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Subject: Weekend Reading, Other bits and music..... from Greg Brown

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Attachments: Five_Obamacare_Myths_Bill_Keller_NYT_July_15,_2012.pdf;
A_challenge_to_conservatives_EJ_Dionne_TWP_July_15,_2012.pdf;
The_Rush_to_Abandon_the_Poor_NYT_Editorial_July_17,_2012.pdf;
Not_All_Investors_Are_Equal_NYT_Editorial_July_17,_2012.pdf;
Point_of_View_by_Wallace_Ford_-_July_29,_2012.pdf;
Guns_and_the_Slog_Gail_Collins_NYT_July_20,_2012.pdf;
58_Murders_a_Year_by_Firearms_in_Britain,_8,775_in_US_Juan_Cole_RSN_July_22,_2012.pdf;
Pathos_of_the_Plutocrat_Paul_Krugman_NYT_July_19,_2012.pdf;
Mitt_Romney's_New_Lie_Robert_Parry_RSN_July_22,_2012.pdf;
Romney_Economic_Adviser_Admits_Romney_Matthew_O'Brien_The_Atlantic_Jul_20_2012.pdf;
Michele_Bachmann's_baseless_attack_on_Huma_Abedin_EB_at_TWP_July_20,_2012.pdf;
A_Formula_for_Cutting_Health_Costs_NYT_July_21,_2012.docx;
World_Security_Network_reporting_from_Islamabad_in_Pakistan_Dr.Bubak_Khalatbari_WS_N_07.21.12.pdf

Dear Friends...

Friday we all woke up to the tragic news of the killing of at least 12 people and the wounding of many more at a late-night screening of the new Batman movie in Colorado.

Reports indicate that the disturbed individual who committed this horrifying act had a bulletproof vest, used some kind of gas canister, and had multiple guns when he opened fire in the crowded theater with a three-month-old is among the injured.

I am sure that almost every American is immeasurably sad for those who lost their lives, those wounded, and their families — and for all those who experienced the horror of those terrible moments. Let our thoughts and prayers go out to them today. We're also so angry. From children's lives lost in school shootings, to Trayvon Martin, the Representative Gabrielle Giffords attack, and this latest slaughter of innocents, as none of us are not safe from gun violence.

Mayors Against Illegal Guns has been campaigning to put a stop to senseless gun violence like this with commonsense measures, like fixing gun checks to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. They've started a petition in SignOn.org to demand action on ending gun violence. Sadly, it often takes moments like these to bring politicians to their senses about guns. And while signing a petition seems so inadequate in the face of what happened last night, it's important to do what we can. Today that means taking a small step toward preventing this kind of tragedy from happening again.

The people who died at the Colorado theater that night are only 12 of the 34 people who died from gun violence that day — and among 19,000 murdered with guns since the attack on Representative Giffords in Tucson. And yet today isn't about statistics. It's about the pain of human loss—the loss suffered by the community of Aurora, Colorado. And the losses to gun violence suffered today and every day by other communities, whose tragic stories won't be covered on the news. It's in the power of Congress to greatly reduce these senseless shootings and make tragedies like today's far less possible. They can start by enacting commonsense measures, like fixing giant loopholes in gun checks, that are supported by the vast majority of Americans — including gun owners.

In 2010: 12,996 people were murdered in the US, of which 8,775 were by firearms. While in 2011: 638 people were murdered in the UK. (Since Britain's population is 1/5 that of US, this is equivalent to 3,095 US murders).

How many more people will have to die by gun violence before we have real gun control laws?

Now for This Weeks Readings

Included are a number of articles about economic inequality. Please take a look at The **New York Times** Editorial, *The Rush to Abandon The Poor*, as Rick Perry, governor of the state with the country's worst health care record (with one quarter of the state's residents; 6.3 million uninsured) has been the loudest voice against national efforts to improve it. Yet Gov. Rick Perry — strangely puffed up as he was so often in his presidential bid — recently told the Obama administration that he would proudly refuse a huge infusion of Medicaid money that would significantly reduce those shameful statistics and cover 1.7 million more people. The same indifference to suffering that pushed Texas to the bottom is now threatening to keep it there. And at least five other Republican governors have made a similar choice, announcing that they will not expand their Medicaid program for the poor even though the federal government would pay for almost all of it for several years under President Obama's health care reform law. WHY?

Also please take a look at EJ Dionne's article, *A Challenge To Conservatives* in the **Washington Post**, explaining that liberals are not really for "soaking the rich," unless you consider the Clinton-era tax rates some kind of socialist bath. And as the experience of the more social democratic countries shows, a modest amount of "economic redistribution" — to offset the radical redistribution toward the very rich of recent decades — can begin the process of restoring the kind of mobility we once bragged about.

Included is an article from **Aljazeera**, *Super rich hiding up to \$32 trillion offshore*, that suggests that rich individuals and their families have as much as \$32 trillion of hidden financial assets in offshore tax havens, representing up to \$280bn in lost income tax revenues, according research published this past weekend. The research is based on data from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations and central banks. The report also highlights the impact on the balance sheets of 139 developing countries of money held in tax havens by private elites, putting wealth beyond the reach of local tax authorities. The research estimates that since the 1970s, the richest citizens of these 139 countries had amassed \$7.3 to \$9.3 trillion of "unrecorded offshore wealth" by 2010. Private wealth held offshore represents "a huge black hole in the world economy," Henry said in a statement.

In the **New York Times** Editorial, *Not All Investors Are Equal*, further exposes suggests that Wall Street is rigged in favor of a small group of top hedge funds who are given access to information not available to the general public enabling them to buy and sell with knowledge that you and I don't have access to.... No Wonder Why They Call Them "The Smart Money!"

