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Summary_Costs_of_War_NC_JUNE_26_2014.pdf;
How_Libya_Blew_Billions_and_Its_Best_Chance_at_Democracy_David_Samuels_Bloomb
erg_Businessweek_Aug_7,_2014.docx;
Obesity_Threatens_to_Cut_U.S._Life_Expectancy,_New_Analysis_Suggests_NMIH_May_
12,_2014.docx; Sade_bio.docx

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image(6).png; image(7).png

DEAR FRIEND.....



I wasn't sure how I was going to start his week's readings until I saw this picture of gospel legend **Naomi Shelton** and I was absolutely sure after listening to song "**Sinner**" from her latest album/Cd "**Cold World**" who as the Mother Jones reviewer Jon Young describes, sings with a gritty warmth that will rouse believers and nonbelievers alike, while her **Gospel Queens** serve as a stirring foil, locating that sweet spot where church music and old-school R&B intersect. This isn't a mere exercise in nostalgia for purists, however: Exciting tracks like "**Get Up, Child**" and "**Bound for the Promised Land**" boast propulsive grooves that will keep any party cooking with funky grace.

Naomi Shelton & The Gospel Queens "**Sinner**" -- <http://youtu.be/CsCEx9qKeDg>

As they say you can see it in her eyes. Enjoy the photo, listen to her music and *feel the gritty warmth where church music and old-school R&B intersect*. And since this is Sunday, not a bad start I would say.....



America is in deep trouble -- economic, political, cultural, and moral. Yet few public figures are speaking honestly to us about our fallen state, much less pointing the way upward other than blaming the ills on President Obama. So leave it to a fictional character to do the job -- brilliantly. In the opening sequence of the new **HBO** series **The Newsroom**, a world-beaten (*as opposed to world-beating*) TV news anchor finds himself on a journalism panel, seated between -- in a reflection of today's stark partisan divide -- a bleeding-heart liberal and a bombastic conservative.

We should thank HBO and especially writer and show-runner for its hit television cable **show The Newsroom** -- *Aaron Sorkin* -- for possibly the greatest television speech ever because someone needed to say this -- with candor, wisdom and a sense of reality -- on nationwide TV -- That the United States isn't the greatest country in the world. Like many fans of **West Wing** and its creator *Aaron Sorkin* I looked forward to the premiere of a new **HBO** series, "**The Newsroom**" where like news anchor Howard Beale in Oscar winner *Paddy Chayefsky's* ground breaking and thought provoking 1974 satirical film **Network** starring Peter Finch -- in **The Newsroom** actor Jeff Daniels plays a news anchor Will McAvoy who can't take the bullshit anymore during a panel discussion and tells it like this country is.

When a student in the audience asks, "*Can you say why America is the greatest country in the world?*", initially the anchor ducks and says, "*The New York Jets.*" Then, fantasizing a woman in the audience holding up cue cards responding to the question that say "*It isn't*" followed by "*But it can be*" (we'll learn she's his former executive producer and lover), and forced by the moderator who demands a "*human moment*" from him, the anchor snaps, "*America isn't the greatest country, Professor,*" and goes on to deliver a speech, a cry from the heart, about why.

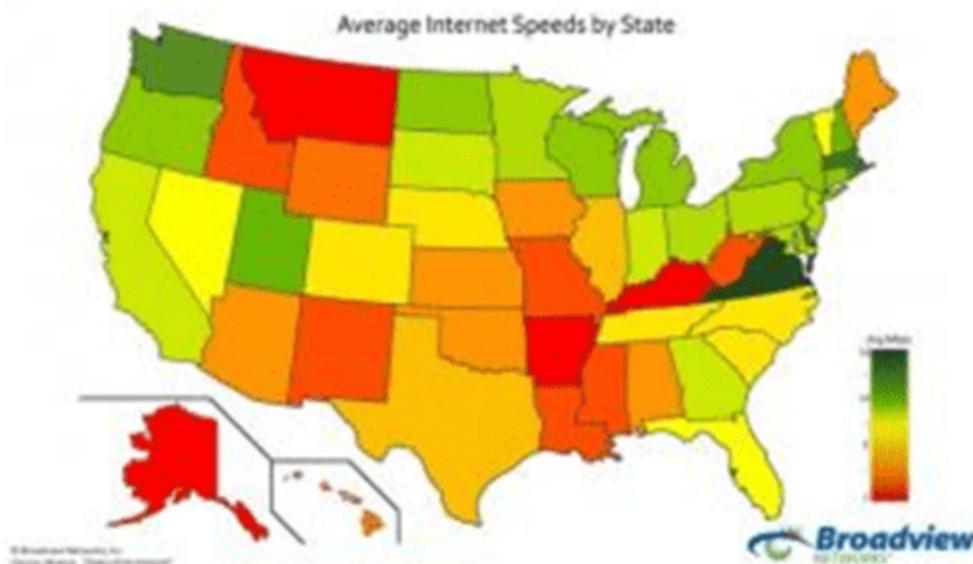
After ticking off the metrics of decline (*"We're seventh in literacy, twenty-seventh in math... forty-ninth in life expectancy,"* etc.), the anchor gets to the heart of the matter -- the moral heart -- which heart bears quoting in full:

We stood up for what was right, we fought for moral reasons, we passed laws, struck down laws for moral reasons. We waged wars on poverty, not poor people. We sacrificed, we cared about our neighbors, we put our money where our mouths were, and we never beat our chest. We built great big things, made ungodly technological advances, explored the universe, cured disease, and we cultivated the world's greatest artists and the world's greatest economy. We reached for the stars, acted like men. We aspired to intelligence, we didn't belittle it, it didn't make us feel inferior. We didn't identify ourselves by who we voted for in the last election, and we didn't scare so easy.

Wrapping up but running out of steam, the anchor reverts to his newsman role and, in a nod to Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite, says: *"We were able to be all these things and do all these things because we were informed. By great men, men who were revered."* Pausing, he concludes: *"First step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one. America is not the greatest country in the world anymore."* (See clip of full sequence here).

Web Link: http://youtu.be/ZPHSXUS0_1c

Hearing this speech, experiencing it, the viewer (*or at least this viewer*) can't help but think that, yes, America would be sounder, healthier, could reverse its decline and head upward, if we did things for moral and not expedient reasons, stopped beating our chest, aspired to intelligence, etc. The list resonates. But the shame is that it took fictional cable television to say it.



Although we expect that Internet speeds to differ greatly from country to country, one might expect speeds to be more consistent from state to state within a single country. Not true. In 2011 the cloud

platform provider Akamai put together "*The State of the Internet*" report for the fourth quarter of 2011, suggesting that Internet speed vary widely from state to state with some states outperforming others by wide margins. Along with a list of states with the highest average Internet connection speeds -- such as Rhode Island, New Hampshire and, at the top, Delaware -- Akamai also examined the states that had the slowest average connection speeds and where the most people experienced slow speeds.

While Delaware residents enjoy an average peak data rate of 36 megabits per second (Mbps), people in Arkansas can expect speeds to top out at 13.3 Mbps on average. Akamai also compiled a list of states with the highest percentage of "narrowband" connection speeds, which are speeds slower than 256 kilobits per second (kbps), according to the report. Akamai ranked the states by what percentage of all Internet connections adopted within the state in the past year were working below 256 kbps. (See the states below with the highest percentage of snail-slow connections.) To put that speed into context, researchers set a new Internet speed record in December 2011, achieving a data rate of 186 gigabits per second, equivalent to 23, 808 Mbps. According to a press release announcing the news that speed would allow the transfer of 100,000 full Blu-ray disks in a single day. There is a silver lining around these data, though. Akamai's report shows, there is a "*clear trend*" away from the adoption of very slow connections; as you'll see in the slideshow below, the percentage of Internet connection speeds working below 256 kbps have decreased from Q3 2011 to Q4 2011 in every single state on the list.

Flip through the slideshow below to check out the states where you'll find the most low-speed Internet connections. Then, make sure to check out Akamai's list of the top nine countries with the fastest Internet speeds. Were you surprised by any of the states you saw? Let us know in the comments!

#9: Texas

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.3 percent

Change From Last First Quarter: 2.2 percent decrease

#8: Ohio

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.3 percent

Change From Last First Quarter: 3.7 percent decrease

#7: Colorado

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.4 percent

Change from last quarter: 4.1 percent decrease

#6: Iowa

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.5 percent

Changes from last quarter: 6.0 decrease

#5: Illinois

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.8 percent

Change from last quarter: 4.1 percent decrease

#4: Alaska

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.8 percent

Change from last quarter: 9.1 decrease

#3: Georgia

Percent below 256 kbps: 2.9 percent

Change from last quarter: 3.4 decrease

#2: Missouri

Percent below 256 kbps: 4.1 percent

Change from last quarter: 3.7 percent decrease

#1: District Of Columbia

Percent below 256 kbps: 4.4 percent

Change From Last First Quarter: 5.3 percent decrease

I then compared the above list with the fastest Internet speeds in other counties. And guess what, the United States was not in the top ten. According to Akamai, most Americans surf the web at 5.8 Mbps, making the U.S. the lucky number 13 on Akamai's list. And which country is the world leader in terms of average connection speed? You'll have to look through the slideshow to find out, but we'll hint that it's been the same country since at least 2007. Are you surprised by which nations made Akamai's current list? I was.....

