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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 3/15/2015

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Attachments: The_Case_of_the_Vanishing_Private_Eyes_BENJAMIN_WELTON_The_Atlantic_JAN_15_2015.docx;
The_Uberization_of_Healthcare_Stuart_Karten_Qmed_February_12,_2015.docx;
From_second-rate_schoolboy_to_world's_most_wanted_man,_the_rise_of_the_caliph_of_terror_The_Independent_03.19.15.docx;
Net_Neutrality_Prevails_In_Historic_FCC_Vote_Dana_Liebelson_Huff_Post_02.28.2015.docx

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DEAR FRIEND.....

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi



He is the most wanted terrorist in the world, with a \$10m bounty on his head. Yet it seems that 44-year-old Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the feared Isis terror organization, was less than outstanding in his youth, according to information unearthed by researchers in Germany. The man who has declared himself “*caliph*” of a new “*Islamic State*” had to repeat a year at school because he was so bad at English, investigators have discovered. He was turned down for the Iraqi army, despite being a member of the Sunni minority favored by the regime of the country’s dictator, Saddam Hussein, because he was too short-sighted – and then failed to win a university place to study law. Instead, he opted for Islamic theology, a subject whose study – perhaps combined with his earlier experiences – contributed to radicalizing his views.

Apart from two photographs, few details had previously emerged about the background of the Isis leader. But the **Süddeutsche Zeitung** newspaper and Germany’s **ARD** television channel revealed new details yesterday after interviewing residents of Samarra, Baghdadi’s home town in Iraq, where he went to school, played football in its narrow streets, and gave children Koran lessons. “*They called him the believer,*” ARD quoted residents as saying.

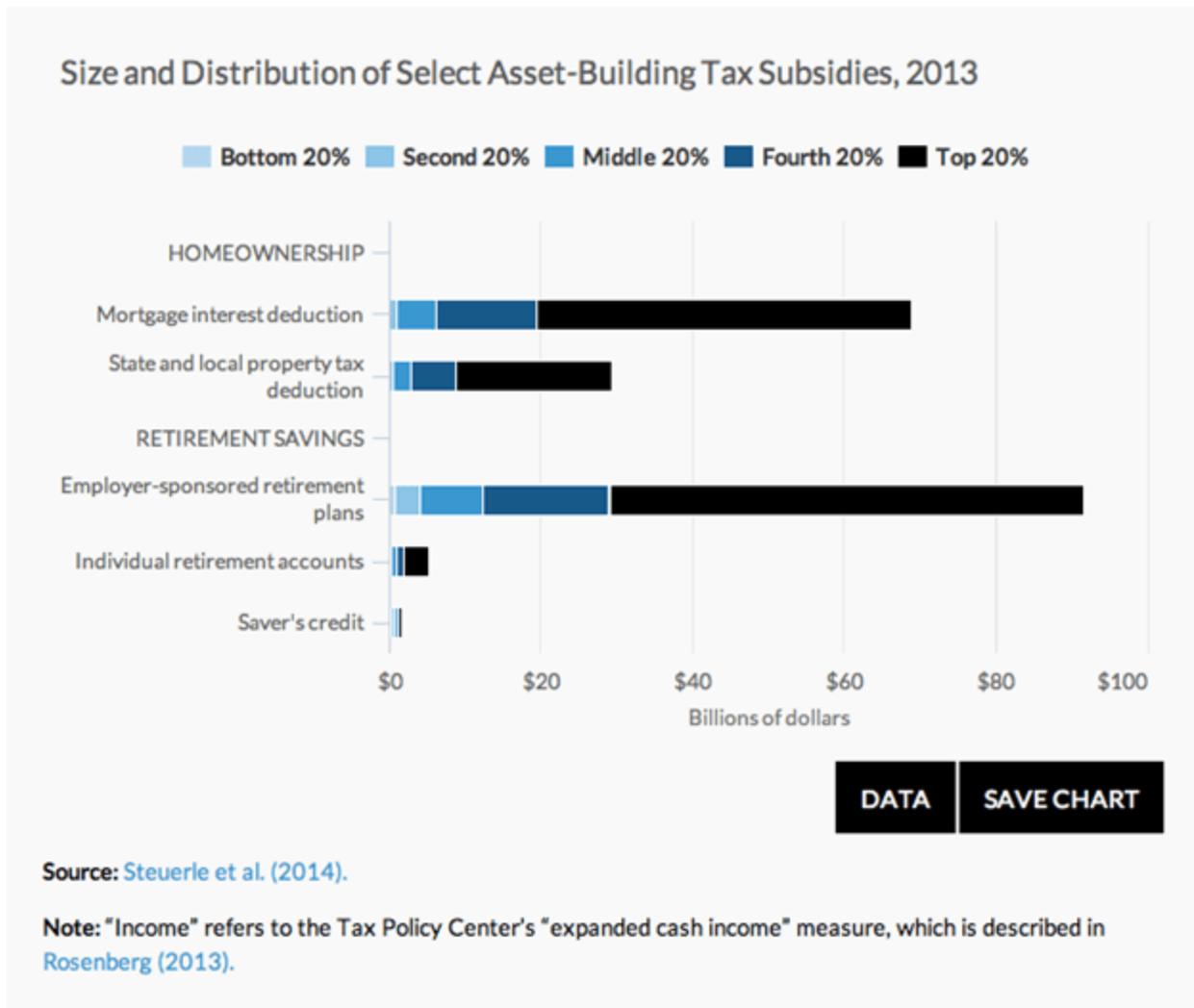
Former neighbors, who requested anonymity, revealed that Baghdadi – the third of four sons born to a devout Sunni Muslim family – was ambitious even then. “*He loved power and being influential,*” one neighbor said. “*But we were all completely shocked to suddenly see him as the ‘caliph’.*” He was rated as an average pupil at the town’s grammar school and his school matriculation marks were too low for Baghdad University to accept him on its law course. But after eight years studying Islamic theology, he emerged with a PhD degree in 1999. The Süddeutsche Zeitung said his university doctorate helped him rise to become Isis leader and enabled him to construct a “*theological justification*” for the organization’s brutality. “*Terrorism is honoring Allah*” – it cited him as saying.

