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Attachments: Antidepressant_May_Slow_Alzheimer's_Disease_Study_Finds_Shelley_Emling_Huff_Post_May_14,_2014.docx; Why_I_fled_libertarianism_—_and_became_a_l_=?WINDOWS-1252?Q?iberal=5FEDWIN_LYNGAR=5FSALON=5FDec_28,_2013.docx?=
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The_Great_Society_at_50_Karen_Tumulty_TWP_May_17,_2014.docx;
Bill_Maher_challenges_Republicans_Impeach_Obama_so_he_can_kick_your_ass_a_third_time_The_Raw_Story_May_17,_2014.docx; Mariah_Carey_bio.docx;
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DEAR FRIEND.....

The Great Society at 50



LBJ's unprecedented and ambitious domestic vision changed the nation. Half a century later, it continues to define politics and power in America.

This week is the anniversary of *The Great Society* which was a set of domestic programs in the United States first announced by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson at Ohio University, then at University of Michigan, and subsequently promoted by him and fellow Democrats in Congress in the 1960s. Two main goals of the Great Society social reforms were the elimination of poverty and racial

injustices. New major spending programs that addressed education, medical care, urban problems, and transportation were launched during this period. **The Great Society** in scope and sweep resembled the New Deal domestic agenda of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Some Great Society proposals were stalled initiatives from John F. Kennedy's **New Frontier**. Johnson's success depended on his skills of persuasion, coupled with the Democratic landslide in the 1964 election that brought in many new liberals to Congress, making the House of Representatives in 1965 the most liberal House since 1938. At the same time it was Johnson who said, "*We've got to use the Kennedy program as a springboard to take on the Congress, summon the states to new heights, create a Johnson program, different in tone, fighting and aggressive,*" he said. "*Hell, we've barely begun to solve our problems. And we can do it all.*" In laying it out, LBJ even set out a specific time frame for it to come to fruition — 50 years, a mark that will be reached on Thursday. Johnson launched his program with a University of Michigan commencement address, delivered on the clear, humid morning of May 22, 1964, in Ann Arbor. "*I never thought I'd have the power,*" Johnson told his advisors Richard Goodwin and Bill Moyers. "*I wanted power to use it. And I'm going to use it.*"

It is universally believed that the most important domestic achievement of the Great Society may have been its success in translating some of the demands of the civil rights movement into law. Four civil rights acts were passed, including three laws in the first two years of Johnson's presidency. **The Civil Rights Act of 1964** forbade job discrimination and the segregation of public accommodations. **The Voting Rights Act of 1965** assured minority registration and voting. It suspended use of literacy or other voter-qualification tests that had sometimes served to keep African-Americans off voting lists and provided for federal court lawsuits to stop discriminatory poll taxes. It also reinforced the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** by authorizing the appointment of federal voting examiners in areas that did not meet voter-participation requirements. The **Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965** abolished the national-origin quotas in immigration law. **The Civil Rights Act of 1968** banned housing discrimination and extended constitutional protections to Native Americans on reservations. And having been a victim of housing discrimination growing up in New York, this law touched me personally.

Unlike the old New Deal, which was a response to a severe financial and economic calamity, the Great Society initiatives came just as the United States' post-World War II prosperity was starting to fade, but before the coming decline was being felt by the middle and upper classes. President Kennedy proposed an across-the-board tax cut lowering the top bracket marginal income tax in the United States by 20%, from 91% to 71%, which was enacted in February 1964 under President Johnson (three months after Kennedy's assassination). The tax cut also significantly reduced marginal rates in the lower brackets as well as for corporations. The gross national product rose 10% in the first year of the tax cut, and economic growth averaged a rate of 4.5% from 1961 to 1968.

On the economic front Johnson's tax cut measure triggered what one historian described as "*the greatest prosperity of the postwar years.*" GNP increased by 7% in 1964, 8% in 1965, and 9% in 1966. The unemployment rate fell below 5%, and by 1966 the number of families with incomes of \$7,000 a year or more had reached 55%, compared with 22% in 1950. In 1968, when John Kenneth Galbraith published a new edition of **The Affluent Society**, the average income of the American family stood at \$8,000, double what it had been a decade earlier. Disposable personal income rose 15% in 1966 alone. Federal revenues increased dramatically from \$94 billion in 1961 to \$150 billion in 1967. As the Baby Boom generation aged, two and a half times more Americans would enter the labor force between 1965 and 1980 than had between 1950 and 1965.

The most ambitious and controversial part of the **Great Society** was its initiative to end poverty. The Kennedy Administration had been contemplating a federal effort against poverty. Johnson, who, as a teacher had observed extreme poverty in Texas among Mexican-Americans, launched an "*unconditional war on poverty*" in the first months of his presidency with the goal of eliminating hunger and deprivation from American life. The centerpiece of the **War on Poverty** was the **Economic Opportunity Act of 1964**, which created an **Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)** to oversee a variety of community-based antipoverty programs.

Federal funds were provided for special education schemes in slum areas, including help in paying for books and transport, while financial aid was also provided for slum clearances and rebuilding city areas. In addition, the **Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965** created jobs in one of the most impoverished regions of the country. **The Economic Opportunity Act** of 1964 provided various schemes in which young people from poor homes could receive job training and higher education. The consensus among policymakers that the best way to deal with poverty was not simply to raise the incomes of the poor but to help them better themselves through education, job training, and community development. Central to its mission was the idea of "*community action*", the participation of the poor in framing and administering the programs designed to help them.

The most important educational component of the **Great Society** was the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**, designed by Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel. It was signed into law on April 11, 1965, less than three months after it was introduced. It ended a long-standing political taboo by providing significant federal aid to public education, initially allotting more than \$1 billion to help schools purchase materials and start special education programs to schools with a high concentration of low-income children. During its first year of operation, the Act authorized a \$1.1 billion program of grants to states, for allocations to school districts with large numbers of children of low income families, funds to use community facilities for education within the entire community, funds to improve educational research and to strengthen state departments of education, and grants for purchase of books and library materials. The Act also established **Head Start**, which had originally been started by the **Office of Economic Opportunity** as an eight-week summer program, as a permanent program.

The Social Security Act of 1965 authorized Medicare and provided federal funding for many of the medical costs of older Americans. In 1966 welfare recipients of all ages received medical care through the Medicaid program. Medicaid was created on July 30, 1965 under **Title XIX** of the **Social Security Act of 1965**. Each state administers its own Medicaid program while the federal Centers for Medicare and **Medicaid Services (CMS)** monitors the state-run programs and establishes requirements for service delivery, quality, funding, and eligibility standards. A number of improvements were made to the Social Security program in terms of both coverage and adequacy of benefits.

The Food Stamp Act of 1964 made the program permanent, while **the Social Security Amendments of 1967** specified that at least 6% of monies for maternal and child health should be spent on family planning. By 1967, the federal government began requiring state health departments to make contraceptives available to all adults who were poor. Meal programs for low-income senior citizens began in 1965, with the federal government providing funding for "*congregate meals*" and "*home-delivered meals*." **The Child Nutrition Act**, passed in 1966, made improvements to nutritional assistance to children such as in the introduction of the **School Breakfast Program**.