#10: Singapore

With an average of 30.7 megabits per second, Singapore cracked the top 10 with a peak speed that is nearly double the global average of 15.9 megabits per second. Thanks in part to its fast broadband, Singapore "is a tech hub," said David Belson, who edited the report. The country is also home to well-known techie Eduardo Saverin, who moved there and renounced his U.S. citizenship before last year's initial public offering of Facebook, which he co-founded.

#9. Israel

Web startup culture and fast Internet go hand in hand, said Belson, the Akamai editor. That's why it shouldn't surprise anyone that Israel made the list. The country's average peak speed was 30.9 megabits per second. *"There's good connectivity,"* he said. *"And there are smart, very technical people."* A recent study conducted by researcher Startup Genome found Tel Aviv to be the best place for startups behind Silicon Valley.

#8: Bulgaria

With its low taxes and cheap labor, Bulgaria is marketing itself as an attractive destination for global companies and investors. Another selling point? Its Internet speed. Bulgarian broadband reached an average of 32.1 megabits per second, an increase of 15 percent compared with the previous quarter.

#7: Switzerland

Befitting a major hub of the finance industry, Switzerland was clocked at 32.4 megabits per second on average. That compares with that other major hub, the U.S., which had an average peak speed of 29.6 megabits per second.

#6: Belgium

Belgium Internet connections peaked at an average of 32.7 megabits per second. At that speed, you could download the 2002 spy comedy *"Austin Powers in Goldmember,"* featuring Mike Myers's Belgian baddie, in about six minutes.

#5: Romania

Among those in the top 10, Romania was the only one to see its average peak speed fall from the previous quarter. The country's average dropped 3.2 percent, compared with a global average decrease of 1.4 percent. Still, most countries would love to have Romania's broadband speed. With an average peak speed of 37.4 megabits per second, it was beat by Latvia by just a tenth of a megabit per second.

#4: Latvia

When thinking about the most technologically advanced nations, Latvia probably doesn't come to mind. But broadband lines there reached an average peak speed of 37.5 megabits per second, placing the country in the top four. *"Some of the Eastern European countries that are on here have a good reputation for Internet connectivity,"* Belson said. *"They're smaller. They have a lot of government backing."*

#3: Japan

The country's electronics industry may be losing its edge, but Japan's telecommunications technology is still on top of its game. The Japanese government has long prioritized Internet development as a national goal, Belson said. High-speed optic fiber runs through many parts of the country. Japanese connections reached 42.2 megabits per second on average, Akamai said.

#2: South Korea

Online gaming sucks up a lot of bandwidth, and there are few nations that love their games more than South Korea. It is home to several gaming competitions, such as World Cyber Games, and has entire television channels devoted to *"electronic sports."* The average peak connection for the country was 48.8 megabits per second. And broadband, as in several of the top-ranked nations, is relatively cheap, too. People in Seoul can get 100 megabit-per-second lines for \$31.90 a month, the report said.

#1: Hong Kong

With its high population density and strong government support, Internet access in Hong Kong is blazing fast. And unlike Internet lines just across the border, content censorship is virtually nonexistent. (China is ranked at No. 123, Belson said.) The average peak speed in Hong Kong was 54.1 megabits per second, according to Akamai, making it No. 1 on the list. At that speed, you could download the HD movie *"Battleship,"* which is set in Hong Kong, in about four minutes. But as the author of the article that I got this list from wrote, why would you want to?



I had tried to ignore this false premise except that when Eugene Robinson wrote an op-ed this week in the **Washington Post**, I felt forced to comment on what a number of pundits on the far right is calling the “*war on whites*”. And like Robinson said in the article, if there really were a “war on whites,” as a Republican congressman Mo Brooks from Alabama ludicrously claimed last September, it wouldn't be going very well for the anti-white side.

What ‘war on whites’?

In 2012, the last year for which comprehensive Census Bureau data are available, white households had a median income of \$57,009, compared with \$33,321 for African American households and \$39,005 for Hispanic households. The white-black income gap was almost exactly the same as in 1972; the gap between whites and Hispanics actually worsened. According to an analysis by the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, the average white family has six times as much accumulated wealth as the average black or Hispanic family. Other authoritative data show that African Americans and Hispanics are far more likely than whites to be unemployed, impoverished or incarcerated.

Yet Rep. Mo Brooks feverishly imagines that whites are somehow under attack and that the principal assailant is — why am I not surprised? — President Obama. Asked whether Republicans were alienating Latino voters with their position on immigration, Brooks said this to conservative radio host Laura Ingraham: “This is a part of the war on whites that’s being launched by the Democratic Party. And the way in which they’re launching this war is by claiming that whites hate everybody else. It’s a part of the strategy that Barack Obama implemented in 2008, continued in 2012, where he divides us all on race, on sex, greed, envy, class warfare, all those kinds of things.”

Ingraham, who makes her living as a rhetorical flamethrower, actually told the congressman that his “*phraseology might not be the best choice.*” But Brooks stuck to his appalling thesis in a subsequent interview with AL.com, saying that “*in effect, what the Democrats are doing with their dividing America by race is they are waging a war on whites and I find that repugnant.*”

Brooks is from Alabama, where public officials used fire hoses and attack dogs against black children who were peacefully trying to integrate the whites-only lunch counters of Birmingham. Where terrorists acting in the name of white supremacy bombed a historic African American church, killing four little girls. Where demonstrators marching for voting rights were savagely beaten by police and vigilantes as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Brooks is 60, which means he lived through these events. Surely he knows that it was white-imposed Jim Crow segregation — not anything that black or brown people did — that divided America by race. At some level, he must realize that his overheated blather about a “war on whites” is not just ahistorical but obscene in its willful ignorance.

But maybe not. Maybe Brooks has fully bought in to the paranoid myth of white victimhood that gives the opposition to Obama and his policies such an edge of nastiness and desperation.

I do not believe it can be a coincidence that this notion of whites somehow being under attack is finding new expression — not just in Brooks’s explicit words but in the euphemistic language of many others as well — when the first black president lives in the White House.

The myth of victimhood is not new. Long after it was understood that slavery was morally wrong, Southern whites justified its perpetuation by citing the fear that blacks, once liberated, would surely take bloody revenge against those who had held them in bondage. Jim Crow laws and lynchings had a similar purpose. In the minds of his assassins, 14-year-old Emmett Till was tortured and killed to protect the flower of Southern womanhood.

The myth surfaces whenever Obama comments on race. When he spoke about the killing of Trayvon Martin, nothing he said was inherently controversial. But the mere fact that Obama expressed sympathy for Martin was taken by some as an attack on the forces of law and order, or an apology for hip-hop “*thug life*” culture, or an indication that his real agenda is to ban all handguns, or something along those ridiculous lines. When Obama was running for president, I wrote that to win he would have to be perceived as “*the least-aggrieved black man in America.*” He has tried his best, but for some people it’s not enough.

There are other reasons why the myth of white victimhood is gaining strength — economic dislocation, rapid immigration from Latin America, changing demographics that will make this a majority-minority country before mid-century. But I can’t help feeling that Obama’s race heightens the sense of being under siege. Congressman Brooks, you’re talking pure gibberish. But thanks for being honest.

Eugene Robinson

AT LEAST \$128 BILLION IN BANK SETTLEMENTS SINCE '09

Bank of America-\$61,199,000,000 **Citigroup**-\$10,088,000,000 **JPMorgan**-\$31,480,000,000
BNP Paribas-\$9,000,000,000 **Wells Fargo**-\$5,841,000,000 **Credit Suisse**-\$2,500,000,000
HSBC-\$1,920,000,000 **Deutsche Bank**-\$1,900,000,000 **Morgan Stanley**-\$1,250,000,000
UBS-\$780,000,000 **Barclay's**-\$773,000,000 **ING Bank**-\$619,000,000
Commerzbank-\$600,000,000 **Goldman Sacks**-\$550,800,000 **Standard Charter**-\$440,000,000



Web Link: <http://infoagr.am/tk-in-bank-settlements-since-2008-ap?src=web>

Since 2009, big banks in the U.S. and Europe have paid at least \$128 billion to regulators, according to data compiled by the **Wall Street Journal**, **Reuters**, and **The Huffington Post**, for issues tied to the housing collapse and other financial misdeeds, including aiding and abetting money laundering and tax evasion. Bank of America's reported \$17 billion settlement over bad mortgages would be the biggest in a string of increasingly expensive bank punishments. But don't cry for the banks -- they seem more than capable of handling it.

While \$128 billion may be an incomprehensible sum to most of us, it's worth considering just how monumental these banks are in comparison. Since 2009, the American banking industry alone has racked up nearly \$503 billion in profits, according to FDIC quarterly data through the first quarter of 2014. (Worth noting: Many of the banks listed in the graphic above are foreign). These fines have made occasional dents in some quarterly earnings, but they're effectively drops in the banks' buckets compared to their greater profits.

Bank of America's reported \$17 billion settlement would be more than double its roughly \$7.5 billion in profit over the past year, according to a HuffPost tally of BofA's recent financials. But the bank's bottom line has been hurt by squirreling away cash for this settlement. It is telling that, on the same day news of this possible settlement broke, federal regulators agreed to let the bank raise its dividend - clearly \$17 billion is not going to break the bank.