Baghdadi experienced the start of the Gulf War in the provinces and in 2004, for reasons that are unclear, he was arrested by US forces and held for 10 months in the Camp Bucca Detention Center in southern Iraq. The camp is still referred to as “*The Academy*” because it held so many radical Islamists, jihadists and battle-hardened soldiers. Baghdadi is thought to have joined al-Qaeda at this time, and from 2007 was responsible for Sharia law with a remit to provide religious justification for acts of terrorism. Some say he was a “*pupil*” of Abu Musab al-Zarkawi, the former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq who pioneered the practice of beheading hostages and making them wear orange jumpsuits. He is reportedly “*commuting*” between Raqqa, the Isis “*capital*”, and the occupied Iraqi city of Mosul. “*School friends of his have been killed by Isis,*” one neighbors told the Süddeutsche Zeitung. “*Then he emerges as emir of this organization – that’s really frightening.*” **And may he find his maker soon....**

Most of the government money spent to encourage savings went to the highest-earning Americans

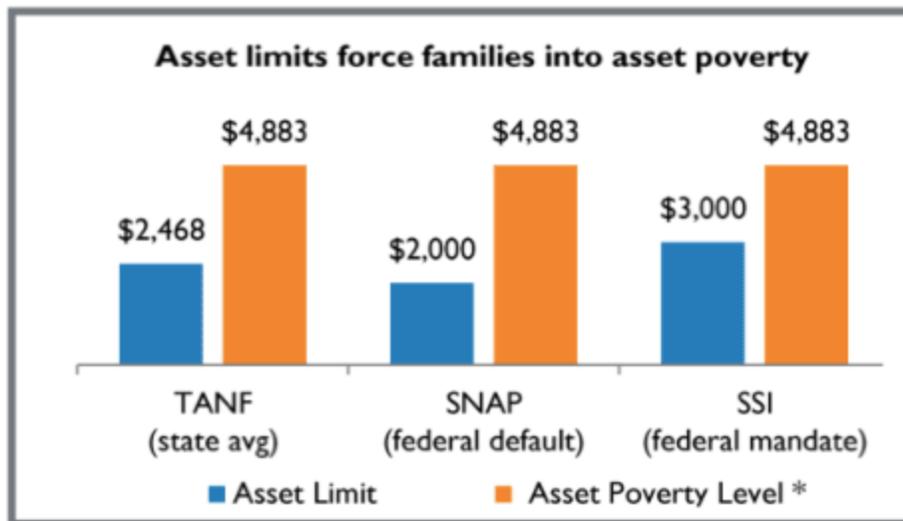
The federal government spent \$384 billion in 2013 on tax incentives that encourage savings, linked mainly to home ownership and retirement plans. Most of that money went to the rich. The highest-

earning fifth of U.S. taxpayers got about two-thirds of the tax refunds and exemptions on things like mortgage interest and property taxes in the current U.S. tax code, while the bottom fifth received less than 1 percent, a report by the Urban Institute shows. Households with less income have less to tuck away for a rainy day and often can't afford to buy a home, so they are less able to take advantage of these tax breaks.



Source: Urban Institute

Both Republicans and Democrats have talked for years about reforming the U.S. tax code, but agreeing which loophole to close is tough. African Americans and Hispanics, who have lower average incomes, also receive less in asset-building subsidies than whites, Urban notes. Worse-off families do benefit from food stamps and other safety-net programs. Those focus on income rather than wealth-building, though, as the Urban analysis notes. In fact, such policies can discourage saving by requiring that recipients have limited assets in order to receive the benefit, according to a Corporation for Enterprise Development report updated in 2014.



With decades of data in it appears that most tax breaks skew in favor of the wealthy and the idea that they create jobs is laughable. Poor people need jobs not tax breaks. And they need jobs with livable wages. Supply Side Economics has failed. And it has failed spectacularly. When I was growing up in the fifties and sixties the rule of thumb was that families should spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. If the 30 percent rule ever made sense — which economists contest — it's almost meaningless now, when almost 41 million U.S. households spend more.

I'm My Own Man..... I Don't Think So!

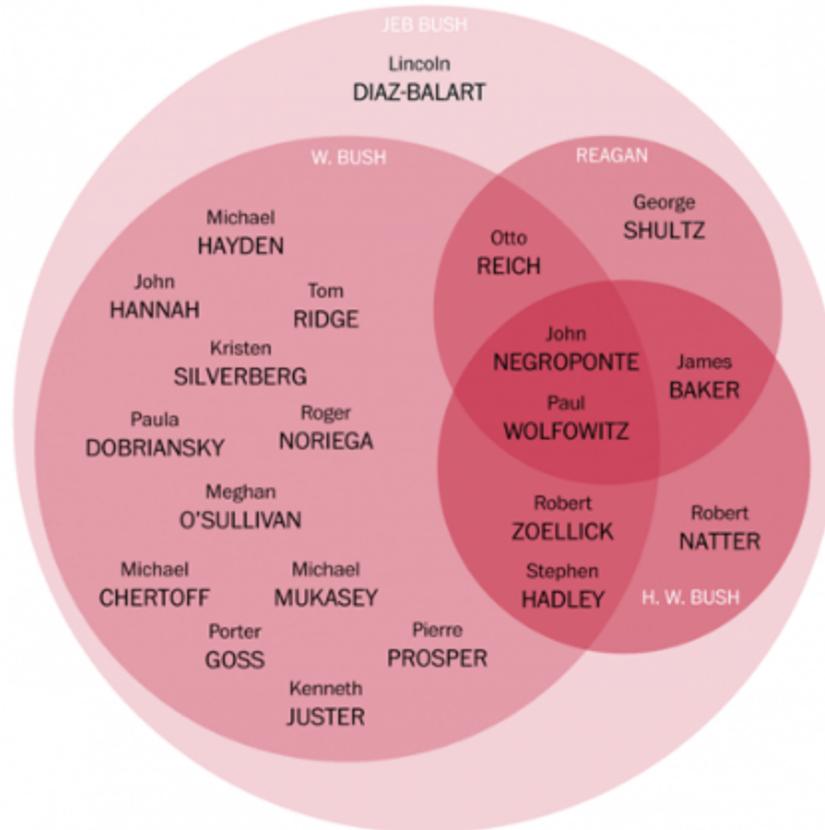


Two weeks ago former Florida Governor Jeb Bush announced his foreign policy vision in a speech in Chicago. Accompanying that speech is a roll out of a slate of experts who will help guide the candidate on foreign policy issues. If Bush's goal is to present himself as his *"own man,"* that list of advisers undermines the point somewhat: 19 of the 21 people on it worked in the administrations of his father

or brother. In the diagram below the Washington Post identified the roles each played in the past three Republican administrations, divvying them up as they often overlapped from one Bush Administration to another.

All the Bushes' men (and women)

How Jeb Bush's foreign policy team overlaps with his brother's and father's teams.