In September 1965, Johnson signed the **National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act** into law, creating both the **National Endowment for the Arts** and **National Endowment for the Humanities** as separate, independent agencies. After the **First National Conference on Long-Range Financing of Educational Television Stations** in December 1964 called for a study of the role of noncommercial education television in society, the Carnegie Corporation agreed to finance the work of a 15-member national commission. Its landmark report, **Public Television: A Program for Action**, published on January 26, 1967, popularized the phrase "public television" and assisted the legislative campaign for federal aid. **The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967**, enacted less than 10 months later, chartered the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** as a private, non-profit corporation.

Transportation initiatives started during President Johnson's term in office included the consolidation of transportation agencies into a cabinet-level position under the Department of Transportation. The department was authorized by Congress on October 15, 1966 and began operations on April 1, 1967. Congress passed a variety of legislation to support improvements in transportation including **The Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964** which provided \$375 million for large-scale urban public or private rail projects in the form of matching funds to cities and states and created the **Urban Mass Transit Administration** (now the Federal Transit Administration), **High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965** which resulted in the creation of high-speed rail between New York and Washington, and **the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966**--a bill largely taken credit for by Ralph Nader, whose book *Unsafe at Any Speed* he claims helped inspire the legislation.

Often not remembered are the Great Society's consumer protection laws that included the **Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act of 1965** required packages to carry warning labels. **The Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966** set standards through creation of the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**. **The Fair Packaging and Labeling Act** requires products identify manufacturer, address, clearly mark quantity and servings. The statute also authorizes **HEW** and **FTC** to establish and define voluntary standard sizes.

The Great Society environmental initiatives focused on the fact that the air we breathe, our water, our soil and wildlife, are being blighted by poisons and chemicals which are the by-products of technology and industry. Johnson believed that the society that receives the rewards of technology, must, as a cooperating whole, take responsibility for control. To deal with these new problems will required new conservation. Clear Air, Water Quality and Clean Water Restoration Acts and Amendments: **Clean Air Act of 1963**, **Wilderness Act of 1964**, **Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966**, **National Trails System Act of 1968**, **Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968**, **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965**, **Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965**, **Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act of 1965**, **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966**, **Aircraft Noise Abatement Act of 1968** and **the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969**.

Many people don't realize that a number of measures were introduced to improve socio-economic conditions in rural areas. Under **Title III** of the **1964 Economic Opportunity Act**, **Special Programs to Combat Rural Poverty**, the **Office for Economic Opportunity** was authorized to act as a lender of last resort for rural families who needed money to help them permanently increase their earning capacity. Loans could be made to purchase land, improve the operation of family farms, allow participation in cooperative ventures, and finance non-agricultural business enterprises, while

local cooperatives which served low-income rural families could apply for another category of loans for similar purposes.

The Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 reorganized the **Areas Redevelopment Administration (ARA)** into the **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**, and authorized \$3.3 billion over 5 years while specifying seven criteria for eligibility.

Wages: Amendments made to the **1931 Davis-Bacon Act in 1964** extended the prevailing wage provisions to cover fringe benefits, while several increases were made to the federal minimum wage. **The Service Contract Act of 1965** provided for minimum wages and fringe benefits as well as other conditions of work for contractors under certain types of service contracts. A comprehensive minimum rate hike was also signed into law that extended the coverage of the **Fair Labor Standards Act** to about 9.1 million additional workers.

Today, the laws enacted between 1964 and 1968 are woven into the fabric of American life, in ways big and small. They have knocked down racial barriers, provided health care for the elderly and food for the poor, sustained orchestras and museums in cities across the country, put seat belts and padded dashboards in every automobile, garnished Connecticut Avenue in Northwest Washington with red oaks. *"We are living in Lyndon Johnson's America,"* said Joseph A. Califano Jr., who was LBJ's top domestic policy adviser from 1965 through the end of his presidency. *"This country is more the country of Lyndon Johnson than any other president."* The backlash against the Great Society has been as enduring as its successes.

Virtually every political battle that rages today has roots in the federal expansion and experimentation that began in the 1960s. It set terms of engagement for ideological warfare over how to grapple with income inequality, whether to encourage a common curriculum in schools, affirmative action, immigration, even whether to strip federal funding for **National Public Radio**. Many **Great Society** programs are now so popular it is hard to imagine the country as we know it without them.

Others — including some of its more grandiose urban renewal efforts — are generally regarded as failures. Poverty remains with us, with the two parties in deep disagreement over whether government has alleviated it or made it harder to escape. LBJ's unprecedented and ambitious domestic vision changed the nation. Half a century later, it continues to define politics and power in America.

Although not every initiative didn't work, many did. And its a shame that LBJ's support of the Vietnam war has clouded the legacy of the many accomplishments of the Great Society. But what the success of the Great Society has shown that there is a role for government with grit, vigor and vision to achieve great things.



Sometime in the 1990s I was introduced to the **Wu-Tang Clan** originally composed of East Coast rappers RZA, GZA, Method Man, Raekwon, Ghostface Killah, Inspectah Deck, U-God, Masta Killa, and the late Ol' Dirty Bastard through my friend Cathy Jones and although their music wasn't my cup of tea I found the individual members interesting as they navigated through their celebrity in search of their personal goals outside of the collective of the group which was much bigger than any individual members with the exception of RZA and the late Ol' Dirty Bastard.

These guys mostly from the New York City boroughs of Staten Island and Brooklyn were worldwide stars, revered by a generation of young people from Kansas to Shanghai to Oslo to Tokyo, yet from some reason they seem overshadowed by many of the pier groups whom our MTV media driven machine felt more comfortable. Wikipedia: The Clan had so many characters, each with his own eccentricities. They were fearless in their approach. There's a good reason no group has been able to successfully recreate their sound. The crew spawned countless loosely associated acts. Their classic albums spawned classic albums." Kris Ex of Rolling Stone called Wu-Tang Clan *"the best rap group ever."* In 2004, NME hailed them as one of the most influential groups of the last ten years.

But this story is not about Wu-Tang as much as it is how they have come up with a new way to market their music. In the 1870s when the piano began to find its way into more and more homes creating a demand for sheet music that was then driven by Ragtime (the first popular music craze in the US) and the technological development of the recording industry in 1877 when Thomas Edison conceived the phonograph record machine that led to the development of 78s, 33s, 45s, LPs, 8 tracks, 4 tracks, cassettes, CDs, DVDs and iTunes creating a music industry that enabled writers, musicians and artists to easily profit from the sales of their efforts worldwide. But like most good things the paradigm shifted as the current generation of young music enthusiast refuse to purchase records/CDs and instead download freely whatever they want to the chagrin of record companies and artists.