It's also worth noting that estimates of the total amount of fines vary based on how banks are included and how many smaller fines are tallied. The authors of this report said that they could be undercounting the total, and will be updating the graphic as new information comes in. Still the underlying lesson should be that as long as there are no criminal prosecutions and serious jail time associated with the malfeasance paying fines, even large fines, will continue to be *the cost of doing business* and little will change **and this is my rant of the week...**

WEEK'S READINGS



OBAMA WEIGHS IRAQ AIRSTRIKES..... ISIS Takes Iraq's Biggest Dam... Seizes Country's Largest Christian Town... Targets Ethnic Minority... Thousands Flee Horror, Trapped In Mountains... Humanitarian Disaster... Children Dying Of Thirst... White House: 'No American Military Solutions'... France Will Support Kurds In Fight... These were the headlines on Thursday's **Huffington Post**..... Another creep to war..... Because halfway around depending on where you live in the country the White House is being pressured into some sort of military action even though no one can explain or guarantee how these actions achieve their short-term goal or will lead to a lasting peace. Therefore if this is truly the case, I ask why do anything? By evening the President alerted the public that that he had authorized humanitarian airlifts (relief supplies) to members of the ancient Yazidi sect, tens of thousands of whom are massed on a desert mountaintop seeking shelter from fighters who had ordered them to convert or die, as well as U.S. air strikes to halt the Islamist advance, protect Americans and safeguard hundreds of thousands of Christians and members of other religious minorities who have fled for their lives. And by Friday morning both supplies were dropped and two F/A-18 aircraft from an aircraft carrier in the Gulf dropped laser-guided 500-pound bombs on a mobile artillery piece used by the ISISL fighters to shell Kurdish forces defending Arbil.

American taxpayers have already wasted somewhere in the neighborhood of \$4.375 trillion with a total cost of potentially \$7.9 trillion (see attached Summary) as hundreds of thousands of soldiers have returned home with all types of complications as a result of multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. This does not include the almost 7000 American troops who died fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, from every part of the country, and a great majority were young men who were married with children leaving families with a lifetime of pain. And although the official figure of wounded soldiers is only 32021, most experts say the number is far more than 100,000. And while the mortally wounded US soldier is the "gold standard" of war deaths for many Americans, the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have produced fatalities among large and unrecognized numbers of private contract workers. In April 2014, the over 61,000 contractors in Afghanistan outnumbered the uniformed US

troops there. An estimated 6,790 contractors working for the US have been killed in the two war zones; the true number is likely much larger as many are citizens of other countries and their deaths or injuries have not been reported.

Going back to the lead article in **The Huffington Post** on Thursday – ***U.S. Weighs Airstrikes, Humanitarian Aid In Iraq*** – which said that the White House was weighing direct military strikes to stem an Islamic militant group's gains in Iraq, as well as humanitarian relief for thousands of displaced religious minorities in the country's north, according to U.S. defense officials and others familiar with the administration's thinking. And that the President was huddled with his national security team Thursday morning to discuss the crisis as the Islamic State group made further gains. And that the contemplated airstrikes would mark a significant shift in the U.S. strategy in Iraq, where the military fully withdrew in late 2011 after nearly a decade of war. But everyone know that airstrikes alone won't keep the insurgents from returning. That requires boots on the ground.... And if I remember correctly ISISL crossed the border into Iraq in late May and in early June with less than several thousand combatants they somehow took over Mosul which was being defended by Iraqi troops ten times their size. Even if the defenders were only three times their size in numbers the fact that government soldiers dropped their guns and abandoned their post without much of a fight is indicative that infighting between Maliki government and former supporters are eventually going to lose to either ISISL or some other cohesive group.

Mission creep often begins with humanitarian aid. And I have no problem with humanitarian aid as I worked with a group who organized one of the first conveys of humanitarian aid into Benghazi in 2011. But I also witnessed a weak central government squander its honeymoon of opportunity to the point that the country is currently in chaos. So humanitarian aid will not stop the insurgency. The war will go on and like the weapons that Iraqi army abandoned in Mosul a good chunk of the humanitarian aid will end up as booty for the insurgents. So what should the President Obama and the White House have done? To be honest I don't know. What I do know is that whatever is done we should be very cognizant of the potential of mission creep because the last thing that America needs today is to put American troops on the ground in the Middle East or for that matter anywhere in the world no matter how badly they are needed or requested. If troops are needed in Iraq let the Arab League lead the charge. And if the Arab League are afraid to go it alone, have them ask for UN peace keepers to at least set up a buffer zone. And again, let's not allow this week's humanitarian aid and air strikes end with boots on the ground in Iraq or anywhere else.

 [How Libya Blew Billions and Its Best Chance at Democracy](#)

Knowing that I am a supporter of the new leadership in Libya, this week a Libyan friend sent me an article from **Bloomberg BusinessWeek** by David Samuels – ***How Libya Blew Billions and Its Best Chance at Democracy***. I began supporting my friends in Libya when they were called the rebels and helped organize the first humanitarian covey into Benghazi. I further arranged for these same Libyan friends to come to New York, meet with the leadership of the United Nations, Human Rights Watch and others to garner support for their cause, culminating with a reception at the United Nations for 270 invited VIPs and international press on June 15, 2011. So like Amr Farkash the investment banker for HSBC in London mentioned in the article, when in October 2011 I heard that Muammar Qaddafi, the dictator who had subjected Libya to his bizarre and often terrifying rule for 42 years, was dead, I too was elated by the news.

In the weeks that followed Qaddafi's death, my same friends some of whom had lived in witness protection in the US, UK and elsewhere like Farkash were seized by a vision of returning home to rebuild the country. And I am sure that like Farhash many envisioned personal riches because Libya is a rich country with more oil than Nigeria with a population of 6 million which is less than Lagos. Libya with a relatively well-educated population in need of seemingly every kind of consumer product and service, for which the country would easily be able to pay by continuing to pump its usual 1.3 million to 1.5 million barrels of oil per day. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Libya, according to Reuters, had more than \$100 billion in foreign reserves, mostly money collected from oil sales under Qaddafi. The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA), the overseas investment arm of the Qaddafi government, had about \$70 billion invested with blue-chip Western companies such as Société Générale and Goldman Sachs, and an additional \$50 billion or more invested throughout Africa. And in Libya, every asset you could imagine was dirt-cheap. *"It was a clean page,"* as Farkash remembers. *"You could start from scratch."*

And like Farhash, many of my ex-patriot Libyan friends returned to Libya some went into government and the others into business as it seem opportunity was everywhere. *"You could smell that there were deals everywhere. Attractive deals,"* Farhash recalls, who started a Libyan investment bank with two friends opening offices in Tripoli and Benghazi, with the aim of encouraging direct foreign investment in Libya. *"Deals about to be done, and deals waiting to be done."* Land was inexpensive and increasing by the day in value, he says. You could fill your gas tank for \$5. But instead of collecting weapons the National Transitional Council, then Libya's chief governing body, decided to give every family a cash payout of \$2,400 from the national treasury. An outlay of billions.

As months passed, the system of cash giveaways by the central government became institutionalized, with payments—easily exceeding \$20 billion in total—being distributed to the general populace of Libya but also additionally to anyone who claimed to have fought or been injured in the revolution. While many of the so-called revolutionaries had only a distant connection to overthrowing Qaddafi, they formed the core of the militias, which set themselves up as permanent fixtures in Libya's cities in place of the army and the police, whose members had been sent home or jailed for collaboration with Qaddafi, regardless of whether they had actually done anything wrong. *"Anyone could stop you on the street and ask you for identification,"* Farkash says. Out of fear, he usually complied. The militias began fighting each other for territory and for the cash payouts from a central state authority that was effectively held hostage as billions of dollars per month were drained from its treasury.

Farkash says that learned that people were being tortured in underground prisons in Benghazi in June 2012. What made the discovery particularly upsetting was that the largest of these torture chambers was located in the 17th of February revolutionary camp, right down the street from the apartment where he was living. Farkash had always thought of the 17th of February crew as the good guys. *"I didn't sleep that night,"* he says. *"The first thing that ran through my mind was, 'If that's happening now, what difference does it make that there was also injustice in the time of Qaddafi?'"* The person who told him about the torture chambers was a member of the Libyan state security apparatus, and Farkash was afraid to act. *"I realized it was too dangerous to say anything,"* Farkash says, still looking horrified. *"This was not why I came back over. I don't want to be part of a new nation that is being built on torture and injustice."*

Farkash left Libya two days later—then changed his mind and went back. He decided to close up shop in Benghazi, where his family is from, and join his partners in Tripoli. The capital city felt safer because of the presence of foreign embassies, which employed their own security forces. He shared an apartment with a friend who worked as a reporter for the New York Times and CNN. Night after night

