participants who had at least one unresolved dispute, the FTC found that 70 percent still hadn't been able to clear up what they believed was inaccurate information. For many people, getting errors corrected can be maddening and they just give up. But a new agreement reached between the credit bureaus — TransUnion, Equifax and Experian — and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman could go a long way toward addressing people's aggravation with the current dispute system. The bureaus are calling the enhanced help the "National Consumer Assistance Plan." Before I tell you about the changes in the plan, let me take you down the rabbit hole that people I've interviewed have experienced in trying to fix credit records.

Let's take a case of mixed files. You notice that someone else's bad credit account is listed on your report. That ding is messing with your good credit history. So you contact the credit bureau — and the other two bureaus, for that matter — to dispute the information. (The incorrect information might only be reported to one agency, but you have to be sure.) You provide proof — copies, never the original — that you are being confused with another consumer. You probably never speak to an actual person as you try to work it out.

The credit bureaus send an electronic inquiry to the creditor that reported the incorrect information. The creditor may just examine its files — without doing any serious digging to verify your claim — and send the same incorrect information back to the bureau. The bureau then contacts you saying the creditor that the item is correct. Because the creditor says so, in other words. If this happens to you.....

And you try in vain to persuade anyone with some common sense to really, truly, look at your proof. This has happened to many Americans on numerous occasions. Example: the credit bureau corrected the information after the person submitted the paperwork. And then several months later, because the creditor update its system, the exact information was reported again to the bureau and ended up back in my credit file, causing my score to go down. This person had to repeat the process. And sometimes repeat again.

The plan is for the bureaus to have an improved dispute resolution process with specially trained employees to review all supporting documentation submitted by consumers for all disputes involving fraud, identity theft or mixed-up information. In cases where a creditor rejects a disputed claim through an electronic system, the bureaus won't automatically accept the decision but will give employees the discretion to reinvestigate the dispute. That's huge.

Also, consumers will be able to get a second free credit report in addition to the one they're entitled to every 12 months if their dispute results in a modification. The bureaus will also create a working group that will review and help ensure consistency and uniformity in the information submitted by data furnishers.

Although the negotiations happened between the credit bureaus and Schneiderman, many of the changes will take place nationwide. But it may take a while for things to go into effect. Many of the details have yet to be worked out, said Norm Magnuson, the Consumer Data Industry Association's vice president of public affairs. The time frame for implementation of the various initiatives reaches out anywhere from six to 36 months, he said. When all the dispute enhancements are in place, hopefully you will no longer go mad trying to fix credit report errors

Costa Rica is now running completely on renewable energy

On March 23, 2015 Adam Epstein wrote on the ecological site QUARTZ that Costa Rica is running without having to burn a single fossil fuel, and has been doing so for 75 straight days. Thanks to some heavy rainfall this year, Costa Rica's hydropower plants alone are generating nearly enough electricity to power the entire country. With a boost from geothermal, solar, and wind energy sources, the country doesn't need an ounce of coal or petroleum to keep the lights on. Of course, the country has a lot of things going in its favor. Costa Rica is a small nation, has less than 5 million people, doesn't have much of a manufacturing industry that would require a lot of energy, and is filled with volcanoes and other topographical features that lend themselves to renewable energy.

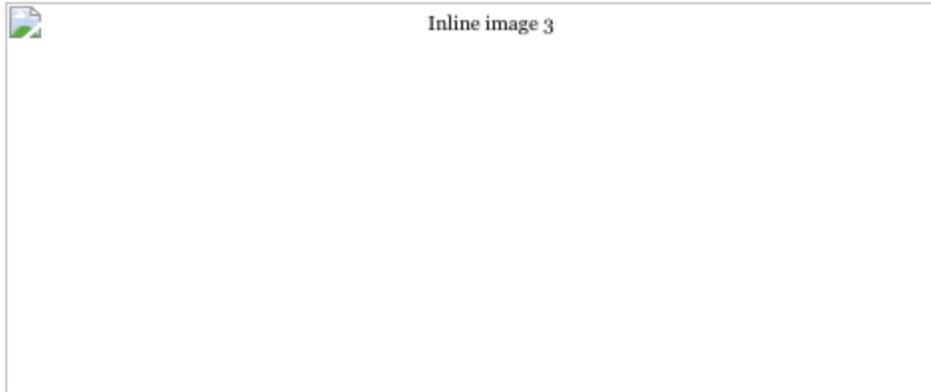
Nonetheless, it is both a noble and significant feat for a nation of any size to eschew fossil fuels completely. Costa Rica is not the only place in the area committed to running on green energy. Bonaire, a Dutch island territory off the coast of Venezuela, operates at nearly 100% renewable energy, and will likely reach that milestone soon with the help of an unlikely energy source: algae. Driven by China, global spending on renewable energy is on track for its first annual gain in three years (though it might not last). Iceland already gets all of its electricity from renewable energy sources, and about 85% of all its energy is produced by geothermal and hydropower sources. And three other European countries (Sweden, Bulgaria, and Estonia) have already hit their 2020 renewable energy goals.

Denmark, which gets 40% of its energy from wind, wants to ditch fossil fuels completely by 2050. The problem with operating completely on renewable energy, as some Danes have noted, is that fossil fuels are still needed as a backup plan if, for instance, there's a stretch of time when the country hasn't experienced enough wind or sunshine to power everything. But the rise of renewable energy has rendered many conventional power plants unprofitable, and owners of those plants are trying to close up shop.

In Costa Rica, a drought would seriously disrupt the country's ability to generate electricity with water. That's probably why its government approved a \$958 million geothermal project. While that's being funded largely by Japan and the European Investment Bank, Costa Rica has already been able to spend

so much on renewable energy because it doesn't need to spend anything on defense. The country hasn't had a military since 1948.

Ted Cruz Plan Could Weaken The Enforcement Of Iran Sanctions



Just days after announcing his presidential bid, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is pushing legislation that would wildly escalate the Republican Party's deregulatory fervor. On March 25, 2015 Cruz filed a simple but sweeping budget amendment that would "eliminate all criminal penalties for offenses established by agency regulations" -- a clause that covers everything from environmental rules to sanctions against Iran. The amendment would eliminate a tremendous amount of corporate crime -- not by getting rid of the wrongdoing itself, but by simply reclassifying the violations as strictly civil, rather than criminal. Many regulations carry only civil penalties, but others carry criminal penalties as well, allowing the Department of Justice to prosecute companies and individuals for those violations. Regulatory agencies write rules to implement laws passed by Congress.