In Paul Krugman's article in the **New York Times**, *Pathos of the Plutocrat*, that asks why many of America's richest men — including some former Obama supporters — hate, just hate, President Obama.

Why? Well, according to them, it's because he "demonizes" business — or as Mitt Romney put it earlier this week, he "attacks success." Listening to them, you'd think that the president was the second coming of Huey Long, preaching class hatred and the need to soak the rich. Needless to say, this is crazy. In fact, Mr. Obama always bends over backward to declare his support for free enterprise and his belief that getting rich is perfectly fine. All that he has done is to suggest that sometimes businesses behave badly, and that this is one reason we need things like financial regulation. No matter: even this hint that sometimes the rich aren't completely praiseworthy has been enough to drive plutocrats wild. For two years or more, Wall Street in particular has been crying: "Ma! He's looking at me funny!"

Wait, there's more. Not only do many of the superrich feel deeply aggrieved at the notion that anyone in their class might face criticism, they also insist that their perception that Mr. Obama doesn't like

them is at the root of our economic problems. Businesses aren't investing, they say, because business leaders don't feel valued. Mr. Romney repeated this line, too, arguing that because the president attacks success "we have less success."

This, too, is crazy (and it's disturbing that Mr. Romney appears to share this delusional view about what ails our economy). There's no mystery about the reasons the economic recovery has been so weak. Housing is still depressed in the aftermath of a huge bubble, and consumer demand is being held back by the high levels of household debt that are the legacy of that bubble. Business investment has actually held up fairly well given this weakness in demand. Why should businesses invest more when they don't have enough customers to make full use of the capacity they already have? This is not President Obama's fault, nor is there little that he can do to quickly change this..... And more tax breaks will accomplish nothing.

Health Care

As many of you know I suffered a health emergency two weeks ago that caused me to be taken from my dinner at Spago via EMT to Cedars Sinai Hospital in Beverly Hills, where I spent four days in an ICU wing, so after two strokes during the past five years American healthcare is a subject that I am well acquainted. So please take a look at Bill Keller's article in the **New York Times**, *Five Obamacare Myths*, to help keep us all better informed.

Also included is the **New York Times** Editorial, *A Formula for Cutting Health Costs* that suggests proven changes that several states have made that if employed throughout the country could reduce health costs and expand coverage..... As a country we have to stop demonizing healthcare and look for real solutions to lower costs and expand care.

POLITICS

In the crazy season that we call Presidential politics please take a look at Robert Parry's article in **RSN**, *Mitt Romney's New Lie*, where his campaign edited remarks by President Obama in such a way as to make it seem that the President was saying that business owners didn't build their own businesses, when the comment actually refers to the building of roads and other public investments. These types of distortions and disinformation should not be tolerated by the press, public and fellow politicians in either party.

Along the same vein is a **Washington Post** Editorial on Michele Bachmann's baseless attack on longtime aide to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Huma Abedin that the Obama administration's approach to the Arab world is the product not of considered diplomacy but of wicked "influence operations," traceable to the Muslim Brotherhood and its agents. Unlike Alan West who a month ago claimed that 88 communists were in Congress, Rep. Michele Bachmann was a serious contender in the Republican Primaries earlier this year. Making this truly, THE SILLY SEASON IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

This past week, Matthew O'Brien got a Romney economic advisor, Glenn Hubbard to admit that *Romney's Economic Plan Won't Work*..... take a read and you be the judge....

Finally..... Included is an article by Conservative David Brooks in the **New York Times**, *Where Obama Shines*, noting that Barack Obama has been a good foreign policy president. He, Vice President Joseph Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the rest of his team have created a style of policy making that is flexible, incremental and well adapted to the specific circumstances of this moment. Following a foreign policy hedgehog, Obama's been a pretty effective fox. Brooks sums up the article by saying that And, partly as a result of his efforts, the world of

foreign affairs is relatively uncontentious right now. Foreign policy is not a hot campaign issue. Mitt Romney is having a great deal of trouble identifying profound disagreements. If that's not a sign of success, I don't know what is. WOW.....

INTERNATIONAL

Just when you thought that the world couldn't get any more dangerous with the biggest threats are North Korea and Iran becoming a member of the Nuclear Club, please take a read of Dr. Babak Khalatbari in **WSN, Pakistan: Nuclear Power with Illiterates**, suggesting that the trend of religious radicalization of Pakistan's education and 21 percent of the men and 39 percent of the women between 15 and 24 years cannot read and write. The nuclear power of Pakistan therefore has one of the highest illiteracy rates of the world. As such Pakistan needs a comprehensive educational policy is the key to stop this trend of religious radicalization. The risk potential of the educational crisis in Pakistan should not be overlooked, since it will leave a lasting mark on the future of the country, its citizens and the rest of the world.

Video & Music Offerings

The most honest three and a half minutes of television, EVER... Beginning scene of the new **HBO** series **The Newsroom** explaining why America's Not the Greatest Country Any Longer... But It Can Be...
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16K6m3Ua2nw>

I am feeling The Chairman of The Board.... Mr. Frank Sinatra

Frank Sinatra - *My Way* - <http://youtu.be/Aht9hcDFyVw>

Frank Sinatra - *It Was A Very Good Year* - <http://youtu.be/ymRNpTP1aO8>

Frank Sinatra - *Send in the Clowns* - <http://youtu.be/K1fVQGESUTo>

Frank Sinatra - *New York, New York* - http://youtu.be/M0_S62E2yIY

I hope that you enjoyed and wishing you a great week.....

Greg Brown

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16K6m3Ua2nw>

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