But what really irked me about the speech was Jeb Bush refusal to acknowledge that the Iraq War was a colossal mistake, saying that mistakes were made, The Serge was one of the most politically heroic decisions ever made by a President and that President Obama squandered the gains from The Serge and that is what ultimately led to ISIS. On Jeb Bush's foreign policy team is Paul Wolfowitz and Stephen Hadley, those *best and brightest* that took the U.S. into an unprovoked, unnecessary War of Choice that destroyed Iraq and left us with ISIS and proved General Colin Powell's **Pottery Barn Rule**, "*you break it you own it.*"

Do we really want to go back to the days of go-it-alone, French hating, Freedom Fries, Neocon idealogs that his brother was sucked into being? Make no mistake, these Neocons' goal is to take us into a war with Iran, as they publically acknowledge that any negotiations to them is a fool's errand. Do we really need or want another President whose strategy is to double-down on gunboat diplomacy? And didn't the "*power vacuum*" start with his brother overthrowing Saddam Hussein and destroying the ruling Baathist Party in Iraq? And not because President Obama accelerated the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Iraq? Obviously if Jeb Bush has succeeded his brother we still would have several hundred thousand troops in Iraq costing another trillion plus dollars and hundreds if not thousands of more American lives... The one thing that I agreed with Jeb Bush was that "*we created the void.*" But it was his brother's War of Choice that created the void, not his successor six years later... Remember..... If we chose to not acknowledge our mistakes..... We *WILL* make them again....

NEUTRALITY RULES!



On February 26, 2015 the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) voted to approve strong net neutrality rules in a stunning decision, defying vocal, months-long opposition by telecom and cable companies and Republicans on Capitol Hill. Democratic Commissioners Jessica Rosenworcel and Mignon Clyburn joined Chairman Tom Wheeler to approve a rule that reclassifies consumer broadband as a utility under Title II of the Communications Act. The FCC intends to use this new authority to ban “paid prioritization,” a practice whereby Internet service providers can charge content producers a premium for giving users more reliable access to that content, as well as to ban blocking and throttling of lawful content and services. These rules also apply to mobile access.

According to a fact sheet released by the FCC, the agency plans to enforce its new open Internet rules through “investigation and processing of formal and informal complaints.” For the first time, the FCC can also address complaints at interconnection points, the gateway between ISPs and the rest of the Internet, on a case-by-case basis. “The Internet is simply too important to allow broadband providers to be the ones making the rules,” Wheeler said prior to the vote.

After four decades of growth the pay-TV audience is slowly shrinking while Comcast, AT&T, Cox and Time Warner’s broadband business are booming, bringing the companies’ Internet subscribers almost equal with their cable subscribers. At this rate, within a year at least one of these cable operators will have more broadband customers than it will have pay-TV subscribers. Competition between cable operators as well with DirectTV has hampered their ability to raise rates to counter subscriber losses in addition to driving away more customers who can get comparable video content online. So that leaves cable operators little option but to squeeze their online competition.

They would love to simply be able to tell customers “No, you can’t access Netflix,” or to slow Netflix and other streaming services down so much consumers aren’t tempted to cut the cord. But what ISPs really want to do — and it’s why Verizon sued to gut the original 2010 net neutrality rules — is to create “fast lanes” for content companies willing to pay. So rather than tell consumers they can’t get quality access to streaming services, the ISPs could go to Netflix, YouTube, Amazon, Apple, and others and say “Hey, if you pay us a lot of money we’ll make sure your products reach customers.” And of course, this

is a cost that will just be passed on to consumers who are already paying their ISPs to make sure that content gets delivered at advertised speeds.

NET NEUTRALITY

Tom Wheeler, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, wants new regulations that prohibit Internet service providers from blocking or deliberately slowing any legal content that consumers want to access while prohibiting fast lanes and paid prioritization.

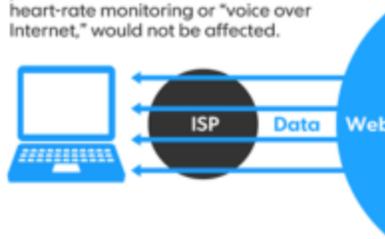
PRIORITIZATION

Consumers and content companies such as Netflix are concerned that Net providers might slow some data in favor of their own content or other traffic that they might be paid to prioritize.



NEUTRALITY

New net neutrality rules would require all legal content be treated equally. Special services that do not travel on public broadband networks, such as heart-rate monitoring or "voice over Internet," would not be affected.



Source: USA TODAY
Research by Mike Snider



The regulations passed by the FCC on February 26, 2015 aim to ensure that Internet content — be it streaming video, audio or other content — will be treated equally by Internet service providers. Another goal of the initiatives: To give start-ups and entrepreneurs access to broadband networks without undue influence from the ISPs. In theory, the new regulations prohibit ISPs' discrimination of content and content providers. An ISP is now prohibited from slowing the delivery of a TV show simply because it's streamed by a video company that competes with a subsidiary of the ISP.

Net neutrality, or *open Internet*, is the principle that Internet service providers give consumers access to all legal content and applications on an equal basis, without favoring or blocking some sources. It also prohibits Internet service providers (ISPs) from charging content providers for speedier delivery of their content on "*fast lanes*" or deliberately slowing the content from content providers that may compete with ISPs. Treating the Internet like a utility gives the FCC the authority to regulate it. Internet providers will be reclassified as "*common carriers*," private companies that sell their services to all consumers without discrimination, similar to how consumers got landline telephone service. And although Verizon, the company that initially sued the FCC in 2011 over rules that were considerably weaker than the new regulations. The new rules are also likely to be challenged in court. Still, the latest FCC decision is a win for everyone who uses the Internet.

Blaming the Victim



February 21 marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X, El-Hajj Malik Shabazz, a figure whose memory seems to wax and wane with America's troubled conscience. On the one hand, many would argue that with the first black president in office, it is Martin's dream that has been realized. Yet, on the other hand, with endless wars abroad, increasing police brutality at home, and a society more divided than ever, it is safe to say that Malcolm's critique of -- and challenge to -- America has never been more urgent. With Islamophobia on the rise and racial tensions between African American/Immigrant Muslim and white America being stretched to the limit there is an immediate need for the country to find a way to navigate the many obstacles facing social progress today. For many of my white American friends it will be difficult for them to understand that Malcolm X's words were not a threat as much as a warning that somehow has been ignored since little has changed and many things have gotten worse.

Web Link: <http://youtu.be/qNfAFfu6VDo>

It was 50 years ago last month that Malcolm X gave a speech about an experience that many of his audiences had seen in their own lives. They had seen it over and over to the point that few African American families had not been touch, because either themselves or someone in their family had been accosted, beaten or killed by the police who accused the victim of causing their attack. What is amazing is that this half-century old speech could have been said yesterday, last week or last month, as what he's talking about rings true to us today in 2015. In a democratic country "*of the people,*" we expect police to be on our side, working with us. But recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, and elsewhere can shake a person's belief in the system. Malcolm X's faith in it was certainly shaken. And as someone who lives with a mixed race teenage boy I am painfully aware of what might happen and how any of his actions could be interpreted as provocative.

When a seventeen year-old can't go to a 7-Eleven for a bag of Skittles and a can of Arizona iced tea without risking being killed by someone who accosted him because his wearing a hoody made him look suspicious and then is accused for somehow precipitating his own death, something is wrong and little if not nothing has changed since Martin X's speech fifty years ago. And somehow after what authorities called an independent investigation and public anger has subsided, our Black Attorney

General Eric Holder announced that there was not enough evidence for a federal hate crime prosecution in the 2012 death of Trayvon Martin. Heartbreakingly what Malcolm X described in 1965 still happens today and far too often.