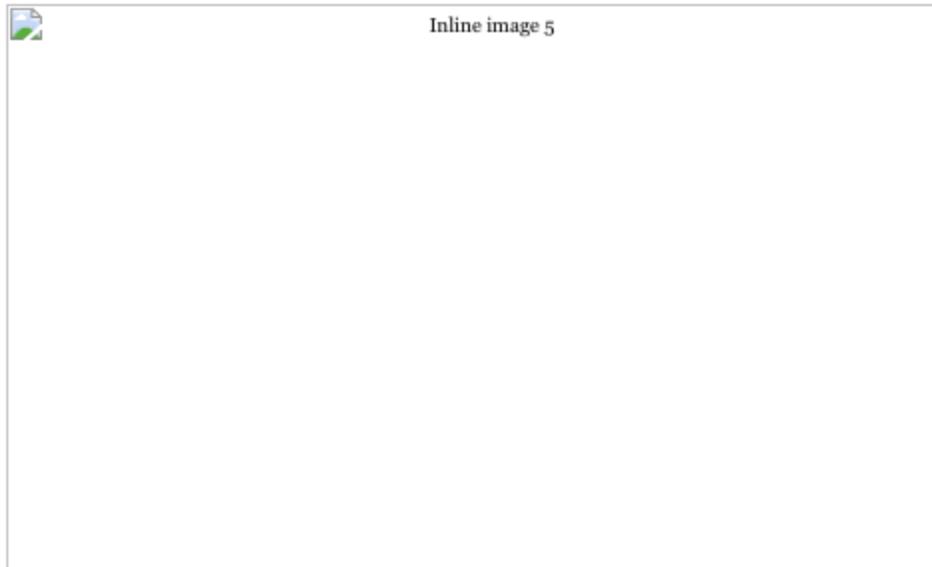
The GOP has been pursuing a broad and aggressive deregulation agenda for several years. A host of Republicans have introduced bills designed to hamstring regulators with additional red tape when issuing rules, and to make it harder for agencies to impose costs on companies in the pursuit of the public good. Cruz's legislation goes much further, and would have effects far beyond the typical GOP targets of Obamacare, the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform law and the Environmental Protection Agency's coal standards.

The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, for instance, is the agency responsible for administering sanctions against Iran. Those sanctions generally bar U.S. companies or individuals from doing business with Iranian firms or Iranian officials. Violating the sanctions can be either a civil or a criminal offense, with criminal penalties including a fine of up to \$1 million and 20 years in prison. If Cruz's budget plan were implemented, it would eliminate those criminal penalties, weakening the sanctions regime.

You would think that a hawk like Senator Cruz who is in favor of increasing sanctions on Iran would understand that when you gut the government through deregulation and abolishing government agencies there are consequences and by implementing his deregulations some of the things that he

actually favors will also be hurt. Mr. Cruz obviously you haven't fully thought this out which is one of the reasons why many believe that you are not ready to become the Leader of the Free World. Because if anything leading the Free World requires a lot of governing infrastructure and oversight.

The 3 Biggest Myths Blinding Us to the Economic Truth



The "*job creators*" – CEOs, corporations, and the rich, whose taxes must be low in order to induce them to create more jobs. Rubbish. The real job creators are the vast middle class and the poor, whose spending induces businesses to create jobs. Which is why raising the minimum wage, extending overtime protection, enlarging the Earned Income Tax Credit, and reducing middle-class taxes are all necessary.

The critical choice is between the "free market" and "government." Baloney. The free market doesn't exist in nature. It's created and enforced by government. And all the ongoing decisions about how it's organized - what gets patent protection and for how long (the human genome?), who can declare bankruptcy (corporations? homeowners? student debtors?), what contracts are fraudulent (insider trading?) or coercive (predatory loans? mandatory arbitration?), and how much market power is excessive (Comcast and Time Warner?) - depend on government.

We should worry most about the size of government. Wrong. We should worry about who government is for. When big money from giant corporations and Wall Street inundate our politics, all decisions relating to #1 and #2 above become rigged against average working Americans.

Is This The *New Normal*



Inline image 1

Riots Rock Baltimore After Freddie Gray Funeral... 15 Structure Fires, 144 Vehicle Fires, 200 Arrests... 15 Officers Injured... **'It's From Years And Years Of Taking Sh*t'...** How The Chaos Started... Orioles Game Postponed... Public Schools Closed... State Of Emergency... National Guard Called In... **Cop Throws Rock At Protester...** **LATEST UPDATES...**

Last week in Baltimore, Maryland protesters hurled bricks and torched businesses and cars, injuring at least 15 police officers, as authorities tried to restore order with an emergency curfew and the National Guard. Their anger surged shortly after the funeral of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black man who died on April 19 — a week after he somehow suffered a major spinal cord injury while in Baltimore police custody. The violence in Baltimore is a dreadful echo of the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri that followed the killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed black man, at the hands of Darren Wilson, a white police officer who said he acted in self-defense. Since then, the killings of unarmed black men across the country have sparked a nationwide movement protesting what they see as excessive force by police. On Monday in Baltimore, that frustration with police boiled over into violence.

“It’s from years and years of taking shit,” said Martin, a longtime resident and a cook at a nearby soul food restaurant. *“Now we’re at a point where people just don’t give a fuck.”* This hopelessness — expressed by many young protesters in Baltimore — arose from frustration with a system that they believe has consigned them to police brutality, poverty and even poorer prospects. The streets were filled with children Monday, many of them fresh out of school and itching for a fight with police. By 4 p.m., around the time schools let out for the day, people were hustling out of office buildings and stores and restaurants were closing their doors to customers.

*“As a nation, when 60% of a group of people is unemployed... When they walk past rows and rows of vacant broken houses... When they would rather burn down a building to be heard because they have a sense of hopelessness that tells you everything you need to know.... And the problems have always existed.... It is poor people who have no hope and they get mad and burn s*** down....”*

DH Hughley

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On April 6, 1968, just two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., riots broke out in Baltimore. When the dust settled on April 7, three people were dead, 70 were injured and more than 100 had been arrested, and numerous buildings were burned and destroyed, according to Baltimore magazine. The Maryland Crime Investigating Commission Report of the Baltimore Civil Disturbance of April 6 to April 11, 1968 later summed up the event in a few sentences that could have easily been written yesterday:

[S]ocial and economic conditions in the looted areas constituted a clear pattern of severe disadvantage for Negroes compared with whites... Our investigation arrives at the clear conclusion that the riot in Baltimore must be attributed to two elements -- '*white racism*' and economic oppression of the Negro. It is impossible to give specific weights to each, but together they gave clear cause for many of the ghetto residents to riot.

The decade following the riots saw significant white flight from Baltimore, as factory jobs in the Rust Belt city dried up. The city lost more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs between 1950 and 1995, according to ThinkProgress. As middle- and working-class whites left Baltimore in droves, they left behind a shrunken tax base and an enervated local economy. "*All the middle-class people moved out,*" Mike Tsamouras, 74, told The Boston Globe in 2010. "*We lost a lot of people.*" Between 1970 and 1980, the city's population dropped from 906,000 to 787,000. By 2010, Census data showed there were just 620,961 residents in Baltimore. As factory jobs moved overseas, most of the opportunities for employment that replaced them did not pay very well.

