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Subject: .Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 09/07/2014

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The_Fire_This_Time_Bob_Herbert_Huff_Post_Aug._20,_2014.docx;
The_Lives_of_Juvenile_Lifers_Ashley_Nellis_The_Sentencing_Project-March_2012_08_31_2014.pdf;
The_U.N._says_7_in_10_Palestinians_killed_in_Gaza_were_civilians._Israel_disagrees_William_Booth_TWP_Aug.30,_2014.docx;
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DEAR FRIEND.....

 Kenneth Young's Case

Web Link for the show's trailer: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/15tolife/>

A friend send me the trailer of the **PBS** documentary on **POV – 15 to Life: Kenneth's Story** – which is about a 14-year-old Kenneth Young who with 24-year-old Jacques Bethea, a neighborhood crack dealer and Young's mother's supplier, committed a series of armed robberies in Tampa, Florida in June 2002. Bethea brandished the pistol and on one occasion was talked out of raping one of the victims by his younger partner. Fortunately, no one was killed or seriously injured during the crimes. And at the age of 15, Young was tried under Florida law as an adult and received four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. By 2006, all of Young's appeals had been denied. In 2009, his last hope for clemency from the governor's office was also denied. Then, in 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Graham v. Florida* declared it unconstitutional to sentence a juvenile to life in prison without the possibility of parole in the case of non-homicidal crimes. This ruling vacated Young's life-without-parole sentences. At his 2011 re-sentencing hearing at the age of 26, Young was resentenced to four concurrent 30-year terms, followed by 10 years of probation. Kenneth Young is set for release in 2030 and continues to seek a reduced sentence that acknowledges his rehabilitation.

Having been in a supermarket being robbed by a bunch of young toughs, it is an ugly experience. But you can't watch Kenneth's story and wonder why no one in our criminal and courts systems in Florida felt any compassion for this young man, giving the cards that he was dealt with as a child. I grew up in a neighborhood where some of my teenage friends were seduced into crimes by older siblings, friends of the family, other family members or the local street toughs. These were often the only role models that they had and often they really didn't understand the consequences of their actions. While at the same time "Sammy the Bull" Gravano, the enforcer for Mafia Godfather John Gotti, who acknowledged killing 19 people himself was given only a five year prison sentence and then placed in witness protection in Arizona. Which one do you think is more dangerous? There are lost souls who are and will always be a danger to society. And some of them are teenagers and even younger. But to give a fifteen year old four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole for something that he did when he was 14 years old and there was no loss of live or bodily harm is not justice in anyway shape or form.

It is evident that injustice still exist in our legal system and the unspoken clear disparity is in the cases where the young are Black and Hispanic. Yes there were people mentally, emotionally, and maybe even physically hurt during this spree but no one was killed. Did he deserve some punishment of course, but 4 life sentences come on. More importantly, we know that that our jails and prisons are criminal colleges, so putting a teenager into an institution with murders, rapist, career criminals and other violent offenders is not going to lead to any type of rehabilitation, especially when he or she realizes (or being told) that this is where they will be for the remainder of their life. Again, I grew up in a neighborhood where many of my peers had little to no chance, as they were schooled in criminal enterprise by the adults around them, while my mother hoped that church and school along with a copious amount of corporal punishment would keep me on the right track. But if my mother had been a crack whore, I might have followed her crack dealer boyfriend on a criminal spree. So there but for the grace of God go I. And for kids like Kenneth Young, shouldn't we live in a society that is compassionate enough to try to redeem them instead of putting them in holes and throwing away the keys. The United States is the only country that sentences juveniles to **Life Without Parole** and since the late 1990s more than 2500 juveniles have been sentenced to Life Without the Possibility of Parole. ***This is an outrage.....***

THE LIVES OF JUVENILE LIFERS | FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY

Ashley Nellis, Ph.D.: March 2012

The United States stands alone worldwide in imposing sentences of life without parole on juveniles. The U.S. achieved this unique position by slowly and steadily dismantling founding principles of the juvenile justice system. Today a record number of people are serving juvenile life without parole (JLWOP) sentences in the U.S. for crimes committed before their 18th birthday.

Sentences of life without parole are often erroneously believed to translate to a handful of years in prison followed by inevitable release. The reality is that a life without parole sentence means that the individual will die in prison.

This report provides a new perspective on the population of individuals serving life sentences without parole for crimes committed in their youth. It represents the findings of a comprehensive investigation into this population that includes the first-ever national survey of juvenile lifers.

Through this effort we obtained in-depth information from these individuals about their life experiences prior to their conviction, as well as descriptions of their lives while incarcerated. The findings are sobering, and should become an element of policy discussion regarding this extreme punishment.

KEY FINDINGS

Although it does not excuse their crimes, most people sent to prison for life as youth were failed by systems that are intended to protect children. Survey findings from 1,579 individuals around the country who are serving these sentences demonstrate high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage, extreme racial disparities in the imposition of these punishments, sentences frequently imposed without judicial discretion, and counterproductive corrections policies that thwart efforts at rehabilitation. Highlights of this report include the following:

Socioeconomic Disadvantages, Education Failure, & Abuse

Juvenile lifers experienced high levels of exposure to violence in their homes and communities

- • 79% of individuals reported witnessing violence in their homes;
- • More than half (54.1%) witnessed weekly violence in their neighborhoods.

Juvenile lifers, particularly girls, suffered high rates of abuse

- • Nearly half (46.9%) experienced physical abuse, including 79.5% of girls;
- • 77.3% of girls reported histories of sexual abuse; overall, 20.5% of juvenile lifers report being victims of sexual abuse.

Juvenile lifers generally experienced significant social and economic disadvantage in their homes and communities

- • A third (31.5%) of juvenile lifers were raised in public housing;
- • Eighteen percent (17.9%) of the respondents were not living with a close adult relative just before their incarceration; some reported being homeless, living with friends, or being housed in a detention facility, treatment center, or group home.

Juvenile lifers faced significant educational challenges

- • Two in five respondents had been enrolled in special education classes;
- • Fewer than half (46.6%) of these individuals had been attending school at the time of their offense;
- • The vast majority (84.4%) of juvenile lifers had been suspended or expelled from school at some point in their academic career.

Extreme Racial Disparities in JLWOP Sentences

The racial dynamics of victims and offenders may play a key role in determining which offenders are sentenced to juvenile life without parole

- • The proportion of African Americans serving JLWOP sentences for the killing of a white person (43.4%) is nearly twice the rate at which African American juveniles are arrested for taking a white person's life (23.2%);
- • Conversely, white juvenile offenders with black victims are only about half as likely (3.6%) to receive a JLWOP sentence as their proportion of arrests for killing blacks (6.4%).

JLWOP Sentences Frequently Imposed Mandatorily

The majority of JLWOP sentences are imposed in states in which judges are obligated to sentence individuals without consideration of any factors relating to a juvenile's age or life circumstances

- • States such as Pennsylvania, which holds the nation's largest population of juvenile lifers, require that youth of any age charged with homicide be tried in adult court and, upon conviction, sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

Corrections Policies Curtail Efforts at Rehabilitation

Most (61.9%) juvenile lifers are not engaged in programming in prison, but this is generally not due to lack of interest, but because of state or prison policies

- • Among the juvenile lifers who were not participating in programming, 32.7% had been prohibited because they will never be released from prison; an additional 28.9% were in prisons without sufficient programming or had completed all available programming.

Many juvenile lifers are engaged in constructive change during their incarceration when they are permitted the opportunity to do so

- • Two-thirds have attained a high school diploma or GED;
- • Despite long distances from home and family, many juvenile lifers attempt to maintain close ties with loved ones through phone calls, letters, and visits;
- • As years in prison pass, lifers are charged with declining numbers of disciplinary actions.

Web Link: http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/jj_The_Lives_of_Juvenile_Lifers.pdf

For the entire report download from the above web link and it is attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

Public safety is compromised when at-risk youth are not provided with adequate, evidence-based, early intervention and violence prevention programming. As a society we can invest early in the lives of high-risk youth to provide skills and support and thus alter the pathways that lead to crime. Waiting until a young person commits a serious violent crime before positively intervening in his or her life is both cruel and misguided. Instead of immersion in evidence-based prevention and early intervention programming to offset their risk factors, for too many individuals, their first formal “intervention” is a life-without-parole sentence.

The seriousness of the crimes committed by these individuals cannot be dismissed. All juvenile lifers were convicted of serious crimes and usually a life has been lost. Family members of victims have had a terrible injustice done to them and their lives are forever changed. There is little support for victims in the criminal justice system in terms of healing from the loss and compensating for the harms done; surviving family members are frequently left out of the justice process despite how intimately they are involved in the offense that occurred.

Eliminate Juvenile Life Without Parole (JLWOP)

Enactment of laws that allowed for lifelong prison sentences occurred in the absence of comprehensive review, expertise, and careful weighing of the consequences of a juvenile life-without-parole sentence. We are not aware of a single hearing at the state or federal level on the appropriateness of JLWOP until recent years; some juvenile lifers had already been imprisoned for decades before the appropriateness of this sentence for youth offenders was brought into question. Only a handful of studies on the matter have been produced. Responses to some of the questions that have now emerged suggest that these questions ought to have been considered long before thousands of lives were forever changed by a sentence that would fate them to die in prison. It is far too simple to pass harmful criminal justice policies and far too difficult to undo them once the damage is realized.