It's a turning upside-down of fairness, with the victim being the only one to suffer if investigations by law enforcement conclude that the attacker's actions don't merit prosecution. When no charges were filed against Ferguson's Darren Wilson or against NYC's Daniel Pantaleo, who took Eric Garner's life, we were stunned all over again. How can this be fair? We can only wonder why so little has changed. Maybe it's because, while things have gotten better in broad strokes, power on a local level — being less visible — can more successfully resist change. It can get away with holding onto old abusive cultures while the rest of the country moves forward.

Fanning the flames is the media who treat the spectacle of the protests as dramatic fodder for their murder and mayhem continuous news cycle without ever really trying to find the truth or fairness. And the way media frames it all by oversimplifying people's positions is so dangerous. Reducing the problem to the police-versus-the-world may make great TV, but it's doing real damage to our country and getting us nowhere.

Obviously being a cop must be really hard. You wonder why someone would go into that line of work. Some for power, sure, but probably far more to do something good. We know we need police. We just need to be clearer as we speak out against police brutality that we can see the difference between the officers who see themselves as part of their communities and the cops who see themselves as above the people they're charged with serving. And we need to partner with the many cops who surely want to see this brutality stop, beginning with the understanding that life looks different from different sides of a badge.

Most of all, we need to stop arguing and start figuring this out. And above all, we have to stop blaming the victim.

Here's Malcolm X's prescient speech.

Malcolm X: "But don't scare Negroes today with no badge, or no white skin, or no white cheek, or no white anything else. The police the same way, they put their club upside your head, and then turn around and accuse you of attacking them. Every case of police brutality against a Negro follows the same pattern. They attack you, bust you all upside your mouth, and then take you to court and charge you with assault. What kind of democracy is that? What kind of freedom is that? What kind of social or political system is it when a black man has no voice in court? Has no nothing on his side, other than what the white man chooses to give him? My brothers and sisters, we have to put a stop to this. And it will never be stopped until we stop it ourselves. They attack the victim, and then the criminal who attacked the victim accuses their victim of attacking him. This is American justice. This is American democracy. And those of you who are familiar with it know that in America, democracy is hypocrisy. Now if I'm wrong, put me in jail. But if you can't prove that a democracy is not hypocrisy, then don't put your hands on me."

A police officers shot and killed Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old African American boy, occurred on November 22, 2014, in Cleveland, Ohio who was playing in a park with an Airsoft replica. The officers were responding after receiving a police dispatch call "*of a male sitting on a swing and pointing a gun at people*" in a city park. A caller reported that a male, was pointing "a pistol" at random people,

although the caller stated twice that the gun was "*probably fake*". Toward the end of the 2 min 17 second 911 call, the caller stated "*he is probably a juvenile.*" Two officers reported that upon their arrival, Rice reached towards a gun in his waistband. One of the two officers fired two shots within two seconds of arriving on the scene, hitting Rice once in the torso. In the aftermath of the shooting, it was reported that the officer, in his previous job as a policeman in Independence, Ohio, had been deemed an emotionally unstable recruit and unfit for duty.

Yet the city of Cleveland recently responded to a lawsuit filed by the family of Tamir Rice with several defenses, including that the 12-year-old died and his family members suffered because of their own actions. The city, in its response, wrote that Tamir's death and all of the injuries his family claims in the suit "*were directly and proximately caused by their own acts, not this Defendant.*" It also says that the 12-year-old's shooting death was caused "*by the failure ... to exercise due care to avoid injury.*" The response does not explain these defenses in more detail, though 20 defenses are listed in all, including another one that says Tamir died because of "*the conduct of individuals or entities other than Defendant.*" Obviously, little has changed which is why ***this is my rant of the week....***

WEEK'S READINGS



"Listen, pal. I make an honest living. People only come to me when they're in a desperate situation. I help 'em out. I don't kick families out of their houses like you bums down at the bank do." – Jake Gittes, ***Chinatown***.

What ever happened to the Private Detective or PI? I grew up with the likes of **Sam Spade** (Humphrey Bogart) **Philip Marlow** (Dick Powell, Robert Montgomery and Humphrey Bogart), **Dick Tracy** (Ralph Byrd), **Nick & Nora Charles** of ***The Thin Man*** series (William

Powell & Myrna Loy and Peter Lawford & Phyllis Kirk and Craig Stevens & Jo Ann Pflug), Peter Gunn (Craig Stevens), Boston Blackie (Chester Morris, Richard Kollmar and Kent Taylor), Magnum, P.I. (Tom Selleck), Jim Rockford (James Garner), Harry O (David Janssen), Mike Hammer (Mickey Spillane, Kevin Bray and Stacy Keach).... And the granddaddy them all Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone, Jeremy Brett and Benedict Cumberbatch), closely followed by Hercule Poirot (David Suchet, Peter Ustinov and Charles Laughton) and Jake Gittes (Jack Nicholson) from one of my favorite films Chinatown. So I was drawn to an article what I initially thought was about the demise or the Pinkerton National Detective Agency and how this legendary institution was purchased by the Swedish security company Securitas AB in 1999 and the romantic tradition of the American private eye had officially come to its end.

I guess the Pinkerton Agency was really closer to Blackwater Associates than the fictionalized characters in literature, radio, film and TV although it was its 160 history chronicled in the media that cemented its legacy. But even without self promotion, its activities on their own merit a singular distinction what Private Investigation/Investigators do; Foiled an assassination attempt of Abraham Lincoln; During the Civil War, Pinkerton served as head of the Union Intelligence Service which was the forerunner of the U.S. Secret Service; Allan Pinkerton recruited the first African-American Union Intelligence Agent, John Scobell; Pinkerton and his agents became legendary during their relentless pursuit of Jesse James - the Younger Gang, the Dalton Brothers and Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch, The Pinkerton Agency begins the practice of clipping and filing newspaper stories for reference in investigations. Pinkerton's collection of mug shots and methodology develops the first criminal database, and by the early 1890s, Pinkerton's National Detective Agency had 2,000 active agents and 30,000 reserves causing the state of Ohio to outlaw the agency, due to the possibility of it being hired out as a "private army" or militia. Hence Blackwater....

Over the decades, state and local police organizations as well as national administrations such as the FBI, NSA and Homeland Security have developed skills sets, resources and expertise that no private organizations can offer. The days of chasing bad guys on horseback have given over to Crisis Management, Employment Services, Intellectual Property, Intelligence, Investigative, Protective, Security and Safety which are the services Pinkerton offers today. Much like Kroll Associates which was started in 1972 by Jules Kroll was founded as a consultant to corporate purchasing departments. Kroll focused on helping clients improve operations by uncovering kickbacks, fraud or other forms of corruption. Kroll began its line of investigative work in the financial sector in the 1980s, when corporations in New York City approached Kroll to profile investors, suitors and takeover targets, with special attention to any perceived connections to disreputable organizations, suspicious business practices, personality and integrity issues, or any kind of corporate malfeasance. In the 1990s, Kroll expanded into forensic accounting, background screening, drug testing, electronic data recovery and market intelligence.