"A riot is the language of the unheard" – Dr. Martin Luther King

In just the past year Anthony Hill, Tyree Woodson, John Crawford, Dante Parker, Michael Brown, John Crawford III, Ezell Ford, Kajieme Powell, Carlos M. Perez, Akai Gurley, Tamir Rice, Romain Brisbon, Eric Garner, Dennis Grigsby, Jessica Hernandez, David Kassick, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, Daniel Elrod, Charly Leundeu Keunang and other people of color have died at the hands of police under questionable circumstances with no prosecutions against any officers. By the way Freddie Gray was the 111 police killing since 2010. Therefore, as one Baltimore resident observed, "*This ain't about Freddie Gray.*" And until people of color see and feel that they too are protected under the rule of law, what we witness this past week in Baltimore will continue to be the *New Normal.... and this is my rant of the week...*

WEEK'S READINGS

Education Is Not Great Equalizer for Black Americans



Gaps in wealth, not in education, between black and white families may be the most powerful force locking Americans into their social class. In the story of the American Dream, education and a good job are supposed to erase the class differences into which we are born and open opportunity to anyone with merit and grit, regardless of race. But new research is showing that getting another degree or a higher paying job may do less than believed to make good on the American Dream for families of color.

Black Americans with college degrees have less in savings and other assets than white Americans who dropped out of high school. According to a recent calculation of 2011 figures by a group of academics, the median household headed by a black college graduate had about two thirds of the net worth of the median white household headed by someone who did not finish high school.

"The data shows that a job or an education are not the panaceas we think they are," says Darrick Hamilton, PhD, a New School economist. Hamilton produced the figures, which will be released in a forthcoming report, using Census Department data, along with Duke University's William Darity, Jr, PhD, and Rebecca Tippet, PhD, of University of North Carolina. Other research has shown similar wealth disparities between white and Latino families.

"When you look descriptively at families, we see that education does not erase the racial wealth divide," Hamilton said.

Andre Robert Lee, 44, a filmmaker in New York, has been bluntly aware since he was a teenager of the limits on education to change the relationship between wealth and race. His film "Prep School Negro" is an autobiography of growing up as the son of a black garment factory worker and receiving a scholarship at the age of 14 to attend a mostly white, elite private high school outside of Philadelphia. Andre Robert Lee, 44, a filmmaker in New York, has been bluntly aware since he was a teenager of the limits on education to change the relationship between wealth and race.

"People always told me I got a golden ticket," Lee says in the film. But when he arrived at the private school, Lee was struck to find how starkly wealth defined differences in race. Other students would drive fancy new cars to school. He struggled to come up with bus fare. One morning, not long after

beginning at the school, Lee looked up from his desk and across the room to see the son of the man who owned the factory that his mother worked in.

"My mother's inheritance to me was that she worked at the factory. My classmates father's inheritance was to take over the factory."

"I remember sitting there and looking over to him and thinking, wow, your father pays my mother less a year than our tuition is here," Lee says to a teacher in a scene from his film. "It was a realization about the differences between our inheritances," Lee told NBC recently. "My mother's inheritance to me was that she worked at the factory. My classmates' father's inheritance was to take over the factory."

Digging deeper

In a new video that Lee produced for NBC News, he has pulled never-before-seen outtakes of an interview he conducted with Harry Neuman, his classmate's father who owned the factory where his mother worked. "I wanted to dig deeper into the inequality that was so present," he says.

Lee says that his private school education, and later degrees from a liberal arts college and a graduate program in education, have helped him build a life of relative financial stability, compared to the near poverty wages his mother earned. "But it didn't erase the differences in inheritance," he says. "There's no catching up. I'd see people who wanted to be in film just jump and try it, because they knew there was something to catch them. I didn't feel I could just do that. It took much longer."

Just as education does not erase wealth divides, racial disparities in savings and assets remain persistent even when black workers earn more. The median black family earning an income in the middle fifth of all wage earners had slightly less accumulated wealth than the median white family earning incomes in the bottom of fifth of earners.

Can education alone close the wealth gap between white and black Americans?

Growing income inequality in the United States has gained broad attention in the years since the Great Recession. But wealth—assets like homes, stocks or retirement accounts, minus debts—are even more heavily concentrated in the hands of very small number of rich Americans.

Some of the overall gap in white to black wealth is a result of the overwhelming whiteness of those at the pinnacle of the economy. Yet even among the broad majority of American families in the middle and bottom of the labor market, the differences between white and black wealth are striking.

"The fact that getting a better education doesn't equalize wealth says a lot about how we think about class," says Anne Price, who runs a project on racial wealth inequality at Insight Center for Community Economic Development. "In the United States, we have previously viewed class from an incomplete lens by looking at it in terms of income, occupation and education. But the most comprehensive indicator of class may indeed be wealth."

Financial transfers

According to a 2014 study from the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University, nearly half of white households received financial transfers from other relatives. The median amount of that movement of intra-family wealth was \$83,692. Just one tenth of black households, meanwhile, received money or other assets from relatives, and among these few, the median amount was \$52,240.

On average, white households had 13 times the wealth of black households in 2013, according to the Pew Research center. The gap has grown since 2007 when it was ten to one.

Wealth has an outsize influence on opportunity, Price and others say. Black families with some wealth are often compelled to use those extra dollars make up for longstanding economic gaps— to support relatives who lack retirement savings, for example, or to pay off a mortgage—rather than use that income to build new wealth or expand opportunities.

"It's not so much that opportunity creates wealth but that wealth creates opportunity."

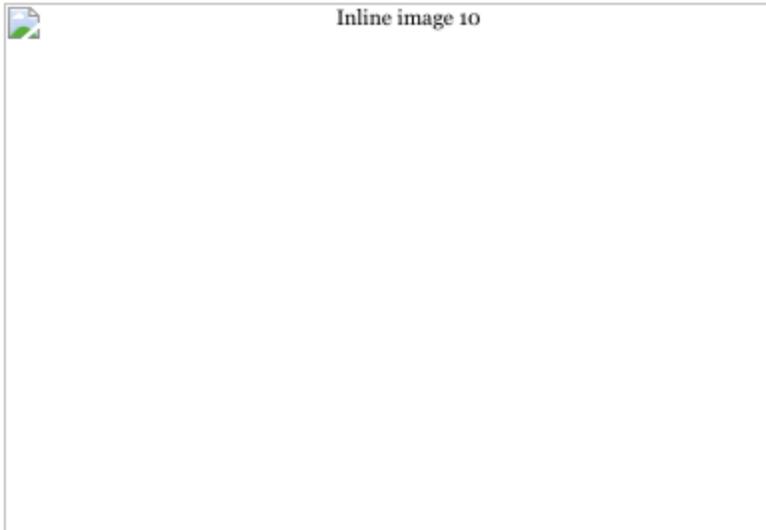
Without wealth, African Americans who have achieved middle class incomes and own homes are more likely to fall out of the middle class when hit by economic hard times. The majority—seven out of ten—of African Americans kids born into families in the middle fifth of wage earners will fall out of the middle class as adults, according to figures from the Brookings Institution.