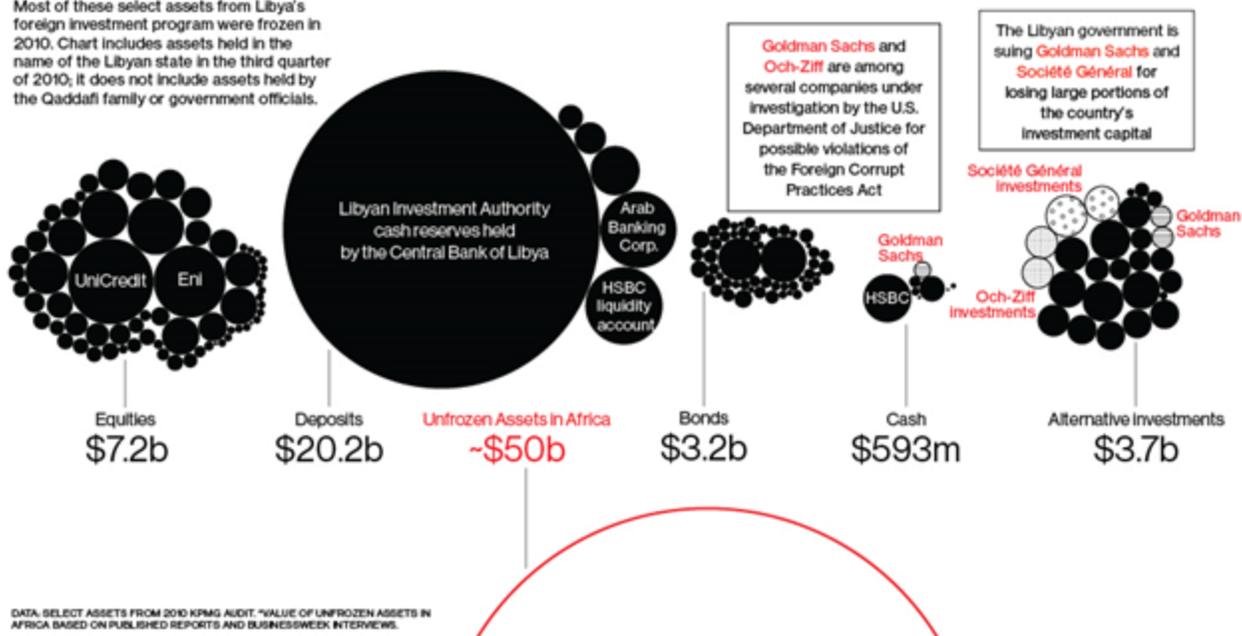
after work he watched footage of the street battles fought by militias who had little training in warfare, but all the equipment of a modern army. In the homes of friends and business associates, he saw heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, and shoulder-held antitank missiles. He left soon after, for good. "These are rockets used in war," he says. "They have them stored in their houses. So if these people get pissed, what will they do with it?"

In the last few months, the Libyans have been finding out. Warring militias have destroyed large sections of Tripoli's international airport with mortars, shoulder-launched missiles, rockets, and tanks. The fighting made the news again in July when a rocket or shell set a large oil depot on fire, sending clouds of choking black smoke over Tripoli. Shortly thereafter, 27,000 Libyans fled the fighting on foot in a single day, arriving as refugees in neighboring African countries. In just one week in July, according to a brief issued by the Soufan Group, a consultancy specializing in the Middle East, more than 60 people were killed in Benghazi, and the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, and Canada have evacuated their diplomatic personnel.

Libyan oil production has declined to about 300,000 barrels a day, and a half-dozen prominent figures on the Libyan political scene, whose names had appeared in optimistic Western newspaper articles about the brave Libyans who opposed Qaddafi and fought for a more equal and democratic future, have been murdered. Their deaths have passed without any demonstrations or other significant forms of public notice inside Libya, a measure of how irrelevant the causes for which Libyans fought three years ago have become.

Libya's Wealth

Most of these select assets from Libya's foreign investment program were frozen in 2010. Chart includes assets held in the name of the Libyan state in the third quarter of 2010; it does not include assets held by the Qaddafi family or government officials.



Libya's economic future, once touted as the brightest in Africa, looks equally bleak. At the time of Qaddafi's death reported that the dictator had stashed tens if not hundreds of billions of dollars away in overseas accounts that the country desperately needed to pay its bills. After the dictator was toppled, you would think that the search for this hidden personal fortune would be a major priority. But with people fighting over who should be given the right to go after this \$100 billion plus little has been recovered and the longer time passes the less likely it will. As a result, less than \$1 billion has been recovered although a £10 million (\$17 million) London townhouse belonging to Qaddafi's son Saadi and two bank accounts containing almost €100 million (\$134 million) belonging to Qaddafi's

son Mutassim, who was killed during the uprising. The accounts were located in Malta, a common offshore home for hidden bank accounts and shell companies. So far the Libyan government has failed to get Malta to release the funds, and the transcripts of the trials are a hilarious primer in the art of not asking inconvenient questions when large amounts of money are wired from strange locations to accounts held by the son of a notorious dictator.

While the amounts involved in these cases are large by normal standards, they barely add up to \$1 billion—pocket change for the oil-rich dictator and his petro state. “A lot of the smokescreens you are seeing are masking the biggest robbery in the history of humanity,” says Libyan-born Hafed al-Ghwell, a member of the World Bank’s Development Research Group. (Al-Ghwell adds that he doesn’t speak on behalf of the World Bank.) He is talking about the disbursal of state assets under the new country’s leadership, if it could be called that. *“I can tell you financially that, in terms of foreign reserves, Libya had close to \$125 billion to \$130 billion until the end of last year. These numbers are verifiable.”*

In addition to the country’s foreign currency reserves, the economist estimates that the LIA has from \$55 billion to \$60 billion in various portfolios. *“They do not know what assets they have,”* he says. Tens of billions of dollars, he adds, were invested in hotels, telecommunications companies, and other assets in Africa that may not be traceable. Still, a close reading of the LIA ledgers, which were leaked to a nongovernmental organization and are now available online, reveals that if tales of Qaddafi’s hidden fortune proved to be a myth, the rumors that tens of billions of dollars were looted from Libyan accounts are entirely real. And it didn’t begin with the collapse of the country.

Not often spoken of is the deal that Seif Qaddafi on behalf of his father made with the British government in March 2003, that lifted Western sanctions in exchange for Libya turning over two men suspected of facilitating the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103. On the eve of the American invasion of Iraq, Seif offered: In exchange for taking steps to further open to the West, his father would be willing to come clean about Libya’s weapons of mass destruction—which, unlike Saddam Hussein’s programs in Iraq, turned out to be far more advanced than the West imagined. In addition to secret WMD facilities hidden in the Sahara, Qaddafi had something else of interest: billions of dollars in oil wealth that the regime was desperate to invest in banks, stocks, hedge funds, property markets, infrastructure projects, advanced fighter planes, and almost anything else that Western governments and corporations had to offer. The resulting gold rush was so wildly lucrative, and obscenely unprincipled, that it continues to reverberate at the highest levels of global finance and politics a decade later.

After British Prime Minister Tony Blair left office in 2007, he joined JPMorgan Chase’s investment banking unit in London and became a frequent visitor to Libya. According to documents made available by the muckraking nonprofit Global Witness, Blair, accompanied by British police, would fly into Tripoli on a Bombardier Challenger 300 jet hired by the elder Qaddafi, where he’d be transported from the airport to the British Embassy and treated like a visiting head of state. He’d stay at the British ambassador’s residence and meet regularly with Seif, who oversaw the activities of the \$70 billion LIA, as well as with Seif’s close friend, Mustafa Zarti, the deputy head of the LIA. While Blair has said that his trips to Tripoli didn’t involve doing deals with the LIA, the careful wording of his denials doesn’t contradict the assessment of a senior British diplomat quoted in a Sept. 17, 2011, article in the Sunday Telegraph who described Blair’s visits as devoted to lobbying for J.P. Morgan, the investment banking unit of JPMorgan Chase.

In France, a growing scandal led magistrates in April 2013 to open an investigation into the allegation that former President Nicolas Sarkozy accepted tens of millions of euros in Libyan state funds to finance his successful campaign in 2007. It became headline news on June 30, 2014, when police took Sarkozy's lawyer into custody and held him for 48 hours. Criminal charges have thus far been filed against 10 people, including Sarkozy's former campaign manager. Goldman Sachs charged \$350 million in fees for trades that lost the Libyans 98 percent of their \$1.3 billion investment

Blair's, Sarkozy's, and JPMorgan Chase's efforts to profit from association with the Qaddafis may have been unseemly, but they don't appear to have violated U.S. law. Other financial institutions may have crossed a legal line: The LIA is suing Goldman Sachs and Société Générale in London, while the U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission are investigating several U.S. companies, including hedge fund Och-Ziff Capital Management and the asset advisory firm Blackstone Group, for violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Publicly traded Och-Ziff has warned shareholders that its future results may be affected by the Justice Department's probe. Goldman Sachs, Och-Ziff, Société Générale, and Blackstone declined to comment.

Of the nine companies to which the LIA entrusted its \$70 billion bankroll, almost all appear to have lost incredible amounts of money while charging sky-high fees. According to an audit conducted by KPMG, Société Générale managed to lose more than half of a \$1.8 billion investment, while charging the Libyans tens of millions for its financial expertise. London-based investment management firm Permal Group, which received \$300 million from LIA, lost 40 percent of it while earning \$27 million in fees. BNP Paribas lost 23 percent: *"High fees have been directly responsible for the poor results,"* the auditor noted. Credit Suisse lost 29 percent of the funds that it managed. Millennium Global Investments, based in London, apparently lost all of a \$100 million investment in its emerging credit fund, while a \$300 million investment in Lehman Brothers vanished from the books after Lehman collapsed in 2008. Credit Suisse and Permal did not respond to a request for comment. Millennium could not be reached.