In June 1993, A.I.G. "became one of the largest investors in Kroll, after it retained a minority interest in the firm." In 1997, with annual revenues of approximately \$60 million, Kroll merged with vehicle armoring company O'Gara-Hess & Eisenhard. The new entity, The Kroll-O'Gara Company, became a public company listed on NASDAQ as "KROG." In December 1998, Kroll acquired Schiff & Associates, Inc., a small security engineering and consulting firm based in Bastrop, Texas just outside Austin. The name was changed to Kroll Schiff & Associates then Kroll Security Services Group and finally to Kroll Security Group. In February 2001, Kroll expanded its working relationship with the insurance company, A.I.G., offering through their Private Client group personal security services to high-net-worth individuals and their families. "Under its working arrangement with AIG, Kroll is called in to supervise crisis management when an incident occurs. In its expanded role the company will now provide those services to private individual holders of AIG policies, providing global protection, for which there is an ever increasing need." In August 2001, the O'Gara vehicle armoring businesses were

sold to Armor Holdings. The company name was changed to Kroll Inc. and its ticker symbol became "KROL." Kroll ended the year with more than \$200 million in annual revenues. In August 2010, Kroll was acquired by Altegrity, Inc. in an all-cash transaction valued at \$1.13 billion.

Having known Jules Kroll in the 1970s, met Erik Prince and been a lifelong fan of Private Eyes the Benjamin Welton article – *The Case of the Vanishing Private Eyes* – caught my fancy. It is actually the story of Sam Hammett who as a wayward youth leaving school at the age of 13, spent his teenage years holding down odd jobs, blowing his paychecks on horse races and boxing matches, as well as consorting with prostitutes in the rougher sections of Baltimore and Philadelphia. Within a few years, alcoholism had its claws in him, and by age 20 it was rumored that he had already contracted a venereal disease. In an attempt to sow some wild oats, Hammett, the son of a Maryland farmer, then joined the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in 1915 at the age of 21.

For Hammett, the Pinkertons initially proved salutary. While working out of their Baltimore office, Hammett acclimated to being on call 24 hours a day and immersed himself in the highly organized indexing system that was the agency's calling card. With the agency's success came controversy. During the pitched battles between laborers and business owners that marked the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Pinkertons were on the side of owners, paid to take an active, violent role in breaking strikes. Painted as marauders by the striking steel workers at Homestead in 1892, the Pinkertons lost the support of a segment of the middle-class reading public when reports of their bloody engagements with the striking workers came to light.

In the July 7, 1892, edition of New York's Evening World, they were called a "sorry lot" and an unforgiving army that had come to western Pennsylvania to establish civil order at any cost. Similarly, the Winchester-toting private detectives were labeled "dogs of war" and "hired thugs" by The St. Paul Daily Globe. Over 100 years later, the blog **Daily Kos**, echoing the language of the 19th-century labor unions and their supporters, labeled the Pinkertons "the Blackwater of the late 19th and early 20th century." In a twist of irony, the highly unpopular union-busting activities of the Pinkertons frequently pitted working-class and lower-middle-class detectives against poorly paid laborers. At the time the average salary for a Pinkerton operative in the late 1800s was about \$12 a week, which looked good in comparison to the 15 or 16 cents per hour that unskilled laborers made in industrial cities such as Detroit and Pittsburgh. In the ranks of both labor and private law enforcement, recently arrived European immigrants were well represented. By his own admission, Sam Hammett left the Pinkertons because of their hard-line stance against the unions.

After leaving the Pinkertons in 1922, Sam Hammett took to calling himself by his mother's maiden name, and, as Dashiell Hammett, became a frequent contributor to the pulpy fiction magazine Black Mask. With those stories, he began to popularize the "hardboiled" style of American detective fiction. Although his most famous creation remains Sam Spade—the amoral private detective central to the action in The Maltese Falcon—Hammett's first P.I. hero was the short, fat gumshoe known simply as "the Continental Op." Drawing on his experience in the Pinkertons, Hammett imbued his Continental Op tales with a type of gritty realism and working-class cynicism that stood in contrast to the prevailing structure at the time, which relied on the archetype of the gifted amateur. And unlike the cerebral Sherlock Holmes or the foppish Hercule Poirot, the Continental Op reads like a believable person, if only a little too tough for his own good.

When Hammett started writing his Continental Op tales in the early 1920s, the private-detective industry was in a transitional period. Along with the more-muscular federal agencies such as the

Bureau of Investigation and the Secret Service, municipal departments in New York, San Francisco, and other American cities had undergone sweeping changes two decades before. Now larger, better equipped, and better educated thanks to civil-service reforms, professional lawmen began rendering large private detective agencies obsolete. Technology made it obsolete to shadow suspects on foot, meaning a case could be seen to completion from the privacy of a cubicle. At the same time, private detectives were becoming affordable to the increasingly prosperous American middle class of the Jazz Age. Marital complaints, will disputes, and the protection of banks formed the meat and potatoes of private-eye work during the dramatic golden years of their fictional counterparts.

But the private eyes of the 1920s had less in common with their more-militarized, strike-busting forefathers than they did with the original P.I.'s of the early 19th century (or with their successors today, for that matter). Ever since the establishment of what is typically considered the first private detective agency in Paris in 1833, investigators had served clients who felt that the police were either unwilling or unable to do the work they required. The first private-eye celebrity, the former criminal-turned-police investigator Eugène François Vidocq, had opened his Bureau des Renseignements, or "*Office of Information*," after being pushed out of his public job during an internal overhaul that sought to clear out ex-cons. Vidocq's Office of Information quickly set about representing the interests of businesspeople and private citizens using the most advanced methods of early criminology and even rudimentary forensics. Its success incurred the wrath and distrust of the Parisian police, who hounded Vidocq with numerous arrests until the financial stress of repeatedly having to clear his name forced him to consider selling the agency in the 1840s. Vidocq always cited his personal knowledge of the underworld as the reason for his success, and because of that hired many former criminals to act as his bloodhounds. His morally questionable employees would set a stereotype of private investigators that would last for decades; by the time the Pinkertons were terrorizing the workers at the turn of the century, the public was used to thinking of private investigators as threatening and untrustworthy.

As Hammett continued writing, the industry he wrote about grew more and more mundane. When the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, now simply called Pinkerton, was purchased by the Swedish security company Securitas AB in 1999, the romantic tradition of the American private eye had officially come to its end. It had been a love affair long in decline, as the mid-20th century's police procedurals and dashing G-men effectively squeezed out private investigators from both the workforce and the written word.