"Wealth provides you with resources for future opportunity for your children. Wealth is the crux of how people have opportunity," Price says. "It's not so much that opportunity creates wealth but that wealth creates opportunity."

Racial disparities in education and employment remain drivers of inequity, experts say. But inheritance is often paramount. The gap between black and white college graduation rates, for example, stems partially from not having the financial resources to keep up with mounting loans. Other students without a private financial safety-net are pressed to work long hours, making it difficult to finish classes.

"We tend to think that if you get a good education, you've got it made," Hamilton says. "But to make it with some security, you first need wealth." "Wealth allows you to weather economic storms. It's what allows you not to become poor in old age," Price says. "It's what keeps families who make it to the middle class from falling out of it."

12 INSANE FACTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TIME ZONES



It's the same story every year. You wake up groggy on a Sunday, and can't remember -- is it an hour ahead or behind in the Spring? What time does the clock wind back? And where's this daylight being saved, anyway? Plus, by the time your body adjusts, BAM! The clock changes again and you're discombobulated for a second time this year. While daylight savings may throw you for a loop, the American time change is child's play compared to other time zone quirks around the world. Here are 12 oddities about time zones so strange, you couldn't even make them up.

Greenwich, of GMT fame, is actually GMT +01:00 in the Summer

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was born at the world-famous Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London, established in 1675 by Charles II. According to the Observatory's website/the entire world, the site "is, by international decree, the official starting point for every new day, year and millennium". And yet, because the United Kingdom observes daylight savings (DST), in the Summer the country turns its clocks forward by an hour for British Summer Time – so in the warmer months, the Brits are an hour ahead of themselves. Sort of.

Putin killed several Russian time zones

Though Russia spans a mammoth 11 time zones on a map, it only adheres to nine of the 11. On March 28, 2010, at 2 am, while much of Russia turned their clocks forward, Russians in the nation's Udmurt Republic, Samara Oblast, Kamchatka, and Chukotka regions neglected daylight savings at the government's behest. Apparently, to streamline business relations with Moscow and unite with the rest of the country, Putin swiftly abolished the time zones overnight; subsequently, the Udmurt Republic and Samara Oblast switched from GMT +03:00 to GMT + 04:00, catching up with Moscow. Meanwhile, Kamchatka and Chukotka joined the time zone of Magadan Oblast, bringing themselves to GMT +11:00, eight hours ahead of the capital. Unsurprisingly, this year, Crimea skipped ahead two hours at 2 am on March 30, syncing up with Moscow. In Putin's Russia, clocks change you.

India observes a single national time



Inline image 9

Despite being gigantic, India insists on maintaining one national time zone (GMT +05:30) over the entire subcontinent. Because nobody would have read "Midnight +02:30's Children". In the past, India's cities actually kept their own times, but the unified time zone was reportedly introduced during the colonial era to streamline the elaborate railway network, operating on what was called the Madras time zone. Still, that's like New York and Utah sharing a timezone, except with a bazillion more people in between.

Many countries don't bother saving daylight

It's not like you can bottle it up for a rainy day, so a number of countries around the world don't actually observe Daylight Saving Time. Among them are much of South America (including Argentina and Peru), Asia (Japan, China, Indonesia, and Thailand don't do DST), the Middle East (such as the United Arab Emirates), and most of Africa, with the exception of Namibia, Egypt (see below), Tunis, and Morocco. And while South Australia observes DST, Northern Territory, Queensland, and Western Australia do not. More recently, on March 25, 2012, Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, in the South Caucasus on the Eastern European/Asian border, rejected DST in order to stay closer to Armenia (which has argued with Azerbaijan for the region, now partially under Armenian military control).

Hawaii and Arizona burn daylight like there's no tomorrow

Hawaii doesn't adhere to DST, maintaining an easy-to-remember time zone of GMT -10:00 year-round. Strangely, in the Winter, Alaska is on the same time as Hawaii -- so, while their climates are world's apart, for half the year, both states observe HAST (Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time).

Arizona (GMT -07:00) has also ignored DST since 1975, owing to the state's monumental heat; as ABC15 points out, if Arizona did observe DST, the sun would rise at 6:30 am instead of 5:30 am, and set at 9 pm instead of 8 pm, making for a much less productive workforce, according to a study conducted by Michigan State University. A number of U.S. Territories -- such as the Virgin Islands,

Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa -- also don't observe DST. But they're not stars on a flag, so no one really cares.

Iran and Afghanistan only half-care what you do

Several nations and territories recognize partial offsets from GMT, instead of the usual full hour -- making early people on time and late people even worse, or vice versa. Actually, late people are always awful. Iran (GMT +03:30, and GMT +04:30 in Summer), Afghanistan (GMT +04:30), Sri Lanka (+05:30), and Newfoundland, Canada (GMT -03:30, and GMT -04:30 during the Summer) are all off by half hours from neighbors. Places that recognize 15-minute offsets include Western Australia (which uses GMT +08:45), Nepal (GMT +12:45, switching to GMT +13:45 the Summer), and New Zealand's Chatham Island (GMT +05:45).

Lord Howe Island is on its own island

And then there's the anomaly of Lord Howe Island in Australia (pictured above, at sunset), which curiously puts its clocks back by just half an hour in the local Winter to GMT +10:30, only to skip ahead to GMT +11:00 in the Summer. Good luck figuring out how that works. Awkwardly, the island is half an hour ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time. Though the atoll's time zone was officially standardized by the Standard Time Act 1987, and before that, by an earlier version of the same act in 1971, Lord Howe Island has been anecdotally adhering to its odd time-keeping since way back in 1904 (without concrete evidence, however).

Dec. 30, 2011 didn't exist in Samoa

Samoans time-traveled at the close of 2011, when the nation decided to skip an entire day. The country officially moved time zones to miss out on Friday, Dec. 30 altogether, jumping swiftly from Thursday to the weekend, and into the adjacent westward time zone. Sounds like a dream come true for those suffering the aftermath of a Thirsty Thursday. The Samoan government instituted the change in a bid to separate the nation from its trading past with the US, and to improve its working relationships with closer countries like Australia, China, and Singapore -- all on the same time of GMT -11:00. American Samoa, on the flip side, didn't make the change, instead opting to remain one of the few territories in Oceania on the same time as the US.

The International Space Station uses GMT



Inline image 11

Space might feel light years away, but really it's only five hours ahead of New York. In the Winter, residents of the UK, on GMT, are actually on the same time as those selfie-taking astronauts at the ISS, who are midway between the time in Houston and Moscow.