Eliminating juvenile life without parole would not result in serious, violent offenders escaping punishment. Instead, this would involve adoption of punishments proportionate to the crime while considering an offender’s age, maturity, and capacity for personal transformation through rehabilitation. The imposition of sentences that deny any hope for release contradicts what we know about young people’s potential for change. There is a wide gap between the view that some youthful offenders deserve stiff punishment and the perspective that no juvenile, under any circumstance, should ever be afforded the opportunity to seek release from imprisonment.

Allow and Encourage Life-Sentenced Inmates to Engage in Rehabilitation Programming

Rehabilitation programming in prison is often reduced in corrections budgets in times of fiscal constraints, despite the reality that 93% of prisoners return home. For life-sentenced inmates, the opportunities for rehabilitation are even slimmer; the limited number of available slots are generally

reserved for those who will be released the soonest, so lifers are consistently pushed to the back of the line, if they are permitted to engage in programming at all. This is especially problematic for juveniles with life sentences, as their sentences are, by definition, longer than most. Many youth whose life sentences were determined to be unconstitutional in 2010 under the *Graham v. Florida* ruling now face challenges in demonstrating reform in order to be considered for release, as some have been denied the opportunity for programming because of their life sentences. This poses a challenge to the Supreme Court's requirement that, "What the State must do, however, is give defendants...some meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation."

House Youth in Age-Appropriate Settings Pre-Trial and Post-Conviction

To the extent that some youth will continue to be transferred to adult court and processed as if they were adults, this does not mean that they need to be housed with older, adult offenders and have their lives put in danger on a daily basis because of their physical and psychological vulnerabilities. Instead, youth placed in the adult system should be housed separately from adults and commingling should be prohibited. Ideally, youth serving long sentences should be placed in juvenile detention centers until their early 20s before being transferred to an adult facility.

Address Racial Disparities

Racial and ethnic disparities observed at this stage of the system are greater than elsewhere in the spectrum of sanctions for juveniles who commit crime. While some disparity might be explained by differential treatment in the justice system, we also know that since a high proportion of juvenile lifers are from poor, high-violence neighborhoods, this can contribute to higher rates of involvement in serious crime.

Greater investment in prevention and early intervention strategies in high-need communities would result in lower incidences of life sentences for juveniles. In addition, closer inspection of the racial dynamics between offenders and their victim(s) in lengthy sentences including JLWOP sentences may reveal unwarranted racial disparity in sentence imposition. Though most of the attention on this topic is devoted to death sentences, there is good reason to expand such analysis to other death-in-prison sentences. Building on evidence from death penalty research, analysis of racial dynamics between offender and victim in the allocation of JLWOP sentences, both retrospective and prospective, will allow better understanding about how sentences are applied.

Invest in Prevention, Not Warehousing

Instead of spending scarce resources on warehousing lives that could be transformed, we could be spending money more wisely, helping victims, and improving public safety. The nonpartisan American Law Institute recommends a "second look" after 10 years of imprisonment for life-sentenced youth. 59 Notwithstanding the probability that most prisoners would not be granted release after only 10 years, if even one eligible inmate was determined to be ready for release upon this "second look," this could save a typical state \$1.8 million in needless incarceration. The money saved could instead be directed at prevention and intervention programs that have a strong evidence-base in lowering crime:

preschool programs, parenting skills development, multi-systemic therapy, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and a host of other effective interventions that would reduce crime and repair families and communities from damage associated with violence.

As kids we know right from wrong but we do not know the full consequences. Please ask people to give us a second chance.

Juvenile Lifer (severing a life sentence without the possibility of parole) in Michigan

A Bit of Nostalgia - No words needed

If you are under 55, you simply won't understand.