Private-detective novels set in the modern day are rarely published anymore, and most private investigators now either work as lone-wolf operators handling the type of cases that the Pinkertons explicitly shunned (divorce cases or overly salacious scandals that could ruin reputations, for example) or sit behind a desk, with a computer monitor their primary tool. Technology made it obsolete to shadow suspects on foot (Hammett's specialty) and by car, with satellite imagery making it possible to see a case to completion from the privacy of a cubicle.

The private-investigation industry has moved on to the worlds of white-collar crime, corporate espionage, hacking and surveillance. The most recent Department of Labor statistics (from 2012) depict a group of workers firmly within the middle class—median pay is a little over \$45,000 a year. With only a modest increase in the number of American private investigators predicted by 2022 (from 30,000 to 33,300), it's fair to say that today's private eyes don't pose the same threat as the Victorian-era Pinkertons — and that tomorrow's Dashiell Hammett will be today's tech geek, not yesterday's whiskey-drinking roughneck.

The Obama Years



As the political parlor game increasingly turns to obsessions about the jockeying to become the next president, my thinking increasingly turns to how history will measure the current one.

While a truly comprehensive appraisal and historical contextualization of a presidency is the scope and scale of books more than columns, there are things that, from my perch and according to the peculiarities of my personal interests, stand out.

Some of these are things for which the president can — in part or in whole — take personal responsibility, but others simply happened on this watch. And yet, I believe that they will all be somewhat associated with him and his stewardship.

In an interview broadcast earlier this month, the president told CNN, “I’m proud of saving the economy.” That may well be the most resounding mark of his presidency, even as people debate the quality of the recovery and his administration’s role in it.

It is nearly impossible to overstate how close we came to economic collapse in 2008 and how frightened we all were.

Now, that has turned around. The private sector has seen job growth for 59 straight months. The unemployment rate was down to 5.6 percent in December, the lowest since 2008, and as Reuters

pointed out last month, new claims for unemployment benefits reached “the lowest level in nearly 15 years.”

But this recovery tends to feel more favorable for the wealthy than the working class. As the National Employment Law Project pointed out in an April policy paper, there is an imbalance between the kinds of jobs lost in the recession and the kinds experiencing the greatest growth in the recovery: High-wage industries accounted for 41 percent of the job losses but only 30 percent of the recent employment growth, while lower-wage industries accounted for 22 percent of the job losses but 44 percent of recent growth.

But if you are one of the Americans well off enough to own stocks, life looks much better. In 2009, the Dow Jones industrial average had fallen below 7,000; now it’s above 18,000. And yet, as CNBC pointed out in September, the percent of Americans who hold stock either directly or indirectly is at an 18-year low while “stock ownership for the wealthy is at a new high,” based on 2012 data. As CNBC reported:

“In 2010, the latest period available, the top 10 percent of Americans by net worth held 81 percent of all directly held or indirectly held stocks, according to Edward N. Wolff, an economics professor at New York University who specializes in inequality and Federal Reserve data.”

The Obama years will also be remembered for the reshaping of our politics. There was the rise of the Tea Party and the demise of moderate voices. There were the unfathomable and indefensible rulings by the Supreme Court to bless dark money in the Citizens United case and the gutting of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*. There is an ongoing voter effort to shrink and restrict the voting pool as minorities are beginning to feel their power at the polls.

The Obama years will be remembered as a cultural — and legal — tipping point for equality for all people who do not identify as strictly heterosexual, arguably the civil rights movement of our times. The president signed the bill repealing “don’t ask, don’t tell.” The Defense of Marriage Act was struck down by the Supreme Court.

And in 2012, Obama became the first sitting president to support same-sex marriage (a book by David Axelrod even claims that the president was in favor of same-sex marriage, long before he publicly proclaimed it, and indeed when he was publicly saying that he wasn’t). When Obama took office, same-sex marriage was rare; now it’s legal in 37 states. And a case now before the Supreme Court could determine whether it will be legal nationally.

The New Republic even dubbed Obama the “Gay-Rights President,” and it is hard to argue with that.

The Obama years will also be remembered for his signature legislation — the Affordable Care Act. This week, the president said that 11.4 million people had signed up for insurance or renewed coverage

under the plan. Needless to say, the program is reducing the number of people who are uninsured but it also appears to be lowering medical costs.

Yet the future of the act is unclear. There is a case (*King v. Burwell*) before the Supreme Court — a laughable case about a language quibble that may be the most significant linguistic imprecision of a generation — that could spell doom for the law by withholding subsidies from millions of low-income Americans to purchase health insurance.

There's the Supreme Court again. One could argue that the Supreme Court — the judicial Divine Nine — has shaped the Obama presidency as much as Obama has. That's not to say that he hasn't done an amazing job of shaping the judiciary in this country himself. In addition to appointing two new members to the Supreme Court — both women, a first for any president — he has completely transformed the lower courts.

As Jeffrey Toobin pointed out in *The New Yorker* in October:

“When Obama took office, Republican appointees controlled ten of the thirteen circuit courts of appeals; Democratic appointees now constitute a majority in nine circuits. Because federal judges have life tenure, nearly all of Obama's judges will continue serving well after he leaves office.”

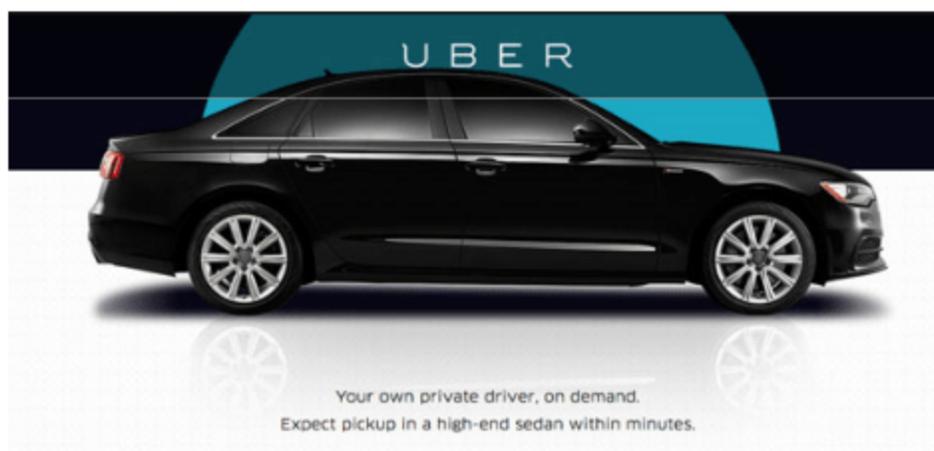
Furthermore, Toobin laid out the diversity of the Obama transformation, writing:

“Sheldon Goldman, a professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a scholar of judicial appointments, said, ‘The majority of Obama's appointments are women and nonwhite males.’ Forty-two per cent of his judgeships have gone to women. Twenty-two per cent of George W. Bush's judges and twenty-nine per cent of Bill Clinton's were women. Thirty-six per cent of President Obama's judges have been minorities, compared with eighteen per cent for Bush and twenty-four per cent for Clinton.”