Spain is in the "wrong" time zone

Most of mainland Spain is either on the same longitude as or further west than the UK. And yet, Spain is an hour ahead, time-wise. That's just stupid. As NPR points out, Spain has effectively been in the wrong time zone since General Franco decided to align with Hitler. And now, 70 years later, Spaniards sleep 53 minutes less than other Europeans, work longer hours, and are less productive. That worked out for everybody.

Egypt had four time changes in 2014

After DST was abolished in Egypt in 2011, it was recently reinstated "as a way to help reduce energy consumption", thanks to the country's energy crisis and subsequent blackouts in the capital, Cairo. Clocks jumped forward an hour on May 15, but returned to their original time for the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, at the end of June. The time allegedly went forward once more at the end of Ramadan, but went back at Summer's end. Presumably, no one scheduled doctor's appointments in Egypt last summer.

Turks & Caicos switched time zones

In 2015, the islands of Turks and Caicos switched time zones to capitalize on sunshine. When the clocks skipped ahead an hour for Daylight Savings, the Caribbean island moved from Eastern Standard

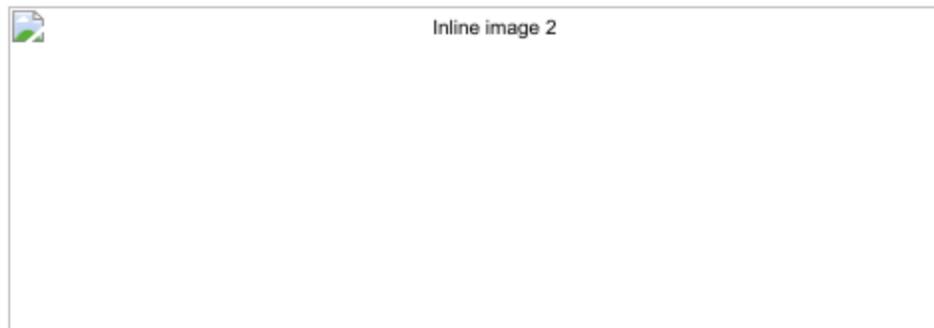
Time, which British Overseas Territories traditionally observed, to Atlantic Standard Time. Basically, they abandoned the British to enjoy even MORE time in the sun (as if they don't have enough already!) and later sunsets. Sounds like a worthwhile trade.

Braking good: China's slowing economy

China's economy is changing. Figures released in April revealed that growth has slowed sharply and deflation set in, as the economy is weighed down by a property slump and factory production is at its weakest since the dark days of the global financial crisis. In the first three months of 2015, GDP grew at "only" 7% year-on-year. Growth for 2015 will probably be the weakest in 25 years.

Fears are rising that, after three soaring decades, China is about to crash. That would be a disaster. China is the world's second-largest economy and Asia's pre-eminent rising power. Fortunately, the pessimists who follow China are missing something. China is not only more economically robust than they allow, it is also putting itself through a quiet — and welcome — financial revolution.

The robustness rests on several pillars. Most of China's debts are domestic, and the government still has enough sway to stop debtors and creditors getting into a panic. The country is shifting the balance away from investment and towards consumption, which will put the economy on more stable ground (see the attached Economist article – Down To Earth). Thanks to a boom in services, China generated over 13m new urban jobs last year, a record that makes slower growth tolerable. Given China's far bigger economy, expected growth of 7% this year would boost the global economy by more than 14% growth did in 2007.



Headlines about China's first-quarter GDP, reported in April, look gloomy to some. The economy grew by 7%, year-on-year, the slowest pace since early 2009, when the global financial crisis was at its worst. But beyond that unflattering comparison, the news is brighter. Thanks to the vast expansion of China's economy, growth of 7% this year (*which is also the official target*) would add as much to global demand as growth of twice that rate in 2007. Consumption is supplanting investment as the economy's most powerful engine, a transition that will put China on a more sustainable path. Slower growth is also part of the government's plan for fixing the economy's ills: China's leaders want to rein in debt, which has soared to worrying heights. But they also worry about braking too sharply — and have already started to ease monetary policy and increase spending.

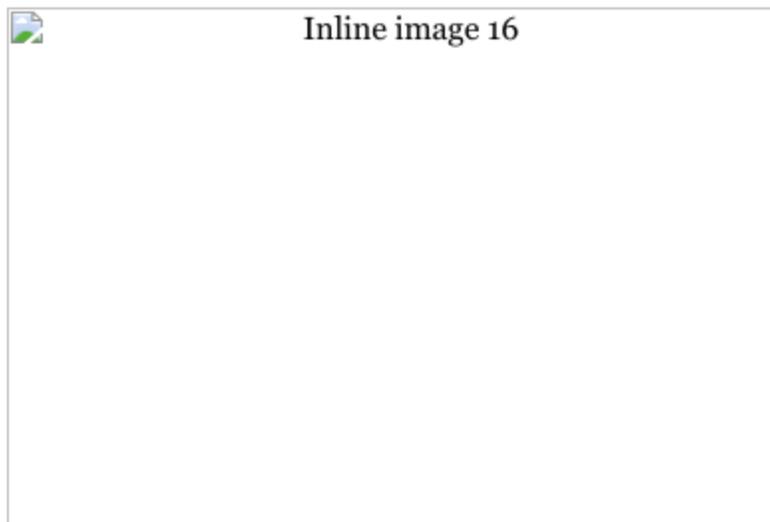
Five organic fruits and vegetables that are worth the higher cost

Buying organic fruits and vegetables costs more, and for many shoppers, the advantage hardly seems worth the expense. But for certain produce items, "buying organic is a must," according to a new release from **Consumer Reports**, the nonprofit long known for its product reviews.

The group's 53-page report, **"From Crop to Table: Pesticide Use in Produce,"** is highly critical of conventional farming, saying that *"the reliance on toxic pesticides to produce food is neither safe nor sustainable.... Given the growing body of scientific evidence pointing to harm, we believe that the costs are too high and do not justify the short-term benefits of controlling pests with toxic chemicals."* And it suggests buying organic whenever possible. But for public health advocates, warning about fruits and vegetables can be a delicate matter. Even the conventional fruits and vegetables may be better than none at all, the group said. Estimating the risk posed by pesticides is a complicated process and, among scientists, sometimes contentious.