Just announced, the Wu-Tang Clan upcoming album "Once Upon a Time In Shaolin" contained in a silver box engraved by a British-Moroccan artist named Yahya much like a piece of art will soon make appearances at museums around the world, where, after a security pat-down, fans and critics alike may listen to it one at a time, before — and this is the important part — the only copy will be auctioned off, secreted in the home of its super-wealthy new owner, and kept insulated from the prying ears of the masses — and that the group has reportedly already received a bid of \$5 million. Needless to say that the concept of auctioning off a single copy of an album sounds bizarre (after all, don't they want people to hear their music?), but that's what the Wu-Tang Clan is doing.

A statement on the album's sleek website says the plan is patterned on a "400 year old Renaissance-style approach to music," one in which a wealthy patron commissions a one-of-a-kind piece of private artwork. The patronage model, of course, cuts a sizable (and sometimes entitled) group out of the deal: fans. Already, two outraged yet committed Wu-Tang fans have launched a Kickstarter project to match the bid of \$5 million (they have not yet broken \$20,000), in hopes that "the rest of us get to enjoy an epic album instead of some uber-rich bastard keeping it to himself like a collector's item." One man's patron, it seems, is another man's uber-rich bastard.

The (very) limited release of Shaolin has led to conversations about music's value in the digital era—conversations, it should be noted, that masquerade as debates but really boil down to people uniformly arguing that others should make a point of paying for music. Digital holdouts like Radiohead's Thom Yorke have complained about the devaluation of music at the hands of streaming services like Spotify and Rhapsody, and this album's single-unit sale is an attempt — however high-minded and quixotic it may be — to restore music's lost import. "One leak," as the album's producer, Tarik Azzougarh (aka Cilvaringz), puts it, "nullifies the entire concept." (Azzougarh recently hosted a Forbes reporter in Morocco, allowing him to record and distribute 51 seconds of the album, which, theoretically, might amount to about \$50,000 worth of music.)

In the coverage of all this, though, Azzougarh's own background — he's studied music management and entertainment law — has taken a back seat to the brazenness of the sales concept. Shaolin may seem like some half-baked one-off, but in fact, Azzougarh claims on the album's website, its release marks the launch of what he calls "*the world's first private music service.*" While such a service could conceivably devolve into an Uber for music, allowing the wealthy to frivolously commission private albums as they please, Azzougarh is hoping it might "*save the music album from dying.*"

The question of whether the private-service model is at all sustainable remains to be answered. Syd Schwartz, founder of the digital marketing and strategy firm Linchpin Digital, points out that this concept is only available to well-established artists. "*The Wu-Tang Clan has 20-plus years of multi-platinum success behind them,*" he says. "*Without that, this wouldn't even be a conversation.*" Schwartz views the plan as an attempt to gin up the hype that used to accompany record releases. He remembers when, in the 1990s, midnight sales of new releases from Garth Brooks and Pearl Jam would force the Tower Records in Hollywood to hire extra security. "*But you can't rally that kind of hype around something that excludes the fans,*" Schwartz says.

Despite Azzougarh's claims to being "first," his ideas are not without modern precedent. "*We already see this type of private music service when we read about a big act doing a private gig for a royal or rich person for a million dollars,*" explains Catherine Moore, a professor of music business at New York University. "*That's not new.*" That model, of course, comes with its own host of potential landmines: after years of soul-searching, singer Nelly Furtado decided in 2011 to donate to charity the \$1 million she received for a private show back in 2007 put on for the family of Muammar Qaddafi. John Strohm, a music lawyer who advises artists such as Bon Iver and the Civil Wars, is equally unconvinced that this is, at its core, a new idea. "*What's new is the way this is being framed,*" he says. Typically, a record label will purchase an artist's master recordings (and the distribution rights to

them), which is different from The Wu-Tang Clan's model only in that the buyer is a company rather than an individual. "It's almost exactly like the kind of deal they might make with Sony," Strohm says.

Even if selling a master recording to a private buyer isn't entirely new, the idea has still produced significant buzz, and will likely attract a supremely wealthy bidder that a Kickstarter campaign will have no hope of matching. All is not lost for the everyman, though: In tandem with "Shaolin," the Wu-Tang Clan is planning on releasing another album, "A Better Tomorrow," through traditional, democratic avenues. It'll probably be available for \$10 on iTunes—for the foreseeable future.

Taking Europe's pulse



THE European recovery remains intact but got off to a disappointing start in the first three months of 2014, when GDP rose by just 0.3% across the 28-strong European Union and a still poorer 0.2% across the 18-state euro area, according to figures from Eurostat on May 15th. Forecasts in early May from the European Commission had already suggested that the recovery would be modest this year but gather momentum in 2015. GDP in the EU will expand by 1.6% this year and 2.0% in 2015. Euro-wide GDP will rise by 1.2% in 2014 and 1.7% in 2015. This year's growth will be too feeble to counter worryingly low inflation, prompting further monetary stimulus from the European Central Bank.

Easily the worst performer this year will be Cyprus, whose national output will continue to tumble, by 4.8%. All other countries in the euro zone are expected to expand, with Finland growing the slowest, by only 0.2%. The only other country going backwards in the EU will be Croatia, whose entry to the EU in the middle of last year has got off to a rocky economic start, with GDP contracting in 2013 by 1% and expected to fall again this year, by 0.6%.

In contrast with these sluggards, two small Baltic states, one inside the euro area and one outside it, will come first and second in the EU league table in both years. Latvia, which adopted the single currency at the start of this year, will grow by 3.8% in 2014 and 4.1% in 2015. Lithuania, which is expected to join the euro area next year, will grow by 3.3% in 2014 and 3.7% in 2015. These forecasts may turn out to be too rosy if the Ukraine crisis continues to intensify, which is likely to have particularly adverse economic effects on the Baltic countries.

The main impetus behind the euro zone's recovery this year will be Germany, which makes up nearly 30% of the currency club's collective output, and which is predicted to grow by 1.8%. The strengthening of the upturn in 2015 comes as the other three big economies, France, Italy and Spain, do better though growth in both France and Italy will still be below the euro-zone average of 1.7%. Outside the euro area, Britain is now experiencing a robust recovery and GDP will expand by 2.7% in 2014 and 2.5% in 2015.

The euro-zone recovery will not be strong enough this year to make much of a dent on unemployment, forecast to fall from 12.0% last year to 11.8% in 2014 though it will drop more in 2015, to 11.4%. That labour-market slack will be one of several factors keeping inflation low though the euro area is expected to dodge outright deflation. Instead inflation will fall from 1.3% in 2013 to 0.8% this year, rising to 1.2% in 2015. Still the economic signs today are much better than they were five years ago.