But the outstanding single offender was Goldman Sachs, which charged \$350 million in fees for a series of trades that lost the Libyans 98 percent of their \$1.3 billion investment. The Goldman fleece, as it might be known, was masterminded by Youssef Kabbaj, an executive in charge of North Africa, and Driss Ben-Brahim, the firm's emerging-markets chief. Ben-Brahim, a good-humored trader educated in France, had made headlines in England in 2004 when Goldman awarded him a bonus of £30 million; in 2006, British newspapers reported he received a £50 million bonus. *"We were in awe of Driss,"* a former LIA executive later told the Wall Street Journal. *"He was like a rock star."*

According to court documents filed by the LIA in London, Kabbaj and Ben-Brahim, who are both native Arabic speakers, courted the star-struck Libyans by taking them on a trip to Morocco, where Ben-Brahim's father was born, and by offering them gifts such as after-shave lotions and chocolates. From January to June 2008, Goldman set up a \$1.3 billion investment in options contracts on Citigroup, UniCredit, Banco Santander, Allianz, Electricité de France, Eni, and a basket of currencies, based on the thesis that the assets would rise in value. They went down. By February 2010, the value of the Libyan investment was \$25.1 million. Kabbaj and another Goldman employee traveled to Tripoli to explain the losses to Zarti, who cursed at and physically threatened the two men. The Goldman Sachs executives were terrified enough to request the protection of bodyguards until they could flee the country.

In an apparent attempt to fix its relationship with Libya—which, after all, had proven to be supremely profitable—Goldman Sachs then offered to pay a \$50 million fee to a Dutch fund called Palladyne International Asset Management, through which the LIA had already invested \$300 million. Goldman could hardly have been interested in Palladyne because of the fund’s financial acumen: According to an audit conducted on behalf of the LIA, 45 percent of the funds, virtually all from Libya, invested in Palladyne were held in cash, while the rest of the investments didn’t do particularly well: “To date we have paid in excess of \$18m in fees, for losing us \$30 million,” an LIA investigator noted in a report. What made Palladyne notable was that it was owned by Ismael Abudher, whose father-in-law Shukri Ghanem was the longtime head of Libya’s National Oil and a trusted member of Qaddafi’s inner circle. In April 2012, shortly after Qaddafi’s death, Ghanem was found floating face-down in the Danube River in Vienna. Palladyne did not immediately respond to comment.

According to a detailed lawsuit filed in March in U.S. District Court in Connecticut by a trader named Dan Friedman, who was hired by Palladyne in 2011, the company “lacked both the management competence and the infrastructure to manage money.” Friedman, who’s suing the recruiter who hooked him up with the firm, alleges in the complaint that, “Palladyne was the asset management company equivalent of a Potemkin village, fronting for a kickback and money-laundering scheme.” The complaint offers an unusually intimate account of a corporate mirror world in which recruitment meetings, trading strategies, and the company’s vaunted “man-and-machine” trading model were used as props to disguise good, old-fashioned theft. Palladyne’s true purpose, Friedman alleges, was to serve as the investment bank version of the fake betting joint in the film *The Sting*, while laundering “money defalcated from Libyan government oil revenues by the family and friends of Muammar Ghaddafi” and serving as the “recipient and guardian of bribes and kickbacks from companies doing business with the Ghaddafi regime (or hoping to do business with them) or the state oil company run by Abudher’s father-in-law.” According to reports published in the financial press, the SEC is investigating whether Goldman’s payment to Palladyne violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

“People were making crazy amounts of money for introductions to the Libyans,” says Mohammed Rashid, an Iraqi-born Kurd based in London, who arranged the meetings between Blair and Seif. Rashid is now a financial adviser to wealthy individuals and entities from the Middle East and to Europeans and Americans who wish to do business with them. According to him and others who have direct knowledge of those transactions, paying money to fixers, matchmakers, advisers, and consultants was a common practice, and such connections were eagerly sought. One London banker says consulting fees for such transactions could range anywhere from 2 percent to 5 percent of the initial investment. None of which would have mattered as much if the performance of the investments wasn’t so dismal.

And if the West relieved Libya of a decent-size share of its national wealth in the years immediately before NATO toppled the dictator, the situation today is even worse. In April 2012, Mohsen Derregia, a research fellow at the University of Nottingham Business School, was appointed chairman and chief executive officer of the LIA following what he describes as “*totally a freak accident*”—an accident that left him in charge of what, at an estimated \$66 billion, was still one of the most valuable investment portfolios on the planet. (That the portfolio remains somewhere near its original value is no triumph in a market that has almost tripled from its low five years ago.) Derregia’s area of academic specialization was accounting, and he knew nothing about finance. On the other hand, he was honest. He was soon forced out of the job and replaced by Ali Mohamed Salem Hibri, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Libya, which took effective control of the LIA in April 2013.

“Libya is a monkey box,” says Rashid when asked if the Libyan government is capable of managing what remains of its wealth. *“You see the chairman of the National Council or whatever it’s called appearing on television wearing slippers and holding a Kalashnikov. They have no idea what they have, and what they have, they steal.”* The game of wildly overstating the personal wealth of Middle Eastern dictators, and then stealing national assets under cover of civil conflict and social chaos, Rashid suggests, is one that Western governments and financial institutions and their co-conspirators in Arab countries play hand-in-glove. *“They said Hosni Mubarak and his family were worth over \$20 billion,”* Rashid says. *“The real number turned out to be a few tens of millions. Meanwhile, when Mubarak was removed from office, the foreign currency reserves and national investments of Egypt were \$54 billion. Now they are below zero. You tell me where that money went.”*

In a way, it might be lucky for Libyans that 95 percent of the country’s assets in the West—including the money being managed by some of the same big-name companies who lost so much the last time around—has been frozen. Abdulmagid Breish, the latest head of the LIA, recently announced plans to hire companies to manage billions of dollars of assets, which from one perspective might help the Libyans get a handle on fees—or open up further opportunities for catastrophic losses. As for history, so many people have now left the LIA that it may be impossible for anyone to figure out what those assets were and where they went.

Sitting in a modest hotel in Qawra, a district in Tripoli favored by visitors from the Middle East, Fatima Hamroush provides a firsthand account of watching money disappear while working for Libya’s nominal government. After spending most of her adult life as a physician in Ireland, Hamroush returned to her native country after Qaddafi’s fall to become health minister. The experience appears to have done little to squelch the sparkle in her eyes or the laughter with which she punctuates her stories about the armed fighters who came to her office demanding money that was intended to heal the sick. Tales of Qaddafi’s secret fortune also make her laugh. *“The man was the state,”* she says in her Arabic-accented brogue. *“He didn’t have to hide money from himself.”* What makes her angry, she says, are the treasure hunters who sign contracts with Libyan officials to locate Qaddafi’s assets, such as the accounts in Malta. *“They are a plague,”* she pronounces. *“I hear them on TV, in the newspaper, some are getting letters signed by government ministers, or the GNC [General National Congress, Libya’s Parliament], and it’s all illegal. It’s part of a scam.”*

When asked to provide an example of how this scam works, Hamroush says Ireland has \$2 billion in Libyan assets. She knows the exact sum, she says, because Irish officials made a point of telling her how much money they had and where it was located. She took the information to Mustafa Jalil, head of the National Transitional Council, at which point at least one group of asset hunters applied to receive 10 percent of the total, she says. *“Somebody in the NTC is either a complete idiot or an evil genius,”* she concludes. *“Money is being squandered everywhere like mad.”*

Giveaways to individuals and militias from Libyan state coffers during her time in office from November 2011 to August 2012 amounted to \$20 billion, according to her own estimate. In addition, the government, to buy loyalty, pays 40 percent of the adult population a salary at a cost of about \$6 billion a month. While that figure could have easily been covered by oil revenue during Qaddafi’s time, the country’s production is now less than a quarter of what it was. Today, the practice of loading up the budget with public salaries in order to buy public loyalty has continued—but with a difference. *“Now there are two or three times as many salaries as before,”* Hamroush says, and they are being paid out of the state’s foreign reserves. At the rate that they are being used, the reserves will be entirely depleted in two years.

As with the army and the police, many qualified civil servants and administrators are banned from doing their jobs because they held the posts under the Qaddafi regime, even though they aren't accused of any crime. So they stay home and cash checks for jobs that they hold only in name. Plenty of Libyans receive checks for more than one state job. In disbanding the army and the police, the Libyan government has had to create new jobs, which are filled by militia members, many of whom had been incarcerated under Qaddafi for political offenses and also for ordinary crimes. The result, as Hamroush describes it, is a topsy-turvy world in which the state is defenseless against bands of criminals that it funds and arms. *"And if you don't follow what they say," she adds, "they threaten you or come to kill you."*

Running a government ministry under such conditions was a challenge, Hamroush says. *"I was receiving every day a huge number of people without appointments. Even if you wanted to finish your work, they would bang on the doors, screaming, shouting. It's like that from 8 in the morning until 1 a.m."* When automatic weapons and grenade launchers failed to make enough of an impression, she adds, militias surrounded her ministry with heavy artillery and anti-aircraft missiles to emphasize their demands for cash benefits, contracts, and control over government resources and funds. The leader of the men who surrounded her ministry with missiles, she says, is now head of Libya's war wounded committee, which distributes billions of dollars to the militias. Another militant, who held four of Hamroush's staffers hostage and forced them to sign letters related to the disposal of ministry funds, was recently appointed to a senior diplomatic post in France. *"Then there was a kidnap attempt," she sighs. She was saved by her driver, who knew the kidnapper, a petty criminal from his hometown.*

It's hard for the West to understand the full scope of the disaster that's befallen Libya. It's happened, in part, because no one in or outside Libya bothered to figure out what the country might really look like after the dictator was gone. *"Even after Afghanistan and Iraq, no one seems to have thought seriously about what would happen afterward,"* says al-Ghwell, the World Bank economist. Al-Ghwell, one of the world's leading experts on the development of North African economies, says Libya is well along the road to becoming something new: the world's first failed petro state. *"You can imagine Somali rebels and pirates with money to burn,"* he says, when asked why the collapse of Libya should bother anyone besides the Libyans.