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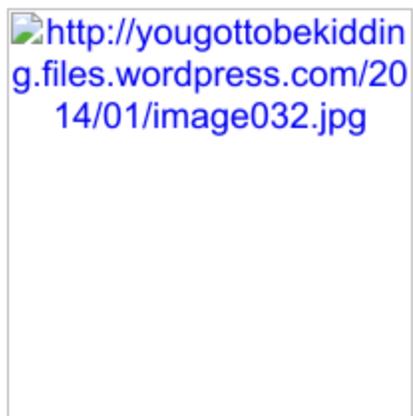
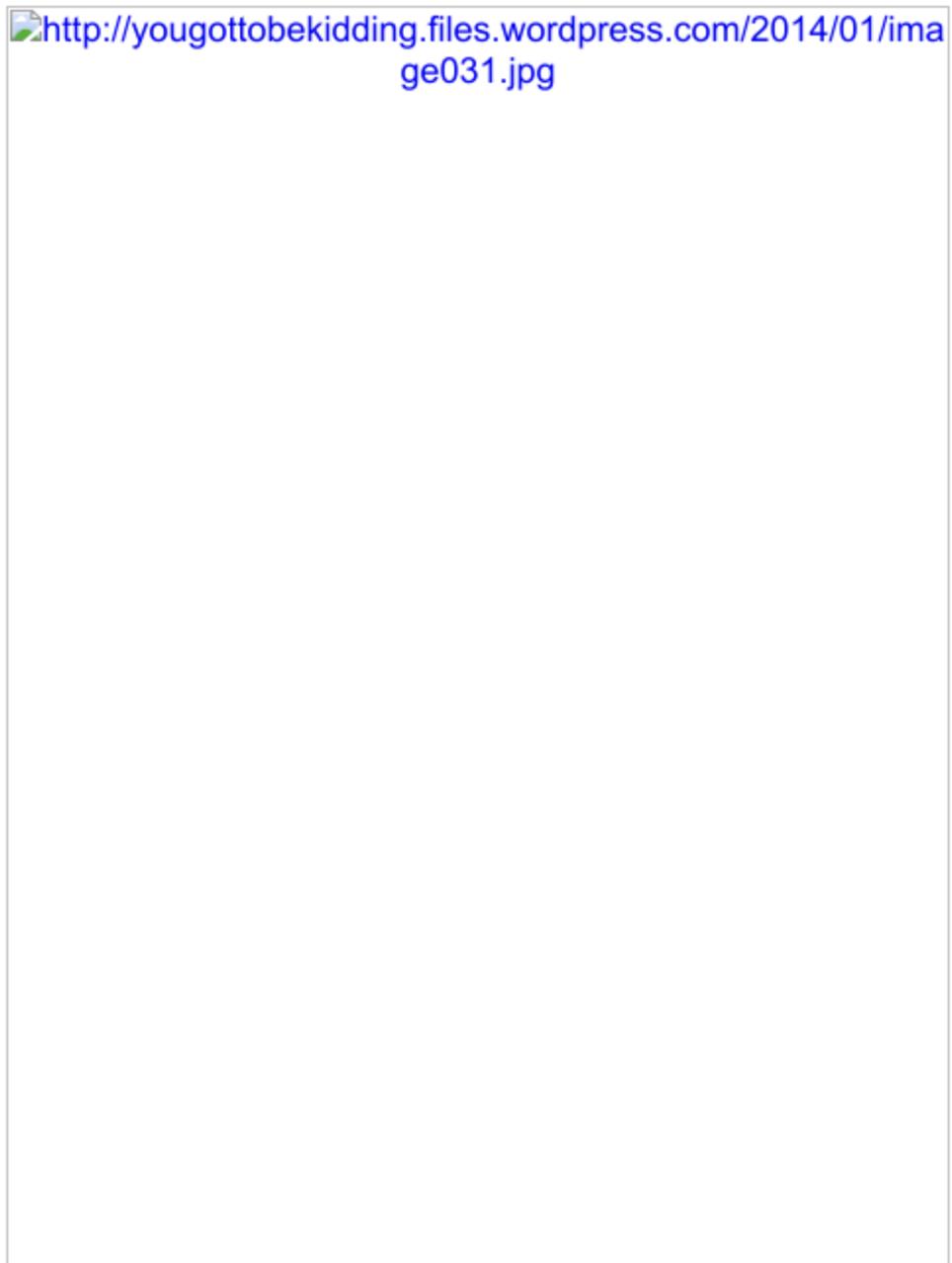
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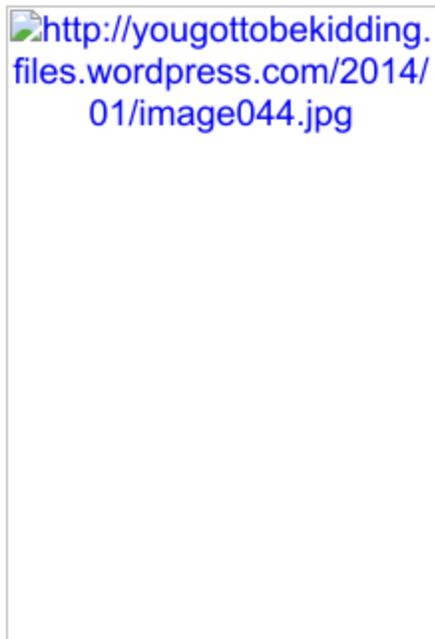
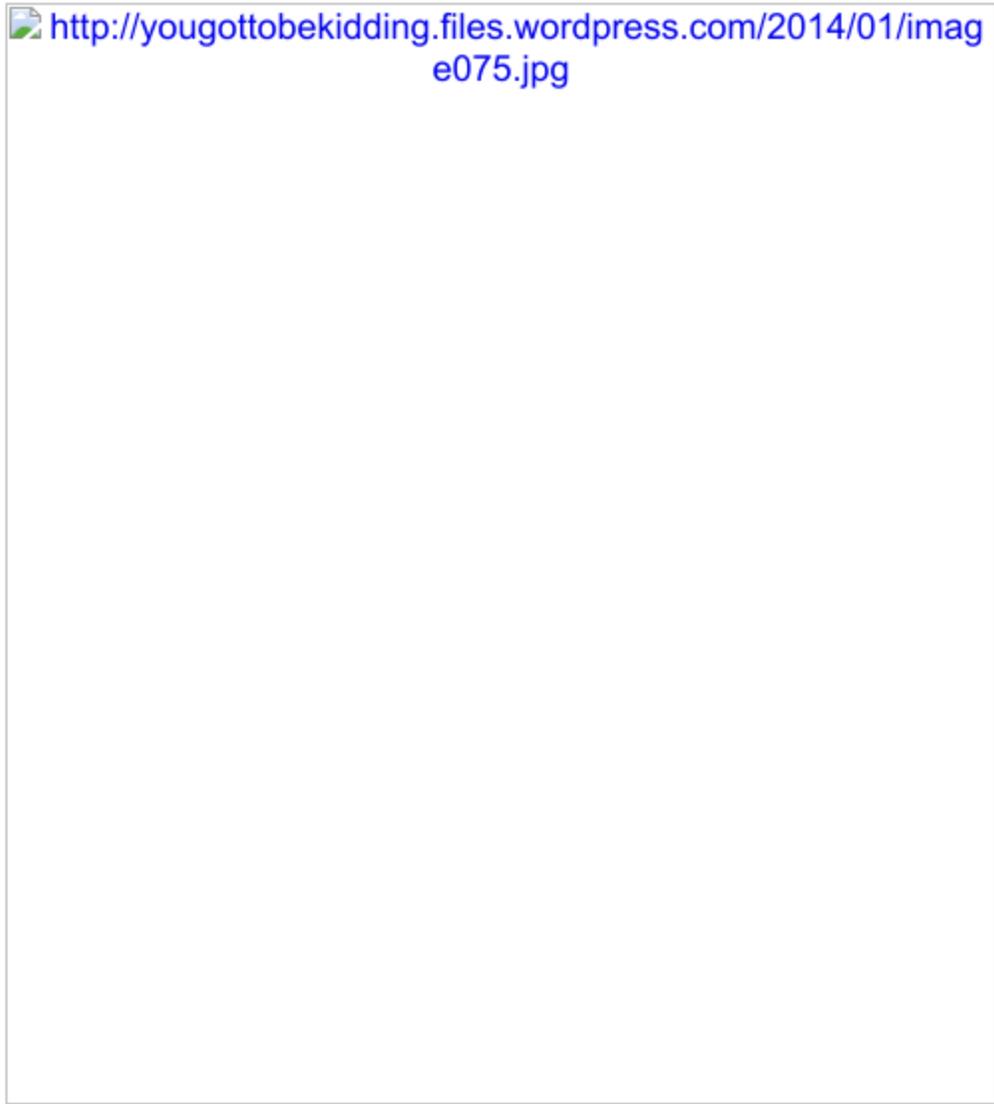
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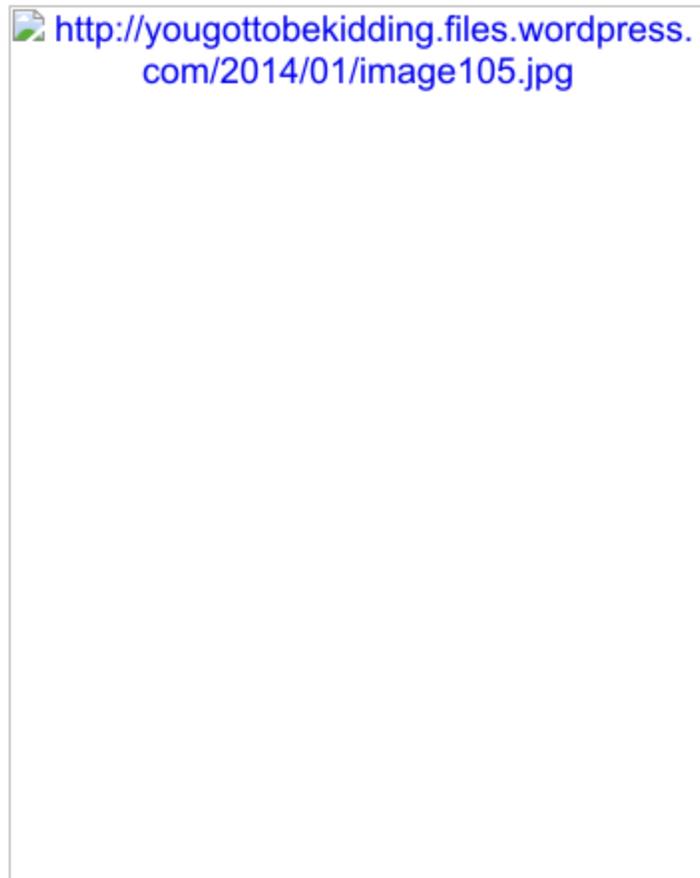
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Less than a week after Israel and Hamas agreed to a cease fire ending seven weeks of war (*because calling it an armed conflict is too polite*) that killed more than 2200 people of which an estimated 1800 were innocent civilians the Israeli government announced last Sunday that it would appropriate almost 1,000 acres of land (400 hectares) in the Etzion settlement bloc near Bethlehem, in the West Bank that would be used to build homes for Jewish settlers and Palestinian officials and others say would cause only more friction after the Gaza war.

Peace Now, an Israeli group which opposes Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank, said the appropriation was meant to turn a site where 10 families now live adjacent to a Jewish seminary into a permanent settlement. Construction of a major settlement at the location, known as Gevaot, has been mooted by Israel since 2000. Last year the government invited bids for the building of 1,000 housing units at the site. A local Palestinian mayor said Palestinians owned the tracts and harvested olive trees on them. Nabil Abu Rdainah, a spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, called on Israel to cancel the appropriation. *"This decision will lead to more instability. This will only inflame the situation after the war in Gaza,"* Abu Rdainah said.

Israel has come under intense international criticism over its settlement activities, which most countries regard as illegal under international law and a major obstacle to the creation of a viable Palestinian state in any future peace deal. *"We have long made clear our opposition to continued settlement activity,"* a State Department official said. *"This announcement, like every other settlement announcement Israel makes, planning step they approve and construction tender they issue is counterproductive to Israel's stated goal of a negotiated two-state solution with the Palestinians."* *"We urge the government of Israel to reverse this decision,"* the official said in Washington.

The Obama administration has been at odds with over settlements since taking office in 2009. After the collapse of the last round of US-brokered peace talks, US officials cited settlement construction as one of the main reasons for the breakdown, while also faulting the Palestinians for signing a series of international treaties and conventions. Israel has said construction at Gevaot would not constitute the establishment of a new settlement because the site is officially designated a neighborhood of an existing one, Alon Shvut, several kilometres down the road.

This is a blatant land grab. It is definitely counterproductive to any peace initiatives. It only reinforces what many Palestinians believe, that Israel and especially the Netanyahu government are not interested in a two-state solution and would if they could push every Palestinian out of Palestine. Currently some 500,000 Israelis live among 2.4 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, territory the Jewish state captured in the 1967 war. And if Israel is really serious about a

two-state solution and lasting peace it has to stop this and other settlements. I am sorry Israel..... **this is a No.... No....**



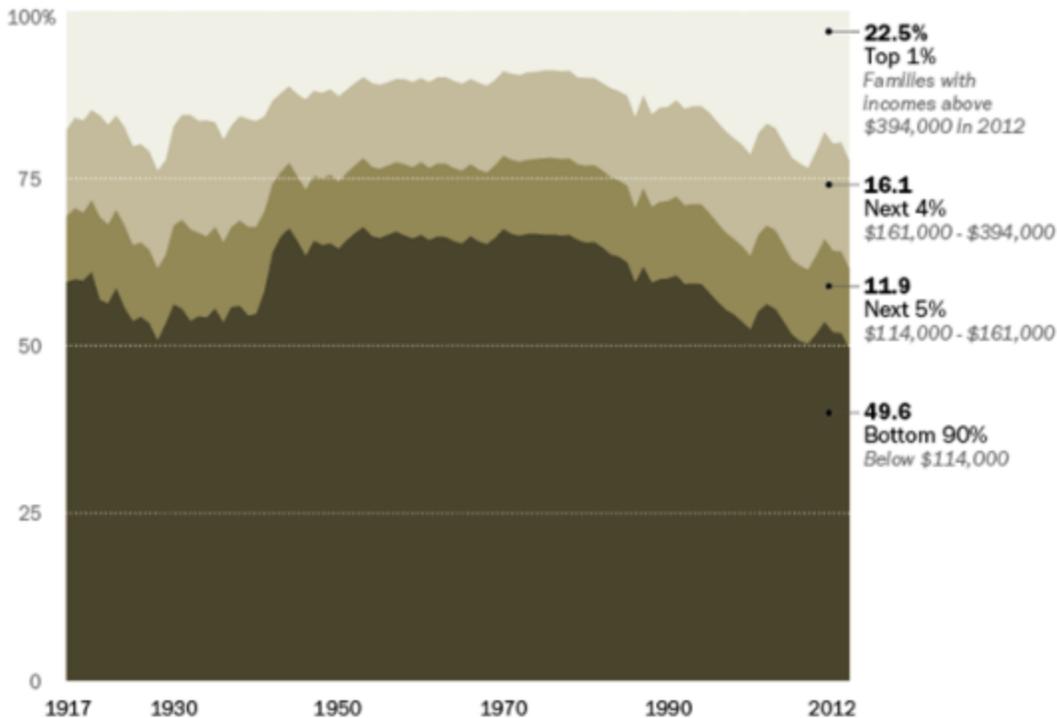
As I was doing research last week I ran across an article in **The New Republic** by Rebecca Leber – ***All of the U.S.'s New Electricity in July Came from Renewables*** – and 0 percent from coal. If this is true, it is a potential game-changer as it is evidence that renewable energy is both competitive and scalable, as well as the future energy source for the country. And just so you don't think that this is just an abnormality, from all of the new electricity generated between January and July, solar and wind contributed 51%.