This is huge.

And there isn't space in this column to address the many other things the Obama years will be remembered for: our engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Arab Spring and the rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East, Russian aggression, moves on climate policy and the rise of American energy, the re-fighting of issues over women's reproductive rights and immigration policy, to name a few.

Whether you agree that Obama was a transformational figure or how he ranks among other presidents — a new survey of American Political Science Association members puts him 18th — there is no doubt that the time of his presidency will be remembered as transformational.



I ran across an interesting article — ***The Uberization of Healthcare*** — in **Qmed** by Stuart Karten suggesting that the Uber business model — (*an app-based transportation headquartered in San Francisco, California, which operates in cities in many countries that uses a smartphone application to receive ride requests and then sends these trip requests to their drivers*) — will soon come to healthcare. Just as Uber changed transportation in positive — and sometimes controversial — ways, healthcare will be infiltrated by startups wanting to change the healthcare model from hospital-centric to patient-centric. Medical device companies and other healthcare providers that don't realize that a major shift is taking place will become the equivalent of today's taxi industry. While medical technology lags behind consumer technology development because it has more regulatory oversight, the Uber model is becoming analogous to what we are currently seeing at our design firm: more and more companies come to us in an effort to "*disrupt*" existing models. In the decades preceding 2015, medical technology products were solely focused on clinicians, but today's most progressive companies want to design health products for patients and their caregivers.

Like modern healthcare systems, the taxicab model was inefficient, not mobile, and often unpleasant for the consumer. Anyone who has tried to get a cab in most major cities before Uber came along will tell you: it was a model built around the needs of taxi drivers and their companies, rather than their consumer. Mobile technology has existed for over a decade, but the taxi industry has simply refused to embrace it, holding on to its old ways. Enter Uber. It uses a mobile platform. It is GPS-enabled. It allows a consumer to rate the driver. It's paperless. It's efficient. And while Uber has faced regulatory pushback, its boldness has been handsomely rewarded. Regulation typically drafts behind, not ahead, of innovation. "Healthcare hasn't yet seen its version of Uber. But the signs are there: within the next decade, Uber-like medical companies will emerge," says Karten.

Today we are seeing a major shift in healthcare brought on by cultural and socioeconomic forces. The population is aging, chronic conditions that require management during patients' daily lives are on the rise, and Accountable Care is putting pressure on healthcare systems to measure and quantify results. Alongside these issues, we are seeing widespread connectivity emerge across all economic classes. Portio Research estimates some 6.9 billion cell phones are currently in use worldwide. That's up from 2 billion in 2005, according to Wireless Intelligence. We are also seeing a transformation of the man-

machine relationship — we are starting to wear computers, and soon, we will be implanting them into our bodies to connect with our communication systems, cars, and homes. As artificial intelligence improves, it will help us interact with increasingly smart environments. In healthcare, highly evolved sensors and powerful algorithms will give us proactive, personalized care. By 2035, the majority of our treatments will occur at home. Our home will be watching us and helping us track our health.

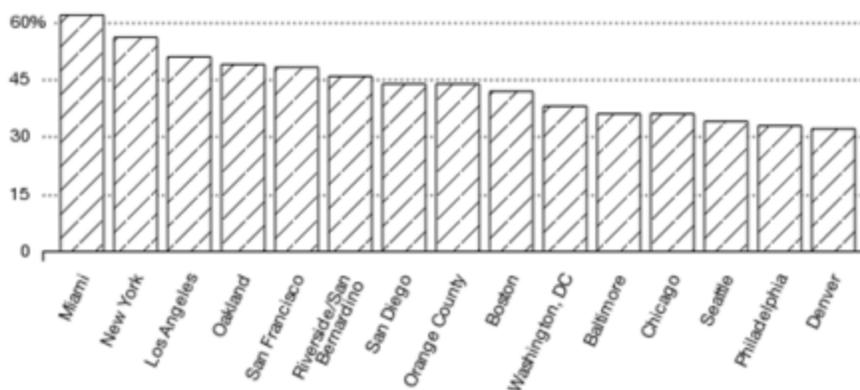
Technology has set all of this change in motion. It's up to product designers and developers to ensure that patients have a positive experience with this new technology — that it makes their lives simpler and richer rather than burdening them down. Traditional medical products are developed with an emphasis on physical and cognitive usability. The New Health products, which will meld with our bodies, homes, and lives in a much more intimate way, must create deeper connections between our cognitive, physical, and especially emotional needs. We are already seeing more empowered patients. People want information. They want to make their own diagnosis. They want to research their doctors. They want their own health data. And caregivers want to be — and must be — part of the loop. In 2009, about 42.1 million family caregivers in the United States provided care to an adult with limitations in daily activities at any given point in time. The estimated economic value of their unpaid contributions was approximately \$450 billion. Caregivers want to use connectivity tools to keep track of loved ones — data, connectivity, sharing — even from a distance. So healthcare will be personal, but also easier for the people who love you. And probably like you, I can't wait until these new products and services come to market.

The Squeeze on Renters Is Getting Worse

Rents increased faster than pay in all of the 25 largest metro areas in the United States over the past decade. The traditional rule of thumb is that rent shouldn't eat up more than 30 percent of a household's income to be considered affordable, and the Trulia data show that in 15 major metro areas the median rent for a two-bedroom unit is now more than 30 percent of average pay.

The Rental Squeeze

In 15 metros, rent for a 2-bd unit costs more than 30 percent of the average wage

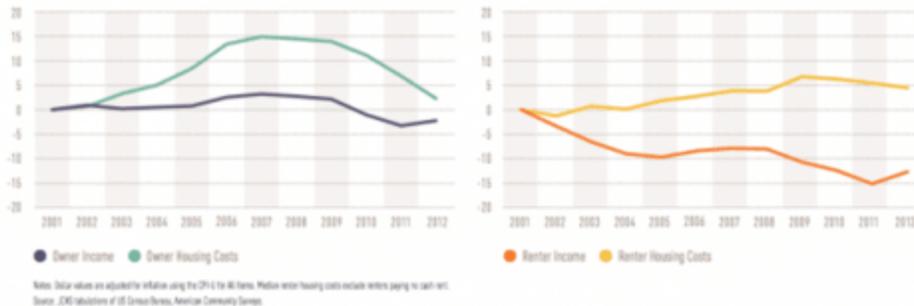


SOURCE: Trulia. Note, data for metro areas, not just cities. Uses median rental price

Affordability tends not to be as much of a problem for homeowners as it is for renters, and that's become even more so since the Great Recession, when foreclosures turned many owners into renters while walloping wages at the same time. According to a June report from the Joint Center for Housing Studies, about 35 percent of renters now pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. More than a quarter of households spend at least half of their income on housing.