Unlike many political leaders, Ali Zeidan, Libya's former prime minister, is willing to discuss on the record his fear of radical Islamist cells that are often referred to by Libyans as Al Qaeda. While some of those cells do have direct links to Al Qaeda, others are linked to Ansar al-Sharia and to other salafist factions that share a willingness to die for their radical Islamist ideology. Some of these cells function as the spearhead for larger Islamist militias. *"You can't come to a compromise with them,"* Zeidan says over coffee in a hotel in a small town outside Munich, where he now makes his home. *"They don't accept the civil state, the state of law, in principle. They want Islamic government. Or fanatic government."* In the vacuum left by the collapse of the state, the fanatics are extending their grip. *"The problem is that there is nobody against them, no intelligence service, no army, no nothing,"* he says. *"So 300 fanatics can have a lot of power."* And also lets realize that Zeidan is a failed leader.

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A balding man in a cheap brown suit, Zeidan hardly looks the part of either a revolutionary leader, which some say he was, or, as others argue, a monster of corruption who fled Tripoli with bars of stolen gold, which are nowhere in evidence during our meeting. In April, Zeidan's successor, Abdullah

al-Thinni, the fourth prime minister since Qaddafi was deposed in 2011, abruptly resigned after gunmen threatened his family. In May, Ahmed Matiq was elected prime minister after another group of gunmen attacked Parliament.

When Zeidan left Libya on March 11, his plane was detained on the (then-intact) tarmac at Tripoli International Airport for more than two hours by an Islamist militia that sentenced him to death on live television for corruption and treason. He was allowed to leave only after his personal bodyguard, who had fought against Qaddafi, convinced the Islamists that seizing the prime minister at the airport would start a war.

The result is a topsy-turvy world in which the state is defenseless against criminals that it funds and arms. One thing entirely clear from the raging chaos that has engulfed Libya is that Qaddafi lives on after his death. He bequeathed to his country a fortune and a uniquely destructive sense of how the political game is played. "If you are a politician in the U.S. or Great Britain, you have to play within the rules of the game. There is a limit," Zeidan says. "*With us, there is no limit.*"

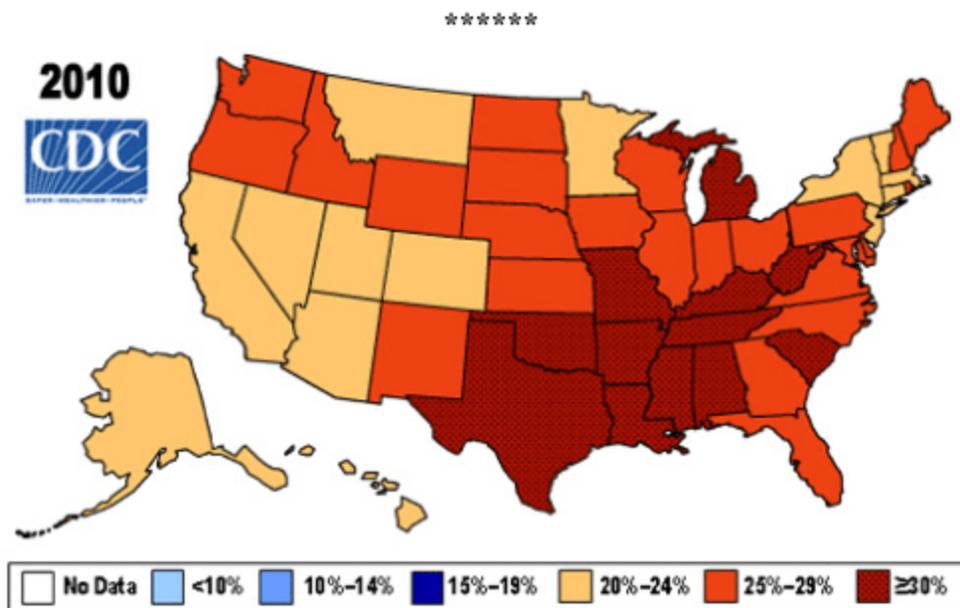
When asked for an example of what he means, Zeidan shrugs. "*For example, when they come and kidnap me and put five guns to my head, trying to play with me, should we pull the trigger,*" he says, alluding to one incident, widely reported in the Libyan and international press, in which he was kidnapped from his bedroom at 3 a.m., "*I told them, 'It is just one moment. Life will go on.'*"

Most threats on his life weren't reported, he says, in part because they were a normal part of his workday. "*They also put a grenade in my office,*" he adds. "*I told them, 'Let us all together go to heaven.'*" It was routine for people to enter his office armed with pistols, rifles, grenades, and even grenade launchers, he says, because the militias were much stronger and better armed than the government's own security personnel. To say that Libya is currently governed by anyone, he says, is a joke.

What Libya needs is security, he says. Without security, Somali-style chaos, fueled by the country's vast oil wealth, is likely to define the future. Security means boots on the ground, of course. But it wouldn't take that many soldiers—from Muslim countries, under the auspices of the United Nations or the Arab League—to drive the militias off the streets, he argues, and make Libya secure. Western countries wouldn't have to send troops but merely provide air support to target the bands of armed tribesmen, raiders, and salafist fanatics who regularly slip in and out of the country. Pressed to suggest foreign countries that might be willing to send troops into Libya, Zeidan can't name a single one.

Zeidan says that criminalizing service to the Libyan state under Qaddafi, left the state unable to function. "*If you tell all the qualified administrators to stay home and you try to manage the state without them, you are not going to succeed,*" he says. While Libya's democratic experiment might have pleased outside observers from the U.S. and France, Zeidan continues, the country's elected Parliament was a reflection of the backward and traumatized society produced by Qaddafi. "*They are just people from the market and the fields,*" Zeidan says. "*They don't have any idea of what should be done for the state. And some of them are fanatics. They don't think about country, targets, aims—everybody thinks of what he wants for himself. And some of them, when you say, 'This is our country, our nation, our people,' they laugh.*" But for me no one seems to learn from history. Money is going

to disappear, they know this but they do nothing. They also know that we live in an impatient world and any revolution that doesn't deliver quickly will have a short lifespan. Finally they should have known that too many cooks in the pot destroys the mean therefore trying to govern by committee is a hopeless exercise.



I was caught by surprise when I heard that the current generation of children in America could be the first generation of Americans who will not live longer than their parents. The main reason is for this is childhood obesity. Over the next few decades, life expectancy for the average American could decline by as much as 5 years unless aggressive efforts are made to slow rising rates of obesity, according to a team of scientists supported in part by the National Institute on Aging (NIA), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The U.S. could be facing its first sustained drop in life expectancy in the modern era, the researchers say, but this decline is not inevitable if Americans — particularly younger ones — trim their waistslines or if other improvements outweigh the impact of obesity.

The human body is a delicate balance of water, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals. When people consume more calories from food than they expend through physical activity, they throw off this balance and cause their bodies to store the excess calories as fat. In extreme cases of fat buildup and weight gain, overweight and obesity result – posing serious threats to physical and mental health. Overweight and obesity is classified according to a measurement called the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is defined as a person's weight in kilograms divided by his height in meters squared (kg/m^2). Among adults, a BMI between 25 and 30 signifies overweight, and a BMI greater than 30 signifies obesity. Overweight among youths is diagnosed according to gender and age-specific BMI growth curves. An overweight child is defined as having a BMI at or above the 95th percentile, and a child at risk of becoming overweight has a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentiles. There is no established definition of obesity in children and adolescents.

During the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States and rates remain high. More than one-third of U.S. adults (35.7%) and approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2–19 years are obese. Almost 2/3 of U.S. adults aged 20–74 years are overweight, including 30% who are obese, according to the 2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). In the past 3 decades, adulthood obesity incidence has increased 100%. Among persons aged 6–19, an estimated 15%, or 9 million youths, are overweight. In the past 3

decades, the numbers have more than tripled for children aged 6-11 (from 4% in 1971-74 to 15% in 1999-2000) and doubled for adolescents aged 12-19 (from 6% to 15%).