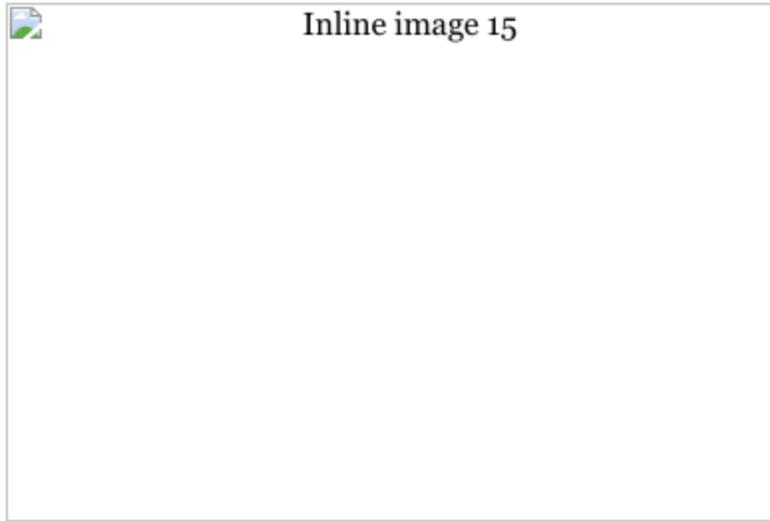
Consumer Reports based its analysis on U.S. Department of Agriculture data on pesticide residues and combined that with Environmental Protection Agency assessments of pesticide toxicity. It also takes into account the typical serving size. Using those calculations, the group placed the food items in one of five risk categories, ranging from *"Very Low"* to *"Very High."* In a *"cheat sheet,"* Consumer Reports highlighted these five foods that ought to be found in the organic section.

Peaches



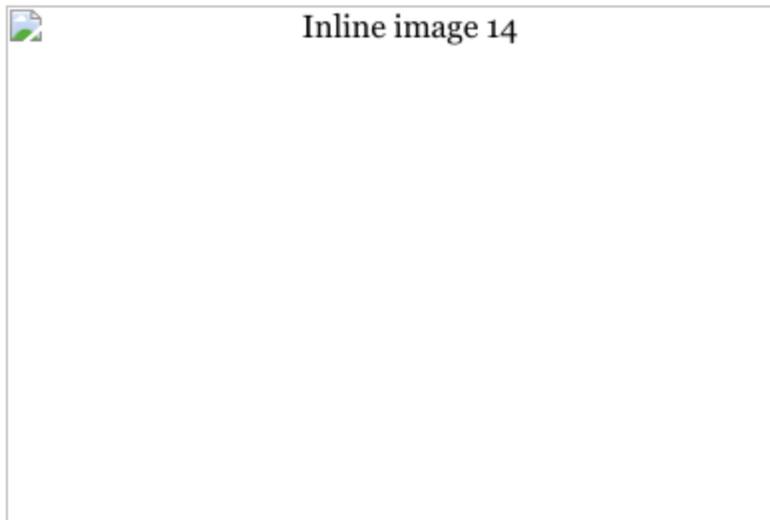
"Fresh peaches grown conventionally fall into our high risk category for pesticide residues," the group said. "A good alternative if you can't get organic -- canned peaches."

Carrots



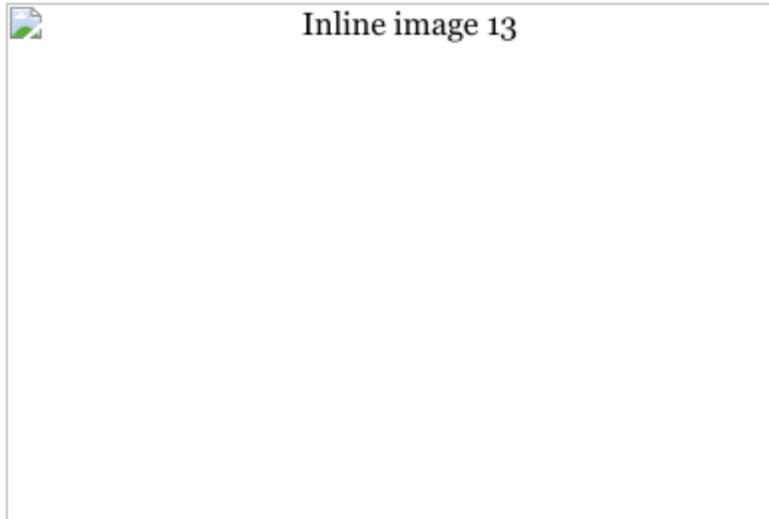
"Carrots are lower risk than other types of produce, but you should still buy organic."

Strawberries



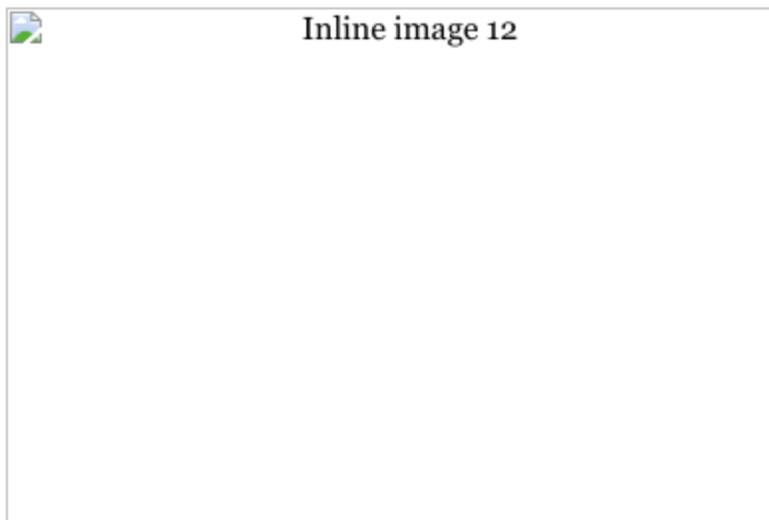
"If you can't find organic, conventional raspberries and blueberries are low risk."

Green beans



"Pesticide risk for green beans hasn't fallen for 20 years even though progress has been made for other produce."

Sweet bell peppers



"Conventional sweet bell peppers, domestic and imported, fall into our high and very high risk categories."