Since the Recession, Affordability Has Improved for Homeowners But Not for Renters

Percent Change in Median Value Since 2001



The report says affordability changes for homeowners generally “reflect the ups and downs in housing costs,” but for renters, “income declines have played a leading role.” Some cities are trying to raise the minimum wage—whether the raises are enough to close the affordability gap is up for debate—but they have struggled to build enough affordable rental housing. Los Angeles alone needs an estimated half a million new affordable units to keep up with demand. And there is no shortage of rental housing currently being built in Central Los Angeles but you have to wonder how many families can afford \$2000 plus for a one-bedroom and \$3000 plus for two-bedroom apartments which are the rents that many builders are building against. As housing has become more and more expensive many families are forced to live further and further away from metropolitan areas and jobs.

For many families, getting to and from work is the second-largest monthly expense, one that's directly tied to where they live. A house in a far-out suburb may look cheap, but add in gas for an hour-long commute and the cost rises considerably. Developers are increasingly building high-end housing near public transit, which in some cases pushes lower-income families to less convenient locations. I remember talking with the nurses at the hospital that I was being treated at to find that many of them lived more than one and a half to often more than two hours from their job. This is sort of a tax – as the many hours of travel takes away from the fabric of a family. Like jobs healthcare and education, convenient affordable housing is a must and should be a priority in every metropolitan area in the nation.

5 New Health Rules To Live By



Everything You Know About Breakfast Is Wrong

Get away from fruit and grains in the morning -- you don't need that sugar and gluten. A dose of healthy fats will start your day off right. Have boiled or poached eggs with greens, or sardines on gluten-free crispbreads or half an avocado -- score it, spritz it with lemon juice or olive oil, sprinkle it with salt and cumin and eat it like a grapefruit.

Look At The Integrity Of Calories, Not The Number

Counting calories is a distraction that could lead you down a path of artificial sweeteners and preservatives -- the absolute worst stuff for your body. Instead, think about eating clean food, close to nature and dense with nutrients. Pay attention to the source of your calories rather than the number. (A hundred calories from kale are much better for you than a hundred calories from the vending machine.)

Honor Thy Feet

They're the command center of the body. Be nice to them. While you're doing dishes or chitchatting on the phone, roll a tennis ball under the bottom of one foot, then the other, for five minutes each (or to really spoil yourself, use a foot roller). Doing so ungrips all the tiny muscles that hold up your frame all day and has gentle trickle-up benefits for your entire system. Minimize the number of hours you spend in torturous shoes. High heels don't just hurt your feet; they affect the body all the way up -- knees, hips, spine, neck (and then your brain and mood, because if you're hurting, you're cranky). When you take off a pair, always take two minutes (literally two minutes) to stretch yourself back into shape; stand on a step with just the balls of your feet and let one heel lower down for a deep calf stretch. Hold for a few seconds, then switch feet. Repeat 10 times.

Olive Oil On Salad Is Better Than Olive Oil In Cooking

The good, nutritious fats you get from extra-virgin olive oil are altered when the oil is heated. That doesn't make it bad for you when it's used in cooking; it just takes away some of its magic properties. So go ahead and use a little of it to keep the fish from sticking to the pan. But for maximum health benefits, drizzle it on your salad or swirl it into a green juice (it adds amazing richness).

Move 5 Minutes Out of Every Hour

This is easy to say and hard for some to do, but make it a goal -- in fact, write it on a Post-it and stick it anywhere you get stuck (at your computer, say). After 55 minutes of work, get up and walk around, or climb a flight of stairs. Or if you have a private office, run through a couple of yoga poses or some old-school calisthenics (push-ups, jumping jacks) -- anything that shakes you out of the "chair" shape your body's been holding. This break also gives your mind a restart, so this habit can be great for productivity.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

"Bummer that Brian Williams will be the only one punished for lying about Iraq"

Tom Cavanaugh's – Facebook post on 2/7/25

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

I have no secrets....



Secret To Staying Warm

A news reporter asks a woman what her secret to staying warm is and her answer might surprise you. This woman has no secrets and gives the best interview ever as its short and to the point. She tells this news reporter exactly what is on her mind and how she feels. I have to think many people probably feel the same way she does when it gets really cold outside and have to experience a miserable day at work.

Web Link: http://biggeekdad.com/2010/08/i-have-no-secrets/#.VK_8WiYKm3N.mailto

This clip is only 18 seconds long but it is really funny!!!

I love this woman..... as her answer says it all....

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

TheVoiceTitleCard.png

I often describe television as “*my mistress*” and although I am addicted to ***Law and Order*** in every iteration as well as many of the current dramas (***Homeland, The Americans, Scandal***) in the same vein as well as my guilty pleasures of ***Judge Judy*** and ***Cheaters***, ranking near the top is **NBC’s** blockbuster talent series and global phenomenon, ***The Voice***. In its fourth year and eight season, *The Voice* is better than ever. As evidence I would like to share several Blind Auditions of the current season and 16 Blind Audition Performances from around the world. Hopefully that you will enjoy this week’s music offerings as much as I did because there is so much amazing yet to be discovered talent around the world..... *Please enjoy.....*

The Voice 2015 Blind Audition – **Jeremy Gaynor: *Superstar*** – <http://youtu.be/aEQsUrmUa9Q>

The Voice 2015 Blind Audition – **Anthony Riley: *I Got You (I Feel Good)*** – <http://youtu.be/f9gAl7ir8qo>

The Voice 2015 Blind Audition – **India Carney: *New York State of Mind*** – <http://youtu.be/cEyq8pzw0pl>

The Voice 2015 Blind Audition – **Brian Johnson: *Reason to Believe*** – <http://youtu.be/fr7eeGRB6Zs>

The Voice 2015 Blind Audition – **Ashley Morgan: *I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)*** – <http://youtu.be/LBlQp7zxU24>

The Voice 2015 Battle – James McNeiece vs. Tonya Boyd-Cannon Battle: ***"P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)"*** -- <https://youtu.be/2l1ExpqKuv4>

The Voice 2015 Battle – Brian Johnson vs. Joshua Davis Battle: ***"Knockin' on Heaven's Door"*** -- <https://youtu.be/k-K6DThhRB4>

The Voice 2015 Battle – Ameera Delandro vs. Sonic Battle: ***"Masterpiece"*** -- <https://youtu.be/oBxF-T-WoIc>

The Voice 2015 Battle – Travis Ewing vs. Anthony Riley Battle: ***"Get Ready"*** -- https://youtu.be/HDBfPoEz_g

Top 10 Blind Audition Performances – The Voice USA 2015 – <http://youtu.be/uppk9kGWfO0>

16 Amazing Blind Auditions – The Voice 2014/2013 [AROUND THE WORLD] – <http://youtu.be/A0wifD7hHMA>

BONUS

Best Emotional/Shocking X-Factor (Room Auditions)2014 – http://youtu.be/X_cHm9tzkwQ

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