Adult Obesity Facts

Obesity is common, serious and costly. More than one-third (or 78.6 million) of U.S. adults are obese. Obesity-related conditions include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, some of the leading causes of preventable death. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was \$147 billion in 2008 U.S. dollars; the medical costs for people who are obese were \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight. As you may have observed, obesity affects some groups more than others. Non-Hispanic blacks have the highest age-adjusted rates of obesity (47.8%) followed by Hispanics (42.5%), non-Hispanic whites (32.6%), and non-Hispanic Asians (10.8%). Obesity is higher among middle age adults, 40-59 years old (39.5%) than among younger adults, age 20-39 (30.3%) or adults over 60 or above (35.4%) adults.

Obesity and socioeconomic status

Among non-Hispanic black and Mexican-American men, those with higher incomes are more likely to be obese than those with low income. Higher income women are less likely to be obese than low-income women. There is no significant relationship between obesity and education among men. Among women, however, there is a trend—those with college degrees are less likely to be obese compared with less educated women.

Obesity prevalence in 2012 varies across states and regions

By state, obesity prevalence ranged from 20.5% in Colorado to 34.7% in Louisiana in 2012. No state had a prevalence of obesity less than 20%. Nine states and the District of Columbia had prevalence between 20-25%. Thirteen states (Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia) had a prevalence equal to or greater than 30%. Higher prevalence of adult obesity was found in the Midwest (29.5%) and the South (29.4%). Lower prevalence was observed in the Northeast (25.3%) and the West (25.1%). In addition to the 15% of youths who are overweight, data suggest that another 15% are at risk of becoming overweight (BMI between the 85th and 95th percentiles).

Obesity has spread rapidly across race, gender, and class lines, but its prevalence has increased disproportionately among African-American, Hispanic, and Native American children. In contrast to the 12-13% of Caucasian youth who are overweight, 24% of Mexican-American youth, 20% of non-Hispanic African-American children and 24% of African-American adolescents are overweight. An estimated 38-39% of Native American youth are at risk of becoming overweight, according to a 1999 Aberdeen Indian Health Service study. Prevalence is particularly high among Mexican-American boys (>27% of children and teens) and African-American girls (22% of children and 27% of adolescents).

While a lower level of parental income and education increases the risk of being overweight among Caucasian children, higher socioeconomic status does not necessarily protect from overweight and obesity among African-American and Hispanic children.

Health consequences: Links between childhood overweight, chronic disease, and premature death. Excess weight can exert a profound and immediate effect on physical, mental, emotional, and social development:

Compared with normal-weight youths, overweight children and adolescents suffer disproportionately from such chronic conditions as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, atherosclerosis, bone/joint problems, and sleep apnea.

Overweight kids experience intense social stigmatization. Particularly among adolescent Caucasian girls, Hispanic girls, and boys of all races, childhood overweight is associated with lower self-esteem, a tendency to withdraw from others, increased loneliness, sadness, and nervousness, and increased use of alcohol and tobacco.

Severely overweight children are more than 5 times as likely as their healthy counterparts to have a lower health-related quality of life, i.e., their ability to move around, play sports, and perform in school, as well as their levels of fear and sadness, and the quality of their relationships with peers.

Overweight youths have an estimated 70-80% chance of becoming obese adults. People who suffer the burdens of excess weight during childhood are at continued and elevated risk for chronic diseases and premature death during adulthood. Obesity contributes to 4 of the 10 leading causes of death among U.S. adults: coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer:

- Heart disease and stroke account for almost 40% of deaths in the U.S., costing the nation an estimated \$351 billion in 2003. Obese adults are at ever-increasing risk for hypertension, dyslipidemia, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, left ventricular hypertrophy, stroke, and kidney failure.
- Cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death in the United States. Excess weight, poor diet, and physical inactivity greatly increase the chances of developing cancers of the breast, colon, prostate, endometrium (lining of the uterus), cervix, ovary, kidney, gallbladder, and potentially the liver, pancreas, rectum, and esophagus.
- Diabetes is a major cause of kidney failure, limb amputation, and acquired blindness. Although Type 2 diabetes is considered an adult disease, doctors have seen a sharp rise in the occurrence of Type 2 in childhood, concurrent with the childhood obesity epidemic. 1 in every 3 children born in 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes if current trends continue.
- Obesity is also a significant risk factor for the following diseases: asthma, kidney failure, gallbladder disease, urinary incontinence, and osteoarthritis .

According to Dr. George Blackburn, associate director of the Division of Nutrition at Harvard Medical School, "We must...intensify efforts for early identification and early prevention of overweight and obesity, or we are going to have the first generation of children who are not going to live as long as their parents."

Obesity in US Adults: 2012

As of 2012 no state met Healthy People 2010 Goals. According to data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), no state met the Healthy People 2010 objective of 15 percent, and 30 states were 10 or more percentage points away from the objective. The Healthy People 2010 (HP2010) national health objectives include one to reduce the proportion of adults who are obese to 15 percent.

These latest figures from the CDC demonstrate that obesity continues to be a significant public health problem. The Healthy People 2010 (HP2010) national health objectives include one to reduce the proportion of adults who are obese to 15% (objective 19-2) (1). However, the proportion of adults aged 20 and over who were obese rose 47.8% (from 23% to 34%), and away from the 2010 goal of 15%. Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above. BMI is calculated using height and weight. For example, a 5-foot, 9-inch adult who weighs 203 pounds would have a BMI of 30, thus putting this person into the obese category.

No state met the Healthy People 2010 objective of 15% and 30 states were 10 or more percentage points away from the objective. State-specific obesity prevalence ranged from 20.5% in Colorado to 34.7% in Louisiana in 2012.

Among 2012 BRFSS respondents:

- 28.1% were obese.
- 33.7% (33.5%) of men and 36.5% (36.1%) of women were obese.

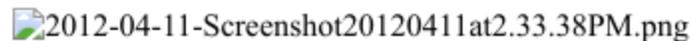
The obesity prevalence ranged from 30.3% for men and women aged 20-39 years to 39.5% and 35.4%, respectively, for men and women aged 40--59 years and ages 60 and over. By race/ethnicity and sex the obesity prevalence was highest for non-Hispanic black women (56.7% (56.6%)) followed by non-Hispanic black men (37.0% (37.1%)). The obesity prevalence was higher in the South (29.4%) and Midwest (29.5%) and lower in the Northeast (25.3%) and West (25.1%).

There is finally a glimmer of hope in the fight against obesity, a critical public health and economic crisis burdening our nation. After several decades of steep upswings, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reported that obesity rates in the U.S. may be stabilizing, with no significant change in prevalence over the past two years for children. However, experts also warn of the major challenges ahead in the battle against obesity in America.

Despite the apparent recent leveling-off in childhood obesity rates, the prevalence of obesity nonetheless remains high, with more than one-third of adults and almost 17 percent of youth obese in 2009-2010. There are also significant concerns about the health and economic consequences that result from obesity-related complications. Diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, and osteoarthritis are just some of the illnesses associated with obesity that impose human suffering as well as significant medical costs. In 2008, obesity-related medical expenses reached \$147 billion, double the amount spent 10 years ago. This figure is projected to rise to \$344 billion by 2018, underscoring the magnitude of the economic threat, as an estimated 50 million days of employment

and \$150 billion in productivity are lost annually in the U.S. due to overweight and obesity-related chronic conditions.

To address this health crisis, attention must be focused on a key issue that lies at the core of the epidemic: the social inequities of obesity. A significant body of scientific evidence links poverty with higher rates of obesity. Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the most comprehensive study conducted thus far to document the nutritional status of the U.S. population, has found that low-income children and adolescents are more likely to be obese than their higher income counterparts. Additionally, reports have shown a higher prevalence of obesity among low-income adults. One study revealed that more than one-third of adults who earn less than \$15,000 annually were obese, as compared to 25 percent of those who earn more than \$50,000 a year. Visually, a compelling correlation emerges when comparing maps detailing poverty and obesity rates in the U.S. (See images below)

2012-04-11-Screenshot20120411at2.33.38PM.png

Major contributing factors to the disproportional impact of obesity on low income populations in America include the barriers faced by people living in poverty in accessing healthy foods, a lack of nutrition education, a dearth of safe environments for physical activity and recreation, and food marketing targeted to this population. Population level data have shown that diet quality follows a socioeconomic gradient. People with higher socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to consume whole grains, lean meats, fish, low-fat dairy products, and fresh vegetables and fruit. In contrast, lower SES is associated with the consumption of more refined grains and added fats.

Simply stated, families with limited economic resources may turn to food with poor nutritional quality because it is cheaper and more accessible. Lack of physical activity is another commonly-cited problem fueling the obesity epidemic in America. Some low-income families live in neighborhoods where it is dangerous to play outside, reducing opportunities for both children and adults to exercise. Furthermore, many low-income communities lack access to fresh and nutritious food. Instead of a supermarket, these neighborhoods may have an abundance of fast-food retailers and corner stores that are stocked with products high in fat and low in nutrients. Additionally, low-income families are often targeted by food marketers with advertisements encouraging the consumption of nutrient-poor foods. In this environment, children in low-income families are especially hard hit, as evidence demonstrates that consistent exposure to such advertising increases the likelihood of adopting unhealthy dietary practices.

Therefore, in developing a strategy to reverse the obesity epidemic in America, a comprehensive *"health in all policies"* approach must be implemented. A roadmap to reverse obesity will not only tackle health and nutrition issues, but also focus on the underlying social and environmental factors that contribute to this public health problem. Decades of scientific research have revealed that our health habits and environments -- the choices people make regarding tobacco use, alcohol, food, and exercise, and the communities in which they live with their transportation systems, workplaces, grocery stores, and schools -- all impact health. Thus, a broad range of strategies are needed to address the individual, social and environmental factors and their interactions that affect people's health-related behaviors.