Bill Maher challenges Republicans: Impeach Obama 'so he can kick your ass a third time'



Web Link: <http://youtu.be/y-D8cn2j0Vs>

Bill Maher closed **Real Time** a week ago Friday by throwing a serious — “*Rob Ford in rehab*” serious, even — challenge to the Republican Party, daring conservatives to follow through on their threat to impeach President Barack Obama over the fatal September 2012 U.S. consulate bombing in Benghazi,

Libya. "If you really believe Benghazi is that serious and Obama is that big a crook, then you should impeach him tomorrow." And, Maher said "When the Republicans impeached [Bill] Clinton, his approval ratings shot up 10 [percentage] points, to 73," Maher argued. "Obama's approval is at 41. He could use a little of that impeachment mojo. So go ahead, haters. Make Benghazi your big issue, please. Put Barack Obama back on the ballot in 2014, so he can kick your ass a third time."

The fact that Republicans are seizing on the attack as a talking point again, Maher said, meant that the Affordable Care Act (commonly known as "Obamacare") was working. "Logic, however, not as much," Maher said. "Because if you ask [conservatives] to explain what the Benghazi crime is, they still can't. It's just some blather about 'Don't you see? If it was terrorists, instead of what he said, act of terror, then Obama is weak and Mitt Romney gets to be retroactive president.'" But logical arguments don't matter in today's GOP, Maher explained, attributing their rhetoric to the party catching syphilis in 1994, leaving it untreated and reducing it to "the drooling and frothing stage today." "It's like trying to relate to someone who's tripping when you're not," Maher said. "Sorry, we don't see the spiders." If you didn't see it, I invite you to view Bill Mather's challenge on the above link.



One of the striking stories in the American economy over the last several decades is just how much the incomes of the super-rich have grown, compared to the incomes of everyone else. But what if the focus on those super-rich – the top 1 percent of all earners – has overshadowed a larger, more troubling gap: the widening one between college graduates and workers whose education stopped after high school? That's the argument MIT economist David Autor makes in a brief research paper out Thursday – that "the growth of skill differentials among the 'other 99 percent' is arguably even more consequential than the rise of the 1% for the welfare of most citizens." By Autor's calculations, if you'd taken all the income gains that flowed to the 1 percent over the last 35 years and redistributed them evenly to everyone else in the economy that would have delivered an extra \$7,100 a year to every household in the bottom 99 percent. That's a lot of money. But it's not as much as the growing pay differential between workers who went to college and those who didn't.

In the last 35 years, he calculates, the so-called college premium – the boost in your paycheck from earning a diploma – increased by \$28,000, adjusted for inflation. So if you took that entire increase and redistributed it to non-college workers, you'd be giving them a raise four times the size of the 1 percent redistribution.

As he described it in an interview:

Imagine two people, average people, four people who go to the same high school, two men, two women. One of the men and one of the women decide to go to college, and one of the men and one of the women decide to call it off in high school. Let's say that happens in 1979... at the time, they could have expected the college graduate family would earn about \$30,000 more a year than the high school grad family...

Now, roll the tape forward 23, 24 years, and that annual gap has expanded from \$30,000 to \$58,000. So, almost doubled. So what might have looked reasonable in 1979 now looks like a bad bet. Contrasting that increase with the growing income share of the 1 percent isn't exactly apples to apples. But Autor says it should be sufficient to challenge Americans' perceptions of inequality – and push policymakers toward more efforts to lift lower-skill workers up. *"I don't mean to say the 1 percent thing is not a big deal. It is," he said. But the "real reason to worry about inequality," he added, is "because of the falling bottom."*

Autor has spent much of his career tracking the forces that have hurt workers and incomes at the bottom, most notably outsourcing and automation trends that have reduced the value of physical labor and increased the value of brainpower. (In this paper, he notes that workers have also suffered because of steadily reduced power to bargain for better wages.) Workers have been relatively slow to catch on, he says – but there's hope. *"Prior cohorts of U.S. students, particularly males, were slow to react to the rising return to education during the 1980s and 1990s,"* he writes in the paper, *"but the message appears to have finally gotten through. During the first decade of the 21st century, the U.S. high school graduation rate rose sharply after having been essentially stagnant since the late 1960s. This unanticipated rise was followed just a few years later by a surge in college completions."* As such, there is a case that a college education may be the biggest reason for social and economic inequality in America.



The Republicans have wanted a scandal since the first day of President Obama's Administration and now they have one, except you/they can't just blame it on Obama. The scandal that I am talking about is actually a scandal within a scandal, as it started out when a whistleblower exposed that the Veterans Affairs hospitals in Arizona were cooking the books to hide the fact that our returning veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq had to wait up to one and a half years before seeing a doctor. And although that in itself is egregious, the deeper and potentially more dangerous problem (and potential scandal), is the way veterans are being treated for PTSD. One of the residual/after effects of any war is PTSD. In the Civil War we called it *solider's heart*. In World War I it was changed to *shell-shocked*. And then in World War I I *battle-fatigue*. Now we have soldiers coming back from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq suffering from a condition called *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

In 2001, the General Accounting Office issued a report warning that wait times for medical services at VA clinics were excessive — and dangerous. Since that time, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have created a whole new generation of veterans. Advances in battlefield medicine have allowed more fighters to survive serious injuries, but that has also meant more returning home with wounds and disabilities, both physical and mental. Even though the total number of veterans has been declining, as the World War II generation passes on, the number of veterans seeking care has been increasing — placing further strains on the system. Lawmakers screamingly most loudly right now seem blissfully unaware that the need for VA services is a direct by-product of wars they supported even more enthusiastically.

But demand alone doesn't explain the VA's problems. Antiquated, sclerotic bureaucracies are also part of the story. Veterans who wish to use VA health services must first apply. They also must get determinations about what kinds of disabilities they have—and how they got them. Those determinations are important: Veterans who lost limbs in battle, for example, get priority for services over those who served stateside without injury. The application files are still on paper, creating a huge backlog. The process also inflates wait times for actual medical services, since the disability determinations frequently require tests and checkups at VA medical facilities.

It has estimated that more than a quarter of a million vets have sought treated for PTSD and 22 veterans a day take their own life. As such, we have an urgent health crisis facing our recently returned veterans and the story is ugly with tens, if not hundreds of thousands returning vets struggling for reentry into civilian life. Many are estranged from their families, unable to get jobs, homeless and addicted to drugs, prescription and otherwise. They are broken and unable to connect to family, friends and the lives that they had before going to war. Human beings are used to living in a certain

environment. If you introduce anything into that environment that is very thematic, very different from what they are exposed to, they are going to experience Post Traumatic Stress afterwards.

Therefore 99% of people who go into combat come back with post thematic stress, as it is a normal reaction to being in an abnormal environment. And with the Department of Veterans Affairs medical budget of \$58 billion at an all-time high you would think that we would be moving to more sophisticated care but the results are going in the wrong direction. Between 2009 and 2011 (the most recent years to the date it is available) the number of veterans under the age of 30 who committed suicide increased by 44%.