But getting back to the initial story, last month, a full 100 percent of the new electricity generating capacity added at the utility level came from wind, solar, and water in the U.S. This counts renewables that power utilities in the energy grid—but doesn't include solar installed on the rooftops of homes and businesses. Wind and solar added 379 megawatts and 31 megawatts respectively for July, bringing the two sources' total installed capacity to 6 percent of the utility sector.

But natural gas is still the main new source of electricity this year, even if the oil and gas sector saw no growth last month. Natural gas accounted for 46 percent of new installations for the first seven months of the year, compared to over a quarter each for wind and solar. While natural gas emits less carbon emissions than coal, it's not necessarily "cleaner." Its methane emissions—a greenhouse gas—are 34 times as potent as carbon over the long-run. Which is why that we have to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible whatever the monetary cost. Still, July was a mind-blowing month for renewables and our country.

Share of Total Annual Income by Income Bracket Groups

Includes capital gains



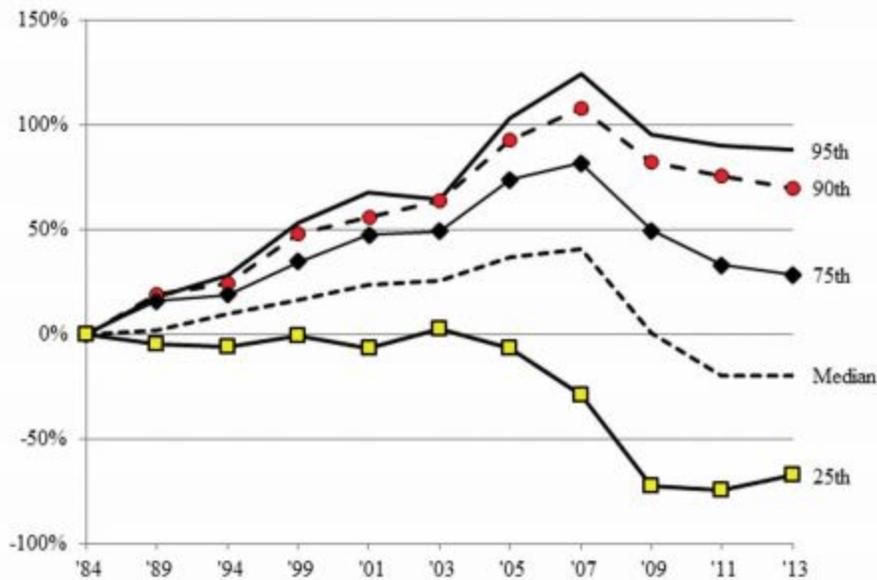
Source: "Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States," by Emmanuel Saez, UC-Berkeley (Sept. 2013)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Reaganomics/supply-side economics hasn't worked if you are part of the Middle Class, because as the graphs in this section shows *20 Percent of the Middle Class Wealth has Evaporated in the past twenty years*. So if you're one of the millions of those in the middle class who can't shake the feeling that you're somehow getting left behind, you're not alone. We've been hearing ad nauseum from both sides of the political spectrum that the economy is seeing a tremendous recovery thanks to the policies of the current democratic White House or that things are crumbling beneath our feet, never to be rebuilt. Of course, that depends on what media sources you choose to digest, but it certainly is a mixed bag. Another common narrative is that the middle class is dying, rapidly growing levels of inequality are polarizing America to the point where the country will be unrecognizable from an economic standpoint in a number of years. That one actually has some merit to it, although it might be a bit hyperbolic.

But the fact that rampant inequality has taken America hostage is not an idea that is lost on the majority of U.S. citizens. As the economy has seen recovery over the past six years following the devastating financial crisis and subsequent recession, most people have had to sit back and watch almost all of the spoils go to the top few percent. For the rich, stock prices have gone up and executive compensation continues to skyrocket, all giving a nice feeling of confidence in the future of the American economy. But for everybody else, a still-suffering housing market, stagnating wages, and rising debts are still heavy burdens on the middle and lower classes. In fact, according to The Washington Post, the middle class is no better off than it was twenty years ago. Somehow, actually, it's 20 percent poorer.

Figure 1. Change in wealth since 1984 for various percentiles (in 2013 dollars)



That's right, somehow and somewhere in the past thirty years, after all the Reaganomics, trickle-down theories, and two Bush-family presidencies, the core of the American economy has lost economic power. While this will naturally lead to pundits on either side of the political spectrum to scream at each other whilst digging into the numbers to find someone to blame, it doesn't actually help. Now, The Washington Post does note perhaps the most important caveat of these findings: that these things tend to be cyclical, and that levels of wealth go up and down over time. What we may be looking at is a snapshot in time, where many people may have taken out loans for school or to buy a home, which will then be paid back over time.

The chart above, taken from The Russell Sage Foundation, which put together the study indicating the middle class is poorer than it was three decades ago, shows the drops in wealth over time being discussed. It's easy to point out when the recession hit in the late 2000s and to a much lesser degree during 2001 when growth slowed. But one only needs to look at the median to get a glimpse of the strife of the average American. Fabian Pfeffer, Sheldon Danziger, and Robert Schoeni, the study's authors, all take note that everyone took a big hit during the recession, and as a result, inequality has grown by leaps and bounds. "Wealth losses," the study says, "were not distributed equally. While large absolute amounts of wealth were destroyed at the top of the wealth distribution, households at the bottom of the wealth distribution lost the largest share of their total wealth. As a result, wealth inequality increased significantly from 2003 to 2013; by some metrics inequality roughly doubled." The authors don't leave on a very optimistic note either, writing, "*the American economy has experienced rising income and wealth inequality for several decades, and there is little evidence these trends are likely to reverse in the near term.*"

The ever-increasing levels of inequality largely flew under the radar up until the most recent recession and didn't really enter the mainstream as a narrative until protesters during Occupy Wall Street started discussing the '1 percent.' While that movement has since fizzled out, it was successful in alerting many middle and low class Americans about the growing issue, many of whom were either not aware or not privy to the serious issues inequality arises. Most Americans wouldn't think anything was wrong until they could no longer have a pizza delivered or until they couldn't watch the NFL on Sundays. As long as there's enough to keep people placated, they usually won't make much of a fuss. But finding out that a huge percentage of the population has lost one-fifth of their wealth over the past

three decades, while many suspected that it had probably grown, may be enough to shake some people out of their cocoons, and force them to pay attention to some of the major economic issues of the day.

Essentially, the American economy — or any economy, for that matter — depends heavily on a balancing act between the rich and the poor, and by providing opportunities for the less-fortunate to climb out of poverty using the tools provided to improve their standing, namely education and training. But as the cards become more heavily stacked against the poor, their prospects become more and more grim, at which point unrest can take hold. Many people may be fairly shocked to learn that while they suspected their assets and wealth had appreciated over the past few decades, they instead find themselves lagging further behind than before. This can have long-standing effects as those caught on the bottom will grow to resent the individuals prospering.

The chart at the top from Pew Research shows the overall creep of the wealthiest classes into overall wealth distribution, meaning that the problem is still growing, and as the authors of The Russell Sage Foundation study note, it doesn't look like it will stop any time soon. Now members of the middle class can pin a percentage on how deeply the past three decades of economic cycles have eroded their wealth. So for those of you who still believe that the markets will fix things, the answer is that you are wrong. Markets can be manipulated to the benefit of those at the top especially when government policies over oversight have been relaxed. Couple this with unbridled greed and the past three decades have shown the makings of greater and greater inequality. And the only thing that will reverse this trend are stringent economic policies that ensure that the maximum number of people benefit and not just those at the top.

Britain Raises Terror Threat Level



Last week when I was in London, Prime Minister David Cameron pledged Friday to plug gaps in Britain's armory to combat terror, describing the extremist threat posed by the Islamic State group as being more dangerous than even that of al-Qaida. Cameron's remarks came just moments after authorities raised Britain's terror threat level to severe, the second-highest level. The decision was related to developments in Iraq and Syria, but there was no information to suggest an attack was imminent. *"What we are facing in Iraq now with ISIL is a greater threat to our security than we have seen before,"* Cameron said, using an abbreviation for a longer name the Islamic State previously used: the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant.