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

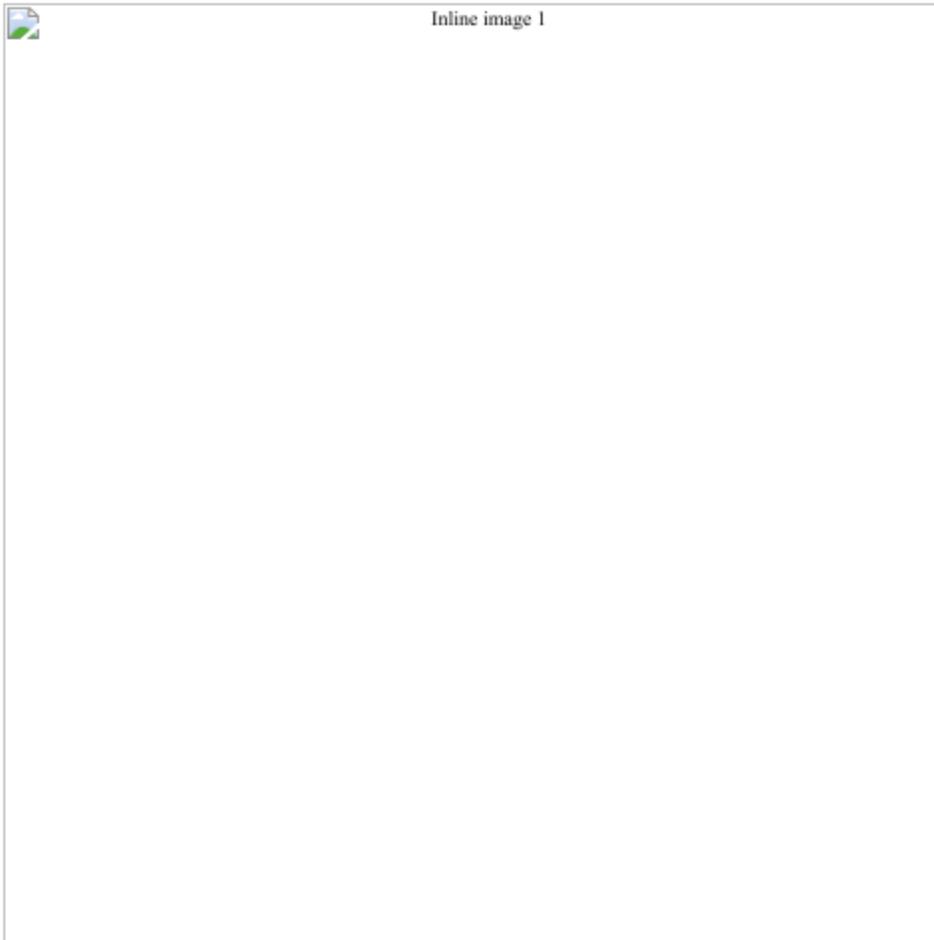
"When he (*Freddie Gray*) asked for help, if they had (*the six police officers*) treated Mr. Gray as a human being they wouldn't be going to court and he wouldn't be dead. And the only reason that exists in this country is because America by and large thinks it's no big deal."

DL Hughley

THINK ABOUT THIS

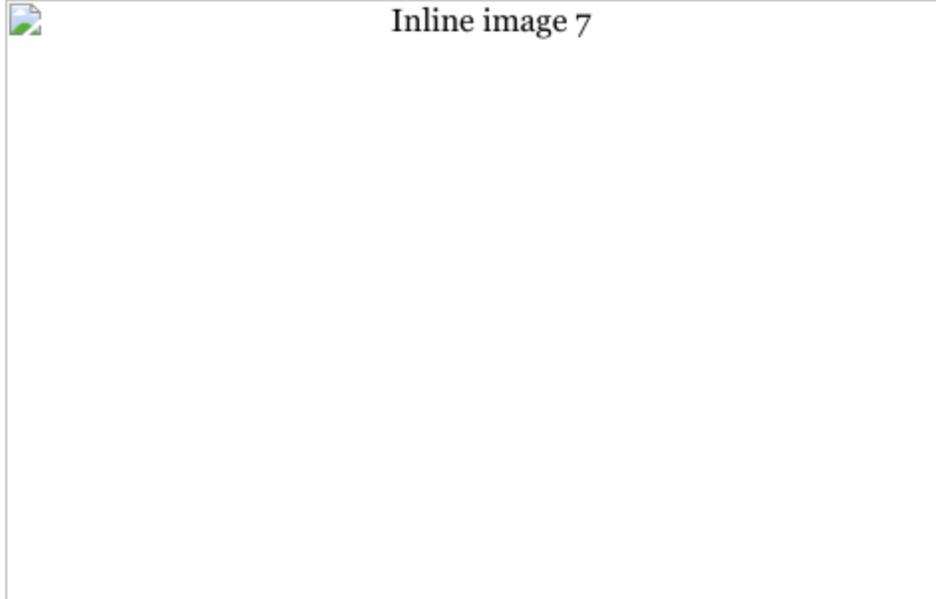
The Numbers Speak For Themselves

Something Is Wrong



BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

What Morons



Web Link: <https://youtu.be/l-w-mWhIWEM>

“Stupid is What Stupid Does”

Mrs. Gump

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Willie Nelson



Inline image 6

This week I would like to invite you to enjoy the music of Willie Nelson, country singer-songwriter, as well as author, poet, actor, activist and philanthropist. Willie Nelson was born on April 30, 1933, in Abbott, Texas. Nelson rose to prominence at the end of the 1960s and contributed to the "outlaw country" subgenre, which challenged the conservatism of Nashville. Nelson has written some of the most popular country songs of all time, including the hit song "Crazy" and "On The Road Again." He is also well-known for his financial troubles and activism. Nelson has written more than 2,500 songs and has released close to 300 albums. Nelson has appeared in over thirty films and TV shows. His acting debut was in the 1979 movie, *The Electric Horseman*, followed by appearances in *Honeysuckle Rose*, *Thief*, and *Barbarosa*. He has won multiple awards, including countless Grammys, American Music Awards and Country Music Awards.

Born during the Great Depression, Willie Nelson and his older sister Bobbie were raised by their paternal grandparents during the Great Depression. With their grandmother, Willie and Bobbie attended their town's small Methodist church where they were first exposed to music. "The first music we learned was from the hymnbooks. Willie had such a beautiful voice," his sister Bobbie told *Texas Monthly* in 2008. Both grandparents loved music and encouraged Willie and his sister to play. Nelson's famous gospel song "Family Bible" draws from his early exposure to religious music. He sold the song for \$50 to his guitar teacher.

After graduating high school in 1950, Nelson went into the U.S. Air Force. He did not last long in the military, however. Stationed in Lackland in San Antonio, Texas, Nelson had to leave the service because of back problems. He tried college, enrolling at Baylor University. To make ends meet, Nelson took on odd jobs, including selling both vacuum cleaners and encyclopedias door to door. Dropping out of college, Nelson worked as a radio disc jockey for several years and played gigs in his spare time. He continued writing songs, producing some of his most famous works -- including "Night Life," "Crazy" and "Funny How Time Slips Away" -- in the late 1950s.

Nelson got his first guitar at the early age of six and soon started writing his own songs. A few years later, he played his first professional gig with a local polka band. Nelson later joined Bud Fletcher and the Texans. He started playing the local club circuit with the band. His sister Bobbie, who played piano, was also in the group. She later married Bud Fletcher. In 1960, Nelson moved to the country music capital: Nashville, Tennessee. He got a job as a songwriter for Pamper Music, earning about \$50 a week. The next year, two of Nelson's songs become hits for other artists -- Faron Young's version of "*Hello Walls*" and Patsy Cline's legendary rendition of "*Crazy*." His first album was released the next year without generating much notice.

Singer Ray Price, with whom Nelson had played with previously, made Nelson's song "*Night Life*" a big hit in 1963. At the time, it seemed that his songs were only successful when they were sung by other people. With his gritty, road house sound, Nelson did not fit into the traditional Nashville country music scene. Producers tried to make him fit the more classic country mold, but they just stripped away his unique style, such as his unusual manner of phrasing. And his resistance to these efforts made him a bit of an outlaw, as did his reputation as a hard-drinking, hard-living man. A number of times along the way, Willie Nelson left the music business only to return.