Making a transition from the military world back into the civilian world is very difficult causing stress. And if you really want to interfere with that transition, medicate them. Which is exactly what the VA is doing. Between 2008 and 2013 there was a 100% increase in the number of psychotropic drugs prescriptions issued to active duty soldiers changing the brain chemistry which will interfere with the normalizing of them moving back to the civilian world. The after effects of these drugs are anger, hostility, poor judgment, depression and suicide making reintegration back into civilian life extremely difficult for many returning vets. Still these vets are chemically shackled to these psychotropic drugs, as it is almost impossible for them to wean themselves of them without a lot of support and professional supervision. The scandal is that veteran's narcotics prescriptions are being renewed month after month, months on end, sometimes for one to two years without any examination to assess the underlying cause. And whistleblowers are saying that this is endemic throughout the entire VA, *"where quick and cheap is rewarded of a good and through."*

Forget this being the VA, the first rule of medicine is **"to do no harm."** And when copious amounts of large doses of opiates are being prescribed inappropriately for PTSD serious harm is being done. What is recommended is psychotherapy, SSRIs (Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), antidepressants and multiple other opioids. While narcotics are very cheap, enabling doctors to see high numbers of patients in a short amount of time for relatively little or no cost. This has led to a prescription meds addiction for tens of thousands if not more for these PTSD patients with some receiving thousands of prescribed opioids in multiple combinations on a monthly basis. Therefore it is hard to understand how any medical institution in good conscience can perpetuate a therapy that is this harmful to the people they are supposed to serve. Let's remember that the VA serves the people that served us. The VA motto: **TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE AND FOR HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN.** Abraham Lincoln.

Obviously there are times when patients need medication but the VA should put a stronger emphasis on counseling and therapy.... timely, right away with psychiatrist evaluating patients prior to their return to civilian life and a reevaluation of all other vets to make sure that they are receiving the treatment and support that they need. The current system needs to be overall as too many veterans are falling through the cracks because what is happening today is unacceptable. Today in a major city, when a vet files a disability benefits claim they can wait 600 days. Currently 900,000 people are waiting for the VA, and of those 600,000 have been waiting for more than 125 days for a simple answer and that's bullshit. It is a shame that twelve years ago people in the U.S. didn't understand the cost of war because they had plenty of money for tanks, they have plenty of money for bombs but somehow today there is not enough money for counselors and for the treatment that is going to be necessary for our returning veterans, who many could be addicted to drugs for the rest of their lives, unable to hold jobs and sustain relationships. ***This is a real scandal and my outrage of the week.***

WEEK'S READINGS



As someone who is of the age where dementia is becoming an increasing concern I took a special interest in an article by Shelley Emling in the **Huffington Post – Antidepressant May Slow Alzheimer's Disease, Study Finds**. With the number of people living with dementia expected to double to 65.7 million by 2030, any breakthrough in the Alzheimer's arena is a welcome one -- especially if it leads to a method for slowing the disease. One such breakthrough happened this week, when researchers announced that a commonly prescribed antidepressant may be able to reduce production of the main ingredient in Alzheimer's brain plaques.

Brain plaques are closely connected to memory problems and other cognitive difficulties caused by Alzheimer's. If researchers can stop the plaque buildup, they may be able to stop the horrific mental decline caused by the disease. Scientists found that the antidepressant citalopram stopped the growth of plaques in a mouse model of Alzheimer's. What was even better is that a single dose of the antidepressant lowered production of amyloid beta -- the primary ingredient in plaques -- by 37 percent in young healthy adults.

Even so, researchers urged caution. *"Antidepressants appear to be significantly reducing amyloid beta production, and that's exciting,"* said senior author Dr. John Cirrito, assistant professor of neurology at Washington University School of Medicine, in a written release. *"But while antidepressants generally are well tolerated, they have risks and side effects. Until we can more definitively prove that these drugs help slow or stop Alzheimer's in humans, the risks aren't worth it. There is still much more work to do."*

Amyloid beta is a protein produced by normal brain activity. When a person has Alzheimer's, levels of this protein go up in the brain, causing pieces of it to clump together to form plaques. The researchers have studied the impact of antidepressants on Alzheimer's before. In 2011, the researchers tested several antidepressants in young mice genetically altered to develop Alzheimer's disease as they aged. In these mice, which had not yet developed brain plaques, antidepressants reduced amyloid beta production by an average of 25 percent after 24 hours. For the new study, the team gave citalopram to older mice with brain plaques. Giving the mice the antidepressant stopped the growth of existing plaques and reduced the formation of new plaques by 78 percent.

In a second experiment, the scientists gave a single dose of citalopram to 23 people aged 18 to 50 who were not cognitively impaired or depressed. Samples of spinal fluid taken from the participants over the next 24 hours revealed a 37 percent decline in amyloid beta production. Researchers say they next plan to study older adults who will be treated for two weeks with antidepressants to find out if the beneficial reduction in amyloid beta is sustainable. The findings were published May 14 in **Science Translational Medicine**.

In other Alzheimer's-related research this year, scientists found that chronic sleep disturbances may speed up the onset of dementias. The good news is that you can improve your quality of sleep with breathing techniques and other simple moves. And in a study from last year, scientists discovered new genes linked to late-onset Alzheimer's, giving them clues on how to create better drugs to fight the disease. If you are like me, suffering from chronic sleep disturbances, I recommend that you do a sleep study with a specialist to address this disorder as every expert in the field now believes that it speeds up dementia just in case a cure isn't found by the time we need it.

Why I fled libertarianism — and became a liberal

I was a Ron Paul delegate back in 2008 -- now I'm a Democrat. Here's my personal tale of disgust and self-discovery



SALON Magazine: EDWIN LYNGAR – DEC 28, 2013

The night before the 2008 Nevada Republican convention, the Ron Paul delegates all met at a Reno high school. Although I'd called myself a libertarian for almost my entire adult life, it was my first exposure to the wider movement. And boy, was it a circus. Many members of the group were obsessed with the gold standard, the Kennedy assassination and the Fed. Although Libertarians believe

government is incompetent, many of them subscribe to the most fringe conspiracy theories imaginable. Airplanes are poisoning America with chemicals (*chemtrails*) or the moon landings were faked. Nothing was too far out. A great many of them really think that 9-11 was an inside job. Even while basking in the electoral mainstream, the movement was overflowing with obvious hokum.

During the meeting, a Ron Paul staffer, a smart and charismatic young woman, gave a tip to the group for the upcoming convention. *“Dress normal,”* she said. *“Wear suits, and don’t bring signs or flags. Don’t talk about conspiracy theories. Just fit in.”* Her advice was the kind you might hear given to an insane uncle at Thanksgiving. Then next day, I ran into that same operative at the convention, and I complimented her because Ron Paul delegates were being accepted into the crowd. I added, *“We’re going to win this thing.”* *“Bring in the clowns,”* she said, and smiled before I lost her in the mass of people.