He told reporters that while the Taliban facilitated al-Qaida terrorism, the Islamic State group is *"effectively a state run by terrorists."* He said the ambition to create an Islamist caliphate isn't something that could be ignored. *"We could be facing a terrorist state on the shores of the Mediterranean and bordering a NATO member,"* he said, referring to Turkey. Intelligence and security services now believe around 500 Britons have gone to fight in Syria and potentially Iraq. Some of the plots are likely to involve fighters who have traveled from Britain and Europe to take part in fighting in the Middle East.

British police have appealed to the public to help identify aspiring terrorists after the killing of an American journalist focused attention on extremism in the U.K. The involvement of a person of British nationality in James Foley's beheading underscored the need to identify those who might travel abroad to fight or are at risk of being radicalized. The attack on a Jewish museum in Brussels also underscored the willingness of the members of the group to attack Europeans. British authorities say around 70 arrests have been made in the first half of the year for a variety of offenses, including fundraising, preparing for terrorism acts and traveling abroad for terrorist training. The police say such arrests are being made at a rate five times greater than 2013. One action Cameron outlined was the possibility that passports could be taken away. He said further measures would be described in the House of Commons on Monday.

Britain also wants to revive a directive to enable police and security services to share passenger records in the European Union. Concerns about civil liberties have stalled the measure in the European Parliament. *"The root cause of this threat to our security is quite clear,"* Cameron said. *"It is a poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism that is condemned by all faiths and faith leaders."* Britain raised the country's terror threat level from substantial to severe just before Cameron held his news conference. The threat level means a terrorist attack is considered highly likely.

Home Secretary Theresa May said the decision by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Center was made on the basis of intelligence and independent of the Cameron and his Cabinet. *"Severe"* is the second-highest of five levels. The last time the rate was raised to severe was in September 2010 — in response to the attempt to detonate a bomb on a U.S. passenger plane over Detroit. It was last raised to the highest level, or critical, in June 2007, after a car on fire was driven into the Glasgow Airport terminal building and — separately — two devices were found in cars in central London.

On July 7, 2005, four suicide bombers attacked the London transit system at rush hour and killed 52 commuters and injured hundreds. Christian Leuprecht, a security expert at the Royal Military College of Canada and Queen's University, said that though officials said there was no specific threat made, it is likely that data flowing to the Britain's intelligence agencies caused them concern. I have a concern with this because I remember the UK in the early 1970s when there was a wave of IRA bombings. When the IRA bombed The Hardrock Café and Harrods, as well as killing a prominent member of the

British Royal Family, Lord Mountbatten and somehow the country survived. So why is there so much hysteria over ISIS who are currently fighting wars in two countries and now being besieged by Syrians, Iraqis, Kurds, Turks and Iranians as well as being bombed by America war planes and drones?

Yes, ISIS is dangerous. But they are being overblown into Bogymen who are no larger threats to the United Kingdom and the United States than inner city gangs, economic inequality, crumbling infrastructure, inadequate healthcare and the lack of education for many of our young people. And maybe we should try to address the underlying reasons why disillusioned young men and women feel the need to give their lives to a radical terrorist organization. Because as dangerous as ISIS is, the disillusionment of these young people is the most dangerous of all. So if David Cameron wants address home grown terrorism, he and others should address the underlying causes.



In 1963 James Baldwin released a series of essays in a book titled ***The Fire Next Time*** as the bookseller Amazon describes – A national bestseller when it first appeared in 1963, *The Fire Next Time* galvanized the nation and gave passionate voice to the emerging civil rights movement. At once a powerful evocation of James Baldwin's early life in Harlem and a disturbing examination of the consequences of racial injustice, the book is an intensely personal and provocative document. It consists of two "letters," written on the occasion of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, that exhort Americans, both black and white, to attack the terrible legacy of racism. Described by **The New York Times Book Review** as "sermon, ultimatum, confession, deposition, testament, and chronicle...all presented in searing, brilliant prose," *The Fire Next Time* stands as a classic of our literature.

So when I came across Bob Herbert op-ed last week in **The Huffington Post** – ***The Fire This Time*** – I was better equip to really understand and appreciate one of the passages in Baldwin's masterpiece, "I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain." With many Americans believing that the country has moved into a post-racial America because of the election of Barack Obama, Herbert points out in the summer of 2005 when these same people were stunned when legions of poor black people in desperate circumstances seemed to have suddenly and inexplicably materialized in New Orleans during the flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina. Expressions of disbelief poured in from around the nation: "How can this be happening?" "I had no idea conditions were that bad." "My God, is this America?"

Herbert: People found themselves staring at the kind of poverty they thought had been largely wiped out decades earlier. President George W. Bush seemed as astonished as anyone. He made an eerie, oddly-lit, outdoor appearance in the city's French Quarter on the evening of September 15 to announce that his administration would wage an all-out fight against the economic distress that continued to plague so many African Americans. If you had listened to his announcement on the radio, you might have thought you were hearing the ghost of Lyndon Johnson. Poverty in America, said Bush, *"has roots in a history of racial discrimination which cut off generations from the opportunity of America."* He added, *"We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action."*

Anyone who took Bush's pledge seriously would have ended up disappointed because nothing of the sort happened. The poor black people of New Orleans faded back into the invisibility from which they had come. It was ever thus: Some tragic development occurs; the media spotlight homes in on black people who had previously been invisible; instant experts weigh in with their pompous, uninformed analyses; and commitments as empty as deflated balloons are made. This time it's Ferguson, Missouri, in the spotlight. And you can bet the mortgage that this time will be no different.

The precipitating events that cause these periodic national spasms can vary widely -- the flooding of New Orleans, the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the beating of Rodney King. But these tragedies all emerge from the same fetid source -- the racism embedded in the very foundation of America. And it's that racism -- stark, in-your-face, never-ending, frequently murderous -- that has so many African-Americans so angry and frustrated, so furious, so enraged. Black people all across America, not just in Ferguson, are angry about the killing of Michael Brown. And they remain angry over the killing of Trayvon Martin. And many are seething over the fatal chokehold clamped on the throat of Eric Garner by a cop on Staten Island in New York -- a cop who refused to relent even as Garner gasped, *"I can't breathe, I can't breathe."*

They are angry about all those things, but they are also angry and frustrated about so much more. Here are just a few of the complaints. Black people are angry about voter suppression -- the relentless, organized, years-long effort to prevent African-Americans from freely exercising their fundamental right to cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice. That effort was bolstered immeasurably and given a veneer of legitimacy last year by the Supreme Court's vile and destructive evisceration of the Voting Rights Act.

Blacks are angry and bitterly frustrated over the way so many were targeted and victimized by predators in the housing and finance industries, and the disproportionate suffering that African-Americans endured in the subsequent housing meltdown and the recession. And they are angry about being left so far behind in the so-called economic recovery.

Blacks hold a variety of views about the job that Barack Obama has done as president. Most are very supportive; some have been disappointed. But nearly all are furious at the high levels of racism and personal venom that have characterized so much of the opposition not just to the president's policies but to him personally. Most blacks I know have taken that as an affront to themselves, as well as an appalling affront to the president, and the resentment they feel is off the charts.

And, yes, there is profound anger and resentment at the myriad hateful ways that blacks are treated throughout the criminal justice system. I will never forget traveling to Avon Park, Florida, a few years

ago to cover the case of an African-American girl in kindergarten who was arrested by the police, handcuffed and taken to the police station in the back seat of a patrol car because she had thrown a tantrum in the classroom. When I interviewed the police chief, I expressed amazement that this had happened to a six-year-old. His reply came in an instant: "Do you think this is the first six-year-old we've arrested?"

Handcuffing the child had proved difficult. "You can't handcuff them on their wrists because their wrists are too small," the chief explained, "so you have to handcuff them up by their biceps."

These are just a very few of the many deep concerns harbored by black Americans. (Others include the chronic under-funding and wholesale closing of public schools in black neighborhoods; the continued widespread discrimination in employment and housing; and the humiliating, debilitating racist encounters, large and small, that nearly all black people face at one time or another, and that many blacks face on a daily basis.)

Despite all the rhetoric, the deepest concerns of blacks are seldom acted upon in any sustained, effective way. Most of the time, they are not even taken seriously. So the anger and the resentment intensifies, month after month, year after year, like gases in pressurized containers, until at some point they blow. That's what has happened in Ferguson. And the trouble in Ferguson is likely to continue, off and on, indefinitely. Because the likelihood of a successful prosecution of the cop who killed Michael Brown is very slim.

The idea that America had reached some level of post-racism with the election of Barack Obama was always delusionary. But it was true that great strides had been made in the half-century or so that followed the civil rights movement. Now, because of the persistence of racism and a relaxation of the fight against it, we are moving backwards. Ferguson is just the latest illustration.

There is no reason to believe that government officials at the federal, state or local level will take the critical steps necessary to begin turning these tragic and explosive matters around. Government officials have a horror of honestly engaging anything that has to do with race. I can't imagine the required leadership coming from any place other than the black community itself.

What is needed right now is a national gathering of some of the brightest and most committed African-American men and women to begin devising strategies to fight back in a coherent and sustained way against the racial injustice that still permeates this society. Let that be the first step toward the development of a new cadre of black leadership to carry this fight forward.