At the national level, several initiatives have been launched to address these fundamental issues. The Affordable Care Act 2010 has mandated inclusion of menu labeling in restaurants and on vending machines, the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act 2010 has set nutrition standards for foods served in schools and child care facilities, and the increase in the number of Baby Friendly hospitals has

expanded efforts to promote breastfeeding. Furthermore, First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move Campaign is mobilizing all sectors of society to get involved in reversing childhood obesity rates within a generation. As part of this initiative, the Child Care State Challenge is encouraging the adoption of voluntary standards for physical activity, limits on screen time, healthy beverages, and promoting the availability of healthy foods in child care settings.

At the community level, new affordable housing neighborhoods like Greenbridge, Washington (located in King County near Seattle) are being designed and built as models for creating an environment that promotes healthy diets and active lifestyles for their residents. In this predominantly immigrant community where more than 15 languages are spoken, more than 54 percent of adults are overweight or obese, and more than 85 percent of adolescents in grades 8, 10, and 12 do not meet the physical activity recommendations set by the federal government. Supported by Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC), a national program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that promotes community-based solutions, Greenbridge focuses on shaping the environment to encourage healthy behaviors among families, with special attention to children who are at the highest risk. Thus far, a comprehensive set of measures has been put in place to foster the development of a healthier community. In addition to an elementary school, a Head Start program, and a Boy and Girls Club, this new affordable housing initiative offers community gardens to grow fresh fruits and vegetables, a library, as well as play areas, parks, and walking paths. A food bank, a public health clinic, and a community center that provides free exercise classes are located just a few blocks away.

This integrative approach has turned a troubled neighborhood into a welcoming place to live. This new community emphasizes the importance of cultivating a nurturing environment for youth, especially as children and adolescents constitute over a quarter of the neighborhood's population. Initiatives like this one that involve not only individuals but the entire family and community provide a model for how to improve the health of cities across our nation. Targeting only one aspect of the problem will not be effective in fighting the obesity epidemic, since many of its causes stem from broad social and environmental factors. Moreover, to effectively confront the disproportionate impact of obesity on low income populations, the social determinants of health -- including the significant disparities that poorer people experience -- must be addressed.

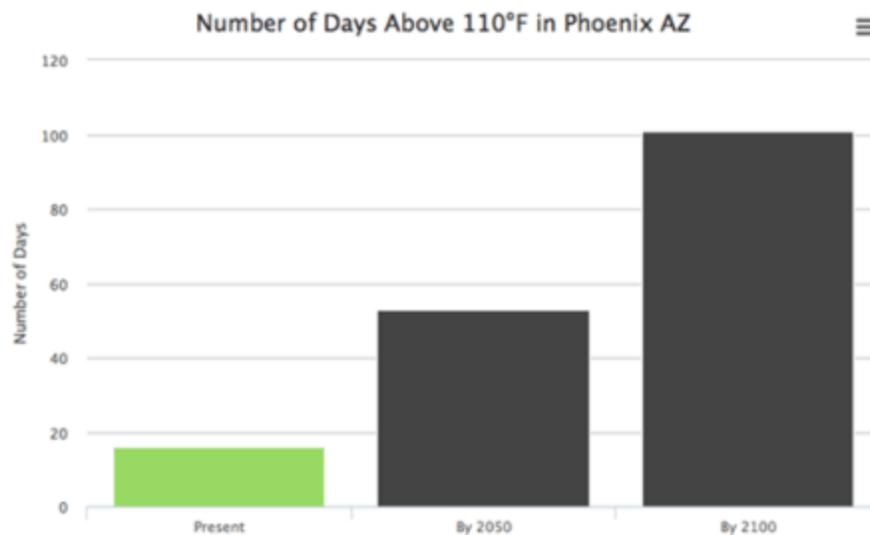
Communities are the cornerstone for preventive interventions that increase the accessibility of fresh foods and physical activity, implement policies to reduce the marketing of unhealthy foods to children and adults, and help make healthy nutritional choices easier and affordable. In this regard, public-private partnerships are critical in bringing families, businesses, health care organizations, government and other stakeholders together to reverse the impact of obesity in our country. Margaret Mead once said, "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*"

Here's How Many Ridiculously Hot Days Your City Will Have in the Future

This new interactive temperature tool will terrify you...wherever you live.

Have you felt unbearably hot this summer, and wondered to yourself, is this what global warming feels like? Chances are that someone living almost 90 years from now would consider you a big whiner. Over at Climate Central, a new interactive tool shows how often your city might suffer through

temperatures above either 90 degrees, 100 degrees, or 110 degrees by the year 2050 and the year 2100. It includes projections for 87 cities under four different greenhouse gas emissions scenarios, and it's terrifying. You can try it out below:



By Chris Mooney: Aug. 7, 2014

Thus, while Washington, DC, currently sees only about one day per year over 100 degrees, that is projected to go up to eight days by 2050 and to 24 days by 2100 under the worst emissions scenario—which is the pathway we're currently on. The only good news: There are three other emissions scenarios accessible in the interactive that aren't as bad. And our current decisions just might get us off the scorchingly hot path, and onto something more tolerable.

I was a bit curious so I went onto the infographic to check out the differences in several other cities should the current trend/future emissions continue. And please feel free to click on the web link below to see how your city will fare should the current trend continue.

Web Link: <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2014/08/global-warming-cities-days-over-100-degrees>

Phoenix, AZ: Currently there are only 8 days on average above 110 degrees – estimated to be more than 53 days by 2050 and 101 days above 110 degrees in 2100.

Los Angeles, CA: Currently there are only 2 days on average above 100 degrees – estimated to double to 4 days by 2050 and more than 12 days above 100 degrees in 2100. I am not sure about this as it is just a little more than halfway through the year and we have had more than 7 days above 100 degrees here in the Valley.

Chicago, IL: Currently there are only 17 days on average above 90 degrees – estimated to double to 45 days by 2050 and more than 73 days above 90 degrees in 2100.

New York, NY: Currently there are only 18 days on average above 90 degrees – estimated to double to 39 days by 2050 and more than 69 days above 90 degrees in 2100.

Houston, TX: Currently there are only 5 days on average above 100 degrees – estimated to double to 22 days by 2050 and more than 70 days above 100 degrees in 2100.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Watch George Carlin "The American Dream" Best 3 Minutes... on YouTube

Web Link: <http://youtu.be/rsL6mKxtOlQ>

Enjoy.... Enjoy.... Enjoy....

THE SECRETS of FOOD MARKETING

No one applauds this woman because they're too creeped out at themselves to put their hands together. This is a fascinating video, I have to admit. Pay special attention to how people react to the speaker.

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

Think you aren't being fooled by advertising tricks? Take a look at this so-called expert revealing food marketing's secret weapon. *The power of willful ignorance cannot be overstated.*

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

SADE



This week I would like to invite you to enjoy the music of Helen Folasade Adu, OBE (born 16 January 1959), better known as SADE. The British singer-songwriter, composer, and record producer who first achieved success in the 1980s as the front woman and lead vocalist of the Brit and Grammy Award-winning group Sade. She has been nominated six times for the Brit Award for Best British Female. In 2002, she received an OBE from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace for services to music, and she dedicated her award to *"all black women in England"*. In 2012, Sade was listed at number 30 on VH1's 100 Greatest Women In Music. Sade has a contralto vocal range.

While in college, she joined a soul band, Pride, in which she sang backing vocals. Her solo performances of the song *"Smooth Operator"* attracted the attention of record companies and in 1983, she signed a solo deal with Epic Records taking three members of the band, Stuart Matthewman, Andrew Hale and Paul Denman, with her. Sade and her band produced the first of a string of hit albums. Sade's debut album, *Diamond Life*, was released in 1984, reaching No. 2 in the UK Album Chart, selling over 1.2 million copies in the UK, and won the Brit Award for Best British Album in 1985. The album was also a hit internationally, reaching No. 1 in several countries and the top ten in

the US where it has sold in excess of 4 million copies. In late 1985, Sade released their second album, *Promise*, which peaked at No. 1 in both the UK and the US. It was certified double platinum in the UK, and quadruple platinum in the US. In 1986 the band won a Grammy Award for Best New Artist. In 2010, *The Sunday Times* named her the most successful solo British female artist in history.

Sade has been an inspiration to many. Her musical influence is far reaching from Beyonce to legendary rapper Rakim. But her style is just as enduring. Last year Jean Paul Gaultier paid homage to Sade's signature style during his Spring 2013 runway show and designer Olivier Rousteing specifically cited the singer's feminine use of menswear as inspiration for Balmain's current spring collection. My life intersected with Sade when she was a student at London's famed fashion institution, Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, with the goal of designing a men's clothing collection and one of her teachers, gave me a cassette of her music to which I responded that she definitely wasn't Aretha and worse, she had no range. Obviously, I misjudged her talent, as she has become one of the most beloved singers of her generation whose music transcends the meaning of pop star. With this, I invite you to enjoy the music of SADE and definitely listen to *Jezebel* as it is so special.....

Sade – ***Smooth Operator*** -- <http://youtu.be/UFlyCcVYQCY>