I will never forget that moment: Bring in the clowns. At the time, I considered myself a thoughtful person, yet I could hardly claim to be one if you judged me by the company I kept. The young lady knew something I had not yet learned: most of our supporters were totally fucking nuts. I came by my own libertarian sensibilities honestly. I grew up in a mining town that produced gold, silver and copper; but above all, Battle Mountain, Nev. made libertarians. Raised on 40-acre square of brown sage brush and dead earth, we burned our own garbage and fired guns in the back yard.

After leaving my small town upbringing, I learned that libertarians are made for lots of reasons, like reading the bad fiction of Ayn Rand or perhaps the passable writing of Robert Heinlein. In my experience, most seemed to be poor, white and undereducated. They were contortionists, justifying the excesses of the capitalist elite, despite being victims if libertarian politics succeed. If you think that selfishness and cruelty are fantastic personal traits, you might be a libertarian. In the movement no one will ever call you an asshole, but rather, say you believe in radical individualism.

11 heinous lies conservatives are teaching America’s schoolchildren



The right has a new plan to capture the country's youth vote: Take over public school curriculums

If recent elections have taught us anything, it's that young Americans have taken a decided turn to the left. Young voters delivered Obama the election: the under-44 set voted Obama and the over-45 set broke for Romney. The youngest voters, age 18-29, gave Obama a whopping 60 percent of their vote. Now Republicans have a plan to try to recapture the youngest voters out there: Take over the curriculum in public schools, replace education with a bunch of conservative propoganda, and reap the benefits of having a new generation that can't tell reality from right-wing fantasy.

How well this plan will work is debatable, but in the meantime, these shenanigans present the very real possibility that public school students will graduate without a proper education. To make it worse, many of these attempts to rewrite school curriculum are happening in Texas, **which can set the textbook standards for the entire country** by simply wielding its power as one of the biggest school textbook markets there is. With that in mind, here's a list of 11 lies your kid may be in danger of learning in school.

Lie No. 1: Racism has barely been an issue in U.S. history and slavery wasn't that big a deal.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute reviewed the new social studies standards laid down by the right-wing-dominated Texas State School Board and found them to be a deplorable example of conservative wishful thinking replacing fact. At the top of list? Downplaying the role that slavery had in starting the Civil War, and instead focusing on "*sectionalism*" and "*states' rights*," even though the sectionalism and states' rights arguments directly stemmed from Southern states wanting to keep slavery. There's also a chance your kid might be misled to think post-Civil War racism was no big deal, as the standards excise any mention of the KKK, the phrase "*Jim Crow*" or the Black Codes. Mention is made of the Southern Democratic opposition to civil rights, but mysteriously, the mass defection of Southern Democrats to the Republican Party to punish the rest of the Democrats for supporting civil rights goes unmentioned.

Lie No. 2: Joe McCarthy was right.

The red-baiting of the mid-20th century has gone down in history, correctly, as a witch hunt that stemmed from irrational paranoia that gripped the U.S. after WWII. But now, according to the Thomas B. Fordham report, your kid might learn that the red baiters had a point: *“It is disingenuously suggested that the House Un-American Activities Committee — and, by extension, McCarthyism— have been vindicated by the Venona decrypts of Soviet espionage activities (which had, in reality, no link to McCarthy’s targets).”* Critical lessons about being skeptical of those who attack fellow Americans while wrapping themselves in the flag will be lost for students whose textbooks adhere to these standards.

Lie No. 3: Climate change is a massive hoax scientists have perpetuated on the public.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has been hard at work pushing for laws requiring that climate change denialism be taught in schools as a legitimate scientific theory. Unfortunately, as **Neela Banerjee** of the L.A. Times reports, they’ve already had some serious success: *“Texas and Louisiana have introduced education standards that require educators to teach climate change denial as a valid scientific position. South Dakota and Utah passed resolutions denying climate change.”* Other states are taking the *“teach the controversy”* strategy that helped get creationism into biology classrooms, asking teachers to treat climate change like it’s a matter of political debate instead of a scientifically established fact.

The reality is that climate change is a fact that has overwhelming scientific consensus. In 2004, Science **reviewed the 928 relevant studies** on climate change published between 1993 and 2003 and found that exactly zero of them denied that climate change was a reality, and most found it had man-made causes. To claim that climate change is a *“controversy”* requires one to believe that there’s a massive conspiracy involving nearly all the scientists in the world. So, your kids are not only *not* learning the realities of climate change, they are also learning, if indirectly, to give credence to conspiracy theory paranoia.

Lie No. 4: The Bible is a history textbook and a scientific document.

Texas passed a law in 2007 pushing schools to teach the Bible as history and literature in schools. Since that was already being done in most schools, the law was clearly just a backdoor way to sneak religious instruction into schools, and a report **by the Texas Freedom Network (TFN)** **demonstrates** that many of them have taken full advantage. One district treats the Bible stories like history by *“listing biblical events side by side with historical developments from around the globe.”* Many other schools are teaching that the Bible *“proves”* that the Earth is only 6,000 years old. The Earth is actually over 4 billion years old.

Lie No. 5: Black people are the descendants of Ham and therefore cursed by God.

Among the courses justified by the 2007 Bible law, TFN found two school districts teaching that the various races are descended from the sons of Noah. All the Bible really says about the sons of Noah is that Ham was cursed by his father so that his descendants would be slaves, but American slave owners used this passage to claim that Africans must be the descendants of Ham and therefore their slave-owning was OK by God. Make no mistake. The only reason this legend has persisted and is popping up in 21st-century classrooms is that conservative Christians are still trying to justify the enslavement of African Americans over a century ago.

Lie No. 6: Evolution is a massive hoax scientists have perpetuated on the public.

Creationists have an endless store of creative ways to get around the Constitution and the courts when it comes to replacing legitimate biology education with fundamentalist Christian dogma. Various states have employed an extensive school voucher system that has allowed creationist dogma to flourish. College-age activist Zack Kopplin has been chronicling the problem, and has found various schools nationwide using taxpayer dollars to teach that evolution is a “*mistaken belief*” and that the Bible “*refutes the man-made idea of evolution.*” Why do these school administrators believe that scientists are hoaxing the public by making up evolution? Kopplin found a Louisiana school principal who claimed it’s because scientists are “*sinful men*” seeking to justify their own immorality, and another Florida school teaching that evolutionary theory is “*the way of the heathen.*”

Lie No. 7: Sex is awful and filthy, and you should save it for someone you love.

While things are improving, even in notoriously fact-phobic states like Mississippi and Texas, “*abstinence-only*” education continues to persist in school districts across the nation. TFN found that **nearly three-quarters of Texas high schools are still teaching abstinence-only**, which is based on the fundamental and easily disproved lie that premarital sex is inherently dangerous to a person’s mental and physical health. On top of this, TFN found that many schools are still passing on inaccurate information on condoms and STI transmission, usually exaggerating the dangers in a futile bid to keep kids from having sex. Unfortunately, even Texas school districts that use curriculum that educates correctly on contraception use are still trying to spin abstinence-until-marriage as a desirable option for all students, **even though premarital sex is near-universal in the real world**. Abstinence-only may be discredited with the voters, but sadly it’s still very normal in Texas, other red states, and **even across the nation**.