In the absence of such leadership, it will be extremely difficult to avoid new outbreaks of the kind of violence and incoherence that we've seen in Ferguson. And there is always a danger of such outbreaks spiraling into something much worse, something completely out of control. I remember Newark and Detroit in 1967, and the devastation that followed the death of Dr. King, and Los Angeles in 1992, and on and on.

Those tragedies did not occur in a vacuum and it's important to understand that. History tells us that it won't be long before another Michael Brown, or Eric Garner, or Trayvon Martin is thrust upon us. The emergence of effective black leadership to guide us over the long haul is America's only defense against such outrages, and against what James Baldwin so accurately characterized as the fire next time.

America often puts a band-aid on a wound expecting everything to heal. The country has systemic problems that it chooses to ignore. And as such, things are only getting worse. To cure these problems require serious investment in education, especially early education, healthcare, decent housing and most of all.... Jobs.... Jobs... Jobs.... When there is 50% unemployment of males in race or in any country, it is a power keg ready to erupt. So why are so many people surprised..... I'm not.... **And this is why this is my rant of the week....**

WEEK'S READINGS

I am a 15-year-old immigrant who came to America because gangs murdered my family. All I want to do is stay and learn



This is what it's like to be a child detained at a holding facility in the US border crisis. This is what it's like to be afraid to go south again. This is my undocumented limbo

When my father was murdered by gangs in El Salvador when I was seven, I thought nothing could get worse. But then the gangs started threatening me, too, and beating up my brothers. I couldn't go to school because the gangs there would come after me, and I wasn't safe at home because the other gangs there came after all of us. There was nothing the police would or could do.

I was constantly under threat, as were my siblings. So in June 2013, scared of this situation, we made the decision to go to the United States – to try to escape the violence. I was 14, and my brothers were nine and 12.

We were all frightened to go, and we knew that it was very risky and dangerous. But it was riskier to stay where we were.

Still, fleeing El Salvador was scary: we knew there were lots of bad people who kidnap and capture travelers along the way to America, so we never really felt safe. We took buses, cars and taxis to get through Guatemala and Mexico, and everything looked so strange.

Through it all, I just kept thinking about our father's murder, and our cousin's murder, about all the bad people who wanted to hurt us in El Salvador, and prayed that we would find somewhere safe in America.

But when we got to the border, we had to make a choice. We were told that we probably wouldn't get caught if we traveled through the desert, but people die there, and we were just children. So we went through the immigration checkpoint at Tijuana and were detained.

The American border agents handcuffed us, even my youngest brother, which was scary because none of us had ever been handcuffed before. We didn't know what would come next. We didn't know if they would just send us back right away, if we would even have a chance to tell our story to anyone, to make them understand, or if we would ever have any chance of living in the United States.

We were in the immigration holding center for about two days, and only then were we moved to a shelter for children, where we stayed for about two weeks. There, we were able to go to school, and the workers at the shelter helped us out a lot.

But that's also when they told us about the court that would decide if we get to stay in America, because of how we got here. We got very worried, because we were thinking to ourselves, "*Now we have to go to a court, and we don't have a lawyer!*"

After we were released from the shelter in July 2013 to await our date with the judge, we went to Washington so we could be with my mom. I had not seen her since she had been forced to flee El Salvador years ago (also because of the gangs). Seeing my mom again was the best day I had had in so long. I finally felt safe.

I've been attending high school, just like any other American teenager. Because our teachers don't speak a lot of Spanish, they're having us use the Rosetta Stone program – so each day we learn a bit more. It's been difficult, but I'm really loving being so excited about school. This year, I've had excellent grades – as have my brothers – so it's helped us feel better about our decision to leave, despite all the troubles.

But our court date is in September, so we're more concerned than ever. We still don't have a lawyer. We don't know what to tell the immigration judge. We don't know what the American laws are like. We can't defend ourselves in front of a judge if we don't even know the language, let alone the laws of this country. We really want to stay in the United States, but it feels like, if we go to the judge without a lawyer, it's almost certain that he'll send us back to our home country no matter what we say.

We have the chance for a better future here, a future that we can't have in El Salvador: there's so much violence there, and the opportunities to get ahead in life – education, work – just aren't safe because of the violence. All we're asking for is help: the help of an attorney, so that we can have a chance to stay and access opportunities that will help us be better and help society.

We just want to go to school and work hard and not have to worry about being hurt or killed, the way we would back home.

As told to Rafael Noboa y Rivera, in Spanish. "Ashley" is represented by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Northwest Immigrants Rights Project in a class action lawsuit against the US government for the right to be represented by a lawyer in her deportation hearing.

Salt intake is too high in 181 of 187 countries around the world



For those of you who like me enjoy French fries, potato chips (and I don't mean the sissy kind) and an occasional blended margarita with salt, we are not alone because Tufts University researchers have determined, with an average of 3.95 grams of sodium consumed per person per day--nearly double the two grams daily recommended by the World Health Organization. The taste for soy in Asia, stews in Eastern Europe and bread and processed food in the United States leads to 1.65 million deaths annually from diseases attributable to excess sodium consumption, a major cause of high blood pressure the world over, according to a study published Thursday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Forty percent of those deaths occurred before the age of 70, and 84 percent were in low- and middle-income countries. The death rate, mainly from heart disease and stroke, was lowest in Kenya (four deaths per million adults) and highest in Georgia (1,967 deaths per million).

In 181 of 187 countries for which data was available, adults consume too much sodium, the researchers concluded. Adults in only a handful of African nations -- notably Kenya, Cameroon and Gabon -- were able to keep their sodium consumption below the recommended level. Nearly 10 percent of all deaths from cardiovascular causes were attributed to excess sodium intake. *"One in 10 is quite large,"* said Dariush Mozzafarian, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, who led the research. He noted the *"enormous rates of stroke in China, Eastern Europe and Central Asia."*

Reduction of sodium intake leads to lower blood pressure and may result in fewer deaths. *"What needs to be done is to have a national, coordinated policy"* on salt in food for the United States, Mozzafarian said. The FDA has said it plans to work with the food and beverage industries to voluntarily reduce salt in food, an approach that has shown some success in the United Kingdom, Mozzafarian said. Consumers need to *"stand up and ask the government to do something about sodium in the food supply,"* he said. In contrast to the recommendations of the WHO, the American Heart Association and other groups, a large study in the same edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that consumption of three to six grams of salt a day was associated with *"a lower risk of death and cardiovascular events than was either a higher or lower estimated level of intake."*

The study suggested that people who consumed fewer than three grams of sodium daily faced a 27% higher risk of death or a heart attack or stroke, underscoring the degree to which the proper amount of salt intake remains a controversial subject. The Tufts researchers collected information on salt intake in 66 countries that account for 74.1 percent of the world's adult population and modeled it for the rest. They estimated that regional average sodium consumption ranged from a low of 2.18 grams to a high of 5.51 grams, with the greatest salt consumption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.



Last week a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians was agreed ending their seven-week conflict in Gaza appeared to be holding early on Wednesday as the focus shifted to securing an arrangement for the long term. No clear victor emerged from what had become a war of attrition between the Middle East's most powerful armed forces and the dominant Hamas militant movement in the Gaza Strip. Exacting a heavy toll in Palestinian lives and property, Israel said it dealt a strong blow to Hamas, killing several of its military leaders and destroying the group's cross-border infiltration tunnels. But Israel also faced persistent rocket fire for nearly two months that caused an exodus from a number of border communities and became part of daily life in its commercial heartland.

Palestinian and Egyptian officials said the deal, which was mediated in Cairo and took effect on Tuesday evening, called for an indefinite halt to hostilities, the immediate opening of Gaza's blockaded crossings with Israel and Egypt and a widening of the territory's fishing zone in the Mediterranean. A senior official of the Islamist group Hamas, which runs Gaza, voiced willingness for the security forces of Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the unity government he formed in June to control the passage points. Both Israel and Egypt view Hamas as a security threat and are seeking guarantees that weapons will not enter the territory of 1.8 million people. Under a second stage of the truce that would begin a month later, Israel and the Palestinians would discuss the construction of a Gaza sea port and Israel's release of Hamas prisoners in the occupied West Bank, possibly in a trade for body parts of two Israeli soldiers believed held by Hamas, the officials said.