The critical success of the album *Shotgun Willie* (1973), combined with the critical and commercial success of *Red Headed Stranger* (1975) and *Stardust* (1978), made Nelson one of the most recognized artists in country music. He was one of the main figures of outlaw country, a subgenre of country music that developed in the late 1960s as a reaction to the conservative restrictions of the Nashville sound.

Around this time, Nelson also branched out into acting. He first appeared in *The Electric Horseman* (1979) starring Robert Redford. Soon after, Nelson starred in *Honeysuckle Rose* (1980), in which he played a veteran country musician performer. His character was torn between his wife (played by Dyan Cannon) and the young singer (Amy Irving) who joins him on the road. The film also featured the song "*On the Road Again*," which earned Nelson an Academy Award nomination for best original song. Now considered a trademark Nelson tune, "*On the Road Again*" also won the *Grammy Award for best country song in 1980*.

Around this time, Nelson contributed to the compilation *Wanted: The Outlaws*, which also featured Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser. Nelson and Jennings also collaborated on the popular song "*Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys*," which won the 1978 Grammy Award for best country vocal performance by a duo or group. Nelson's successful streak -- both commercially and critically -- continued into the 1980s. The ballad "*Always on my Mind*" won the *Grammy Award for best country vocal performance in 1982*. Albums *Without A Song* (1984) and *City of New Orleans* (1984) reached the top or near the top of the country charts. Singing with singer Julio Iglesias, Nelson scored a big hit with the ballad "*To All the Girls I've Loved Before*" in 1984. The following year, Nelson teamed up with Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson to form the Highwaymen. Their first release *Highwayman* (1985) was a big hit, as was the title track. The group went on to produce a live album and another studio effort, *Highwayman 2* (1995) solidifying their reputations as the outlaws of country music.

Known for his compassion, Nelson -- along with Neil Young and John Mellencamp -- organized the first Farm Aid concert in 1985 in an effort to help family farmers. To date, the **Farm Aid** organization

has raised more than \$30 million and continues to work to keep family farmers on their land. In 2007, Ben & Jerry's released "*Willie Nelson's Country Peach Cobbler Ice Cream*" with a portion of Nelson's proceeds donated to **Farm Aid**. In 2012, the **Country Music Association** honored Nelson with an all-star tribute at the CMAs in Nashville. He is recognized worldwide as an American troubadour and icon, transcended musical genres and has remained relevant through five decades for his music, acting and as the face of such social causes as **Farm Aid**, development of bio-diesel and the legalization of marijuana.

For many years, Nelson's image was marked by his red hair, often divided into two long braids partially concealed under a bandanna. In the April 2007 issue of *Stuff Magazine* Nelson was interviewed about his long locks "*I started braiding my hair when it started getting too long, and that was, I don't know, probably in the 70's.*" On May 26, 2010, the Associated Press reported that Nelson had cut his hair, and Nashville music journalist Jimmy Carter published a photograph of the pigtail-free Nelson on his website. Reportedly, he wanted a more maintainable hairstyle, as well helping him stay cool more easily at his Maui home. In October 2014, the braids of Nelson were sold for US\$37,000 at an auction of the Waylon Jennings State. In 1983, Nelson cut his braids and gave them to Jennings as a gift during a party celebrating Jennings' sobriety.

Nelson's touring and recording group, the Family, is full of longstanding members. The original lineup included his sister Bobbie Nelson, drummer Paul English, harmonicist Mickey Raphael, bassist Bee Spears, Billy English (Paul's younger brother), and Jody Payne. The current lineup includes all the members but Jody Payne, who retired, and Bee Spears, who died in 2011. Willie & Family tours North America in the bio-diesel bus Honeysuckle Rose, which is fueled by Bio-Willie. Nelson's tour buses were customized by Florida Coach since 1979. The company built the Honeysuckle Rose I in 1983, which was replaced after a collision in Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1990. The interior was salvaged and reused for the second version of the bus the same year. Nelson changed his tour bus in 1996, 2005 and 2013, currently touring on the Honeysuckle Rose V.

Nelson lives in Maui, Hawaii, in a largely self-sustaining community where all the homes use only solar power. Neighbors include Kris Kristofferson, Woody Harrelson, and Owen Wilson. He also owns a ranch near Austin, Texas where he spends half his time. After a recent sold out show in Iron City, Georgia a reviewer wrote that "this 81-year-old proved that he's still got it. He began the show with a number of hits, including "*Whiskey River*" and "*Still Is Still Moving To Me.*" Willie also covered a number of Waylon Jennings' songs from "*Good Hearted Woman.*" With only one backup electric guitarist, Willie performed all the main acoustics throughout the show as well." ***With this said, I invite you to enjoy the music of everyone's musical outlaw.... Mr. Willie Nelson.....***

Willie Nelson – ***Always On My Mind*** -- <https://youtu.be/R7f189ZovoY>

Willie Nelson – ***She Is Gone*** -- <https://youtu.be/TVwkS6AcszY>

Willie Nelson – ***Angel Flying Too Close To The Ground*** -- https://youtu.be/C3PB1jWO3_E

Willie Nelson – ***Funny How Time Slips Away*** -- <https://youtu.be/iZaZqx9v3dU>

Willie Nelson – ***Crazy*** -- https://youtu.be/_ojOR5DCorM

Willie Nelson – ***You Don't Know Me*** -- https://youtu.be/XX_vYXvATAo

Willie Nelson – ***Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be*** Cowboys (Live at Farm Aid 25) -- https://youtu.be/Z_wmASF3jYA

Willie Nelson – ***Stardust*** -- https://youtu.be/_T6WKdrxzyY

Willie Nelson – ***Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain*** -- <https://youtu.be/JA644rSZX1A>

The Highwaymen – ***Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys*** -- <https://youtu.be/tbp6oRXFAd4>

The Highwaymen – ***City Of New Orleans*** -- <https://youtu.be/tyO1eRtDRcs>

Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard – ***Pancho and Lefty*** -- <https://youtu.be/iloyrVt7EM>

Willie Nelson & Julio Iglesias – ***To All The Girls I've Loved Before*** -- <https://youtu.be/rVqoONrSH-Q>

Willie Nelson & Ray Charles – ***Georgia On My Mind*** -- https://youtu.be/BILUMwo_VVU

Willie Nelson & Ray Charles – ***Seven Spanish Angels*** -- https://youtu.be/x8A9Y1Dq_cQ

Willie Nelson, Ray Charles & Leon Russell – ***A Song For You*** -- <https://youtu.be/2UW4ELmVD9M>

Willie Nelson, Toby Keith & Scott Emerik – ***I'll Never Smoke Weed With Willie Again*** -- <https://youtu.be/-tJXjt5D4zY>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

US: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Skype: [REDACTED]