Lie No. 8: Dragons actually once existed.

As much as “*Game of Thrones*” fans might wish otherwise, dragons are not real and have never existed. **But as reported by Mother Jones**, Louisiana’s notorious voucher school system has let some crazy nonsense fly in the classroom, including the claim that dragons used to roam the planet. A book being used in Louisiana classrooms titled “*Life Science*” and published by Bob Jones University Press claims that “*scientists*” found “*dinosaur skulls*” that the book suggests are actually dragons. “*The large skull chambers could have contained special chemical-producing glands. When the animal forced the chemicals out of its mouth or nose, these substances may have combined and produced fire and smoke,*” the book claims.

Lie No. 9: Gay people do not actually exist.

After being beat back by gay rights and sexual health advocates, Republicans in the Tennessee Legislature are once again trying to bring back the “*don’t say gay bill*.” The law **would ban a teacher from admitting the existence of homosexuality** to students prior to the 8th grade, even if the students ask them about it. Instead, the bill would require turning a student who confesses to being gay over to his parents, with the legislators clearly hoping that punishment will somehow make the kid not-gay. The entire bill rests on and promotes the premise that homosexuality isn’t a real sexual orientation, but just the result of mental illness or confusion, and if it’s enforced, that message will come across to the students.

Lie No. 10: Hippies were dirty, immoral Satan-worshippers.

In the 1960s, it was common for conservatives to try to discredit the left by stoking paranoia about hippie culture and denouncing the supposed evils of rock ‘n’ roll. Forty years have passed, but in Louisiana, some school administrators are apparently still afraid that possessing a Beatles record means a young person is on the verge of quitting bathing and taking up a lifestyle of taking LSD and worshipping Satan at psychedelic orgies.

A history textbook snagged from a Louisiana school funded by the voucher program tells students: *“Many young people turned to drugs and immoral lifestyles and these youths became known as hippies. They went without bathing, wore dirty, ragged, unconventional clothing, and deliberately broke all codes of politeness or manners. Rock music played an important part in the hippie movement and had great influence over the hippies. Many of the rock musicians they followed belonged to Eastern religious cults or practiced Satan worship.”* It’s unclear if the book also teaches that if you play a Queen record backward, you can hear Satan telling you to smoke pot, but that kind of critical information could also be conveyed during the teacher’s lectures on the subject.

Lie No. 11: Ayn Rand’s books have literary value.

Idaho state Sen. John Goedde, chairman of the state’s Senate Education Committee, has introduced a bill that would require students not only to read Rand’s ponderous novel “Atlas Shrugged,” but also to pass a test on it in order to graduate. Goedde claims to mostly not be serious about this bill, but instead is using it as a childish attempt to piss off the liberals, but it’s still the sort of item parents need to watch out for.

After all, Texas textbook standards **require that an obsession with the gold standard** be taught as a legitimate economic theory instead of the mad ravings of cranks that it is. We live in an era where no amount of right-wing lunacy is considered too much to be pushed on innocent children like it’s fact. Anyone who doubts that should just remember one word: dragons.

The Logic and Illogic of Climate Change Denial



This Oct. 30, 2012 aerial file photo provided by the US Air Force shows flooding on the New Jersey shoreline caused by Superstorm Sandy.

The news that a large ice shelf in Antarctica has begun to collapse may not be as important as Karl Rove's opinion of Hillary Clinton's glasses, or Timothy Geithner's descriptions of the early years of Barack Obama's presidency, but it should still not be ignored entirely. Although there are still some, including unfortunately powerful government officials like Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fl), who do not recognize the import, or indeed reality, of global climate change, and the role of human activity in that, climate change can no longer be ignored.

Sadly, if the recent past is any indication that is precisely what is going to happen. It is only a slight overstatement to say that while the election of somebody like Rubio to the presidency would mean that the country would be led by a president who does not recognize and is unwilling to do anything about climate change, the election of a Democrat would mean that the president recognizes, and is unwilling to do anything about, climate change.

The temptation to do nothing about climate change is strong because it is not sufficient to do something. Instead, we must do everything, meaning we need a holistic approach to addressing the problems and challenges associated with climate change. A holistic approach includes exploring scientific solutions, incentivizing different economic behavior, injecting discussions of climate change into almost every foreign policy question and bilateral relationship and perhaps most critically changing the fundamental ways ordinary citizens behave, consume and use resources.

Addressing the impact of climate change is additionally difficult because it is not easy to recognize either the primary or secondary effects of climate change. For example, while the extremely cold winter that just concluded is consistent with the extreme weather conditions that are part of climate change, many saw the cold as evidence that the climate is not warming. Additionally, the economic effects of the cold winters are not at all obvious, but a few more cold winters like that will begin to effect a range of things including residential patterns, energy costs for ordinary Americans, demands on local government and the like in ways that are not immediately apparent.

Similarly, although some conservative politicians seeking to win votes in Republican primaries continue to deny climate change, many of the wealthy business and real estate people who have to make good financial decisions recognize climate change and the need to act accordingly. It is not hard to imagine that some of these people will begin to relocate their businesses or sell property near vulnerable coastal areas. If major real estate owners, for example, begin to sell coastal properties in big numbers due to the inevitability of rising waters, it could set off a panic that would make the crash of 2008 seem like a walk in the park.

This speculation about the indirect consequences of climate change is still minor compared to the direct impact climate change will have on things like water supply, agricultural output, food security and migration. These problems are not only enormous, but addressing them requires a degree of international cooperation that is unfathomable in this, or almost any other, era. In this context denial may well be a healthy psychological reaction to the dauntingly bad news of global climate change. It is not, however, a politically useful reaction. Nor is it one that is likely to help solve the problem.

The problem of sufficiently responding to climate change will also not be resolved by passing a few pieces of major legislation, crafting market based solutions that make large producers of carbon pay more, or by a brilliant young person who made a fortune in some internet start-up before deciding to give his or her money away to help the planet. The causes of climate change are deeper than that and require a deeper solution.

Climate change was not solely caused by evil polluters, but by a species that, in large part, has for centuries been deeply committed to making, buying and selling things. For much of the time we did those things, nobody thought about long-term environmental impact. Instead, regardless of the ideology, involved producing more was, and continues to be, encouraged by most governments. Contemporary US society may be more extreme in its consumerism, but this is largely a difference of degree, not of kind. Therefore climate change can only be effectively addressed both by investing in infrastructure to adapt to rising sea levels, more flooding and the like, but also by changing behavior in a very profound and difficult way. This means changing how we consume, how much we consume, how we produce goods including foods and how we divide up resources. The "*we*" in that sentence refers not to Americans, but humanity in general. However, there is no precedent for this kind of global cooperation or problem solving. Given that the proposals for addressing global climate change seem either insufficient, seemingly impossible or both, it is not surprising that denial is so appealing.