After the ceasefire began, crowds and traffic filled the streets of Gaza. Car horns blared and recorded chants praising God sounded from mosque loudspeakers. Celebratory gunfire killed one Palestinian and wounded 19 others, hospital officials said. "Today we declare the victory of the resistance, today we declare the victory of Gaza," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said. Israel gave a low-key response to the truce, saying it would facilitate the flow of civilian goods and humanitarian and reconstruction aid into the impoverished territory if the "open-ended" ceasefire was honored. And then I read William Booth's article in **The Washington Post** last weekend – ***The U.N. says 7 in 10 Palestinians killed in Gaza were civilians. Israel disagrees.***

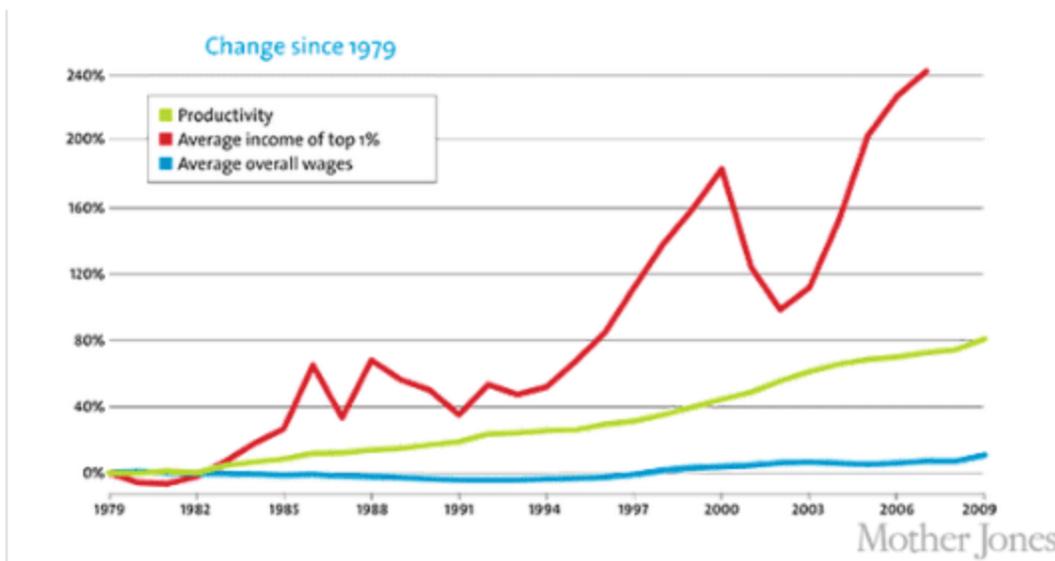
In it he pointed out that although the hostilities have ended, the war in Gaza now continues in a battle between databases to determine who was killed and why. The most contested number, the one that attracts the most stubborn insistence and ferocious rebuttal, is not the total fatalities on the Palestinian side, the more than 2,100 dead in the Gaza hostilities. The controversy centers instead on the ratio of civilians to combatants, or as the Israelis call them “terrorist operatives.” This number will help shape public opinion about the way the war was waged, its cost in human life and whether the hostilities were worth the casualties. In its most recent count, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that 2,104 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including 1,462 civilians, among them 495 children and 253 women. Those U.N. numbers would mean that 69 percent of the total killed were civilians.

By contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said this week that Israeli forces had killed “approximately 1,000 terrorists,” which would mean that far fewer of the 2,104 Palestinian dead were civilians — roughly 52 percent. Israeli military forces pride themselves on being “the most moral army in the world.” The Palestinians say Israeli bombardment was frequently indiscriminate or directed at targets where the risk of civilian casualties was high. In Israel, critics charge that the U.N. numbers are inaccurate and biased, in part because the United Nations bases its reports on numbers generated by human rights groups working in Gaza, which they say cannot be trusted.

But why is this being contested? Whether the ratio is the Israeli assessment of 48 to 52 percent of terrorists to civilians or the UN’s much higher assessment that a much larger ratio of civilians died during the conflict, the fact that almost five hundred children were killed and both sides are jockeying over ratios as if this will give them moral and political cover is despicable. The fact that complete neighborhoods have been obliterated and both sides are fighting over numbers instead of trying to work together, independently or through third parties to do whatever possible to allay the hardship of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians living in this area is also despicable. And worse of all, the fact that both sides are trying to claim a “win” when somewhere between 1200 to 1800 innocent civilians lives were taken from them because leadership on both sides failed to protect them borders on genocide that both sides are party to. War is failure and until societies understand this, conflicts like this will continue.

As I wrote last week, “more than 2000 people have died in Gaza since the beginning of this most conflict began. And it is estimated that almost 1800 have been innocent civilians. This is criminal. Life is important everywhere, a Palestinian life is no less precious as an Israeli life. And people on both sides are to blame, so this conflict has to stop because an eye for an eye blinds everyone.” And now to then continue the fight over numbers of percentage of terrorist to civilians, when millions of innocent civilians have been terrorized for seven weeks and almost 500 children were senselessly killed, is the most despicable of all.... More importantly nothing is going to change....

“Inequality matters,” Bill Moyers said in a recent essay. *“You will hear people say it doesn’t, but they are usually so high up the ladder they can’t even see those at the bottom.”* The distance between the first and the least in America is indeed vast and growing — proven by shocking statistics and personal stories of challenge and hardship, made even harder by policies and political collusion that reward the wealthy at the cost of everyone else. We need to be aware about the class gap, how it happened, what’s making it worse and what you can do about it. Because if we don’t The American Dream as we know it will die.



In the past 20 years, the US economy has grown nearly 60 percent. This huge increase in productivity is partly due to automation, the internet, and other improvements in efficiency. But it's also the result of Americans working harder—often without a big boost to their bottom lines. Oh, and meanwhile, corporate profits are up 20 percent.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR GAINS

Productivity has surged, but income and wages have stagnated for most Americans. If the median household income had kept pace with the economy since 1970, it would now be nearly \$92,000, not \$50,000.



Kiev's Independence Square was the focal point of much of the initial violence

With pressures building on all sides, and after five months of intensifying combat that threatened to rip Ukraine apart and to reignite the Cold War, the Ukrainian government and separatist forces signed a cease-fire agreement on Friday that analysts considered highly tenuous in a country that remains a tinderbox. Previous attempts to stop the fighting have failed. But the prime difference this time was that the main thrust of the plan was not just endorsed, but laid out, by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, whom Western leaders accuse of stoking unrest to prevent Ukraine from slipping out of Russia's orbit.

The cease-fire was agreed to after a two-week rebel counteroffensive backed by Russian troops, armor and artillery that threatened to roll back most of the gains the Ukrainian military had made. Russia has not acknowledged the presence of any of its military units on Ukrainian soil, and there was no mention of their removal as part of the agreement. From the moment the crisis erupted in November — when Ukraine's president at the time, Viktor F. Yanukovich, rejected a trade agreement with the European Union in favor of a deal with Russia — Kiev and the West have accused Moscow of destabilizing the country, first with a stealth invasion and annexation of Crimea and then by inspiring and covertly arming the rebels in southeastern Ukraine.

The conflict ignited the most serious East-West confrontation since the end of the Cold War, with Europe and the United States looking largely impotent as Moscow upset the postwar order by altering borders by force. The West has imposed some economic sanctions, and it is threatening more, but the Kremlin has dismissed their impact and made it clear that it no longer feels itself beholden to Western nations or institutions. The agreement reached Friday laid out the first tentative steps toward both an immediate cessation of hostilities and the promise of greater political freedom in the future. Artillery exchanges tapered off after it was put in effect at 6 p.m., and quiet prevailed through the initial hours.

Combat in the contested southeastern region that killed some 2,600 people and in the last two weeks, Ukrainian forces suffered heavy setbacks, with the separatists opening a third front that threatened the strategic southern coast around the port of Mariupol. Meanwhile, NATO leaders at a summit meeting in Wales threatened Russia with tougher sanctions and committed to providing increased defensive help for Ukraine and the alliance's Eastern European members. Among other things, the cease-fire agreement called for amnesty for all those who disarm and who did not commit serious crimes; the release of all hostages; the disbanding of militias; and the establishment of a 10-kilometer buffer zone (about six miles) along the Russian-Ukrainian border, with compliance overseen by international monitors.

It also points the way to a possible political solution to the conflict. Mr. Putin, insistent that Ukraine be tied to Russia instead of the West, has pressed for regional autonomy for the southeastern regions, while the Ukrainian government has so far been open only to the idea of decentralization. On the face of it, Mr. Putin's endorsement of the cease-fire should increase the chances that it will be maintained. But he has consistently operated in a deceitful manner on Ukraine, like denying that Russia had backed the rebel fighters and had moved its troops and artillery into the country, when clearly it had done so — so there is every reason for skepticism.

In his quest for control and regional power, Mr. Putin poses a serious threat to the international order by disregarding borders, violating agreements and pursuing an expansionist vision without regard to other states or even the effect that economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation could have on Russia.

Although NATO has also been focused on the ISIS threat this week, the alliance pushed back hard against him. It reaffirmed its core purpose of defending every ally against an attack, including those in Eastern Europe who feel most threatened by Mr. Putin's aggression, and created a 4,000-person rapid reaction force capable of deploying in 48 hours.

And although Ukraine is not an alliance member, President Obama said at a news conference on Friday that NATO would uphold the country's "sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and right to defend itself." The 28 NATO members have promised to provide Ukraine with logistics assistance, training and help in organizing the military command structure and related forces. The United States and its allies are also debating going even further and supplying defensive weapons, including radar and anti-tank weapons.

But let's get real. It was the Europeans and the US whose advances to the moderates in Ukraine offering the possibility of joining the European Union and whispers of the possibility of joining NATO that fan the flames of discontent in the country. And although he have been wooed by the West, unable to get the deal that he desired democratically elected President Viktor Yanukovich announces abandonment of a trade agreement with the EU, seeking closer ties with Moscow. This ignited protest by for pro-EU anti-government protesters as images of them bloodied by police crackdown spread online and in the media leading to huge protests in Kiev's Independence Square. The City Hall is seized by activists.