Huffington Post – Lincoln Mitchell: May 17, 2014



Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki is sworn in on Capitol Hill in Washington, May 15, 2014, prior to testify before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing to examine the state of Veterans Affairs health care.

Finally, an authentic scandal: incompetence, deception and possible criminal activity at the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans with serious heart conditions, gangrene, and even brain tumors waited months for care at the Albuquerque VA hospital, a whistleblowing doctor asserted when word broke that the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Phoenix kept a secret waiting list that allegedly led to dozens of preventable deaths. The VA's inspector general was brought in to investigate the charges and hasn't yet found any deaths in Phoenix linked to wait times, but his investigation is ongoing. Since then five other facilities have come under fire, leading to calls for VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to step down. And now there's Albuquerque's. The evidence for this new secret list may be hard to track down, however.

Dr. Sam Foote, a retired doctor who recently shed light on the backlogs and long delays for vets seeking medical treatment. Most recently, accusations of secret waiting lists and document destruction at a Phoenix VA facility have triggered widespread anger across the country. The deputy director of the VFW Nation Veterans Service said Sunday there needs to be "*swift accountability*" regarding reports of treatment delays at veterans' hospitals across the country. "The families of these veterans need justice and they need it quickly," Ryan Gallucci said on "**Fox News last Sunday.**" Dr. Robert Petzel, undersecretary for health in the Department of Veterans Affairs, resigned one day after he spoke at a Senate hearing about the issue alongside Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. With both Republicans and Democrats demanding that more heads need to roll and a criminal investigation should and will be launched the frenzy has begun.

To add sobriety to this week's offerings I would like to share a view from Katrina Vanden Heuvel last Sunday on **CBS' FACE THE NATION** below.

"It's an outrage and those who have been involved in these longer wait times must be held accountable, prosecuted to the full extent of the law. But I think that we need to step back. Congress has cut funding, slashed funding for veterans benefits over these last years. If anyone should be

offering their resignation maybe the Congress should. General Shinseki by the way who was relieved of his duty as army chief of staff by President Bush because he told the truth about how many troops would be needed in Iraq and Afghanistan has tried to institute reforms.... shorter waiting periods... bringing on more vets from Vietnam... fewer homeless vets. I think we need to look hard at the funding issue. And finally I would add I think we need to look at those who have taken our brave men and women into unjustified wars, would bad protective vehicles, bad armor and those people have not been held accountable, for the economics of our country, for the military readiness nor for the veterans' health. I think that needs to be brought into scandal because that in the many ways is the broad scandal."

Katrina Vanden Heuvel – May 18, 2014

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

There is a dog whistle going on in the Republican Party right now.... and a lot of these people who have racist tendencies.... they come running..... I am not saying that Republicans are racist but they find a home in that tent.

Former Governor Brian Schweitzer (D) Montana

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Whether or not you are religious here is a One Minute & 39 seconds hip hop sermon from someone who looks like a suburban soccer mom that you might like.

This is great - watch it: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/WGnEuGwyXqU?rel=0>

I hope that you enjoyed.....

VERY, VERY FUNNY

Bill Maher *New Rules* Dead Man's Party (The Power of Language)

Web Link <http://youtu.be/9rRLoTbKDa0>

Hilarious....

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC



This week I would like to share the music of ***Mariah Carey*** who is one of the special voices of her generation. Carey came to prominence after releasing her self-titled debut studio album ***Mariah Carey*** in 1990; it went multi-platinum and spawned four consecutive number one singles on the **U.S. Billboard Hot 100** chart. Under the guidance of Columbia Records executive and later husband Tommy Mottola, she continued booking success with follow-up albums ***Emotions*** (1991), ***Music Box*** (1993), and ***Merry Christmas*** (1994), Carey was established as Columbia's highest-selling act. ***Daydream*** (1995) made music history when its second single and my personal favorite "***One Sweet Day***", a duet with ***Boyz II Men***, spent a record sixteen weeks on top of the **Billboard Hot 100**, and remains the longest-running number-one song in U.S. chart history. During the recording of the album, Carey began to deviate from her R&B and pop beginnings and slowly traversed into hip hop. This musical change became evident with the release of ***Butterfly*** (1997), at which time Carey had separated from Mottola.

In a career spanning over two decades, Carey has sold more than 220 million records worldwide, making her one of the best-selling music artists of all time. In 1998, she was honored as the world's best-selling recording artist of the 1990s at the World Music Awards. Carey was also named the best-selling female artist of the millennium in 2000. According to the **Recording Industry Association**

of America, she is the third-best-selling female artist in the United States, with 63.5 million certified albums. With the release of "**Touch My Body**" (2008), Carey gained her 18th number-one single in the United States, more than any other solo artist. In 2012, Carey was ranked second on VH1's list of the "**100 Greatest Women in Music**". Aside from her commercial accomplishments, Carey has won five **Grammy Awards**, 17 **World Music Awards**, 11 **American Music Awards**, and 31 **Billboard Music Awards**. Referred to as the "*songbird supreme*" by the **Guinness World Records**, she is famed for her five-octave vocal range, power, melismatic style and signature use of the whistle register. With this, I hope that you will enjoy the music of Ms. Mariah Carey.

Mariah Carey – **We Belong Together** -- <http://youtu.be/0habxsuXW4g>

Mariah Carey – **You're Mine** -- <http://youtu.be/toOIPqXW75A>

Mariah Carey – **Touch My Body** -- <http://youtu.be/9b8erWuBA44> *

Mariah Carey ft. Miguel – **Beautiful** -- <http://youtu.be/oe1wtkkt9-E>

Mariah Carey – **Don't Forget About Us** -- <http://youtu.be/8tZkzL4j3BU>

Mariah Carey – **Mine Again** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC9EcfXs3-I&feature=share&list=PLBC3E2B223ADE6DC2&index=39>

Mariah Carey – **Hero** -- <http://youtu.be/Fz62PTDKDkU>

Mariah Carey – **My All** -- <http://youtu.be/wU0Ew-WB4Ng>

Mariah Carey ft Whitney Houston – **When You Believe** -- <http://youtu.be/eAM2-hg7xJs>

Mariah Carey – **I Still Believe** -- <http://youtu.be/gmDhhpPcAPU>

Mariah Carey and Luciano Pavarotti – **Hero** -- <http://youtu.be/BsvYT8QZRjE>

Mariah Carey – **I Want To Know What Love Is** -- <http://youtu.be/tZIVkVJs0jE>

Mariah Carey – **Fantasy** -- <http://youtu.be/UjAOYDqGcaE>

Mariah Carey feat. Boyz II Men – **One Sweet Day** -- <http://youtu.be/UXxRyNvTPr8>

Mariah Carey – **I'll Be There** -- <http://youtu.be/Ui3dx4an9c>

Luther Vandross ft. Mariah Carey – **Endless Love** -- <http://youtu.be/Nu9RVPTpDyA>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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