By November public support grew when images of pro-EU anti-government protesters bloodied by police crackdown spread online and in the media. Demonstrations escalated when Mykola Azarov resigned as Ukraine's prime minister and the parliament repealed anti-protest laws imposed by Yanukovich. Protest leaders, the political opposition and Yanukovich agree to form a new government and hold early elections. Yanukovich's powers are slashed. The parliament votes to free Yulia Tymoshenko, the former prime minister, from prison. Yanukovich flees Kiev after protesters take control of the capital. And in February Ukraine politicians vote to remove Yanukovich. Ukraine's parliament then assigned presidential powers to its new speaker, Oleksandr Turchinov, an ally of to from President Tymoshenko who was released from prison. Pro-Russian protesters rally in Crimea against the new Kiev administration. Ukraine's interim government drew up a warrant for Yanukovich's arrest.

In February Pro-Russian Aleksey Chaly was then appointed Sevastopol's de facto mayor as rallies in Crimea continue. Crimean Tartars supporting the new Kiev administration clash with pro-Russia protesters in the region. Pro-Kremlin armed men seize government buildings in Crimea. Ukraine government vows to prevent a country break-up as Crimean parliament set May 25 as the date for referendum on region's status. Yanukovich is granted refuge in Russia. Armed men in unmarked combat fatigues seize Simferopol international airport and a military airfield in Sevastopol. UN Security Council holds an emergency closed-door session to discuss the situation in Crimea. Moscow responded by claiming that military movements in Crimea were in line with previous agreements to protect its fleet position in the Black Sea. And in March Russian upper house of the parliament approves a request by Putin to use military power in Ukraine. On March 2, 2014 a convoy of hundreds of Russian troops headed toward the regional capital of Crimea resulting in Arseny Yatsenyuk, Ukraine's new prime minister accusing Russia of declaring war on his country.

Since the removal of President Viktor Yanukovich through deadly anti-government protests, Ukraine has called for fresh presidential elections on May 25. The move was countered by the Crimea

administration that voted overwhelmingly to join Russia in a referendum deemed illegitimate by the US and EU, but welcomed by Russia. As the government in Kiev continued to emphasize the need for a united Ukraine, and world leaders strive to avoid military conflict all side claimed the moral high ground when in fact what happened in Kiev and Ukraine as a whole was an anti-constitutional takeover and armed seizure of power ignited by the West.

The Americans who themselves are war weary have no illusion that Ukraine could ever prevail in a war with Russia. But the intent of the NATO summit decisions is to encourage a political solution by raising the cost of further military actions by the rebels and Mr. Putin. The Europeans, who too often hesitated during this crisis, on Friday showed more resolve by agreeing to stronger sanctions that affect Russia's access to capital markets, defense, dual-use goods and sensitive technology. And although only one-day in the cease-fire, it has already been breached and if a permanent cease fire isn't reach the Ukraine crisis could get a lot worse. And just blaming Putin, who was actually protecting his southern flank isn't the solution.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

Most of our generation was HOME SCHOOLED in many ways.

1. **My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE.**

"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

2. **My mother taught me RELIGION.**

"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."

3. **My father taught me about TIME TRAVEL.**

"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

4. **My father taught me LOGIC.**

" Because I said so, that's why."

5. **My mother taught me MORE LOGIC.**

"If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."

6. **My mother taught me FORESIGHT.**

"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

7. **My father taught me IRONY.**

"Keep crying and I'll give you something to cry about."

8. **My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS.**

"Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

9. **My mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM.**

"Just you look at that dirt on the back of your neck?"

10. **My mother taught me about STAMINA.**

"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

11 **My mother taught me about WEATHER.**

"This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."

12. **My mother taught me about HYPOCRISY.**

"If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"

13. **My father taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE.**

"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out..."

14. **My mother taught me about BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION.**

"Stop acting like your father!"

15. **My mother taught me about ENVY.**

"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have wonderful parents like you do."

16. **My mother taught me about ANTICIPATION.**

"Just wait until we get home."

17. **My mother taught me about RECEIVING.**

"You are going to get it from your father when you get home!"

18. **My mother taught me MEDICAL SCIENCE.**

"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."

19. **My mother taught me ESP.**

"Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"

20. **My father taught me HUMOUR.**

"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."

21. **My mother taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT.**

"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

22. **My mother taught me GENETICS.**

"You're just like your father."

23. **My mother taught me about my ROOTS.**

"Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"

24. **My mother taught me WISDOM.**

"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

25. **My father taught me about JUSTICE.**

"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

Quote of the week:

***"Faith is not about everything turning out ok.
It's about being ok, no matter how things turn out."***

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Watch Jon Stewart trash the media coverage of Ferguson

Web Link: <http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/ufgeuz/race-off>

Jon Stewart has been on vacation, but the Daily Show returned last night. Nearly the entire episode was devoted to Ferguson -- the story that dominated the news for the entire time he was away. Not that his fans didn't have other comedic options at the time; former Daily Show correspondent John Oliver, who now has a show in HBO, filmed a segment on Ferguson and the militarization of the police. It has been viewed on YouTube more than 3 million times already.

Stewart's main segment on Ferguson -- embedded at the top of this post -- blasts media coverage of the protests and the death of Michael Brown, as most of Stewart's most memorable segments do. In another segment, Daily Show correspondent Michael Che ends up reporting from space, after he and Stewart try to find a city that hasn't seen an unarmed black resident killed recently.

**Four-Minute Video Explains America's
Opportunity Gap (With Legos!)**



Web Link: http://youtu.be/t2XFh_tD2RA

America is the land of equal opportunity. At least that's what we tell ourselves. But most of know that's never really been true, even more so today. Many factors determine whether we advance beyond the step on the economic ladder on which we were born: Are you black or white? Were your parents married or divorced? Did you go to college?

You probably didn't think that America's problem with inequality and lack of opportunity could be explained in less than four minutes using nothing more than a set of Legos, did you? *I urge everyone to click on the above web link....*

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC





Over the years there have been a number of independent record labels that changed music, Motown, Chess Records, Sun Records, Apple and Fania Records to mention a few and Stax Records, synonymous with Southern soul music, should be included among this elite group. Originally known as Satellite, the Memphis company was founded in 1959 by Jim Stewart and his sister, Estelle Axton, and took its new name in 1961 from the first two letters of their last names. Among the many artists who scored hits on Stax and its Volt subsidiary during the Sixties were Rufus and Carla Thomas, Booker T. & the MGs (an interracial instrumental quartet that also served as the company's rhythm section), Sam and Dave, Johnnie Taylor, Albert King, and Otis Redding. Redding's death in 1967 signaled the end of the first Stax era (to which Atlantic retains distribution rights). Subsequently the company spawned a new crop of hit-makers, among them Isaac Hayes, the Staple Singers, and the Dramatics. In June 1977, a year-and-a-half after Stax went bankrupt, the company's masters were purchased by Fantasy, Inc., which revived the Stax and Volt logos for new recordings, in addition to reissuing older material.

Stax Records is critical in American music history as it's one of the most popular soul music record labels of all time – second only to Motown in sales and influence, but first in gritty, raw, stripped-down soul music. In 15 years, Stax placed more than 167 hit songs in the Top 100 on the pop charts, and a staggering 243 hits in the Top 100 R&B charts. It launched the careers of such legendary artists as Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Rufus & Carla Thomas, Booker T, & the MGs, and numerous others. Current Stax recording artists include Ben Harper, Booker T. Jones, and others. With this brief introduction I invite you to enjoy some of the music from one of the greatest independent labels of all time.....

STAX.....

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

Otis Redding – *Try A Little Tenderness* -- http://youtu.be/IQ9n2_5mbig

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

Sam & Dave – **Hold on I'm coming** -- <http://youtu.be/kOLBUtbF8qM>

Sam & Dave – **Soul Man** -- <http://youtu.be/pYh-LwbUwoQ>

Sam & Dave – **When Something is Wrong With My Baby** -- <http://youtu.be/T246rhSoHes>

Rufus Thomas – **Walking the Dog** -- <http://youtu.be/M6AZNywvF-s> and <http://youtu.be/7AmJBM9HbWE>

Rufus Thomas – **'Breakdown' & 'Funky Chicken'** -- <http://youtu.be/KCFyKRtlLOI>

Carla Thomas – **Gee Whiz** -- <http://youtu.be/vLfOzHK6i9g>

Carla Thomas – **You'll lose a good thing** -- <http://youtu.be/9cZd4uAl9Jo>

Rufus Thomas ft. Carla Thomas – **The Night Time Is The Right Time** -- <http://youtu.be/7jBY96xcM9o>

Isaac Hayes – **Shaft** -- <http://youtu.be/oDOH3ViMmCM>

Isaac Hayes – **By the Time I Get to Phoenix** -- <http://youtu.be/zPbhMHVnNnI>

Isaac Hayes – **I Stand Accused** -- <http://youtu.be/eKdUQQ8vI1Y>

Booker T & The MGs – **Green Onions** -- http://youtu.be/WB5VD_Z5Zvg

Booker T & The MGs – **Time is Tight** -- http://youtu.be/C7VAem_LXj8

Billy Stewart – **Sitting in the Park** -- http://youtu.be/F_m8xmL6Vck

Billy Stewart – **I Do Love You** -- <http://youtu.be/DDH8KSstDXg>

Billy Stewart – **Summertime** -- <http://youtu.be/1Vka8HoB5m8>

I hope that you have enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and yours a wonderful week and sorry for the delayed release today....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--
Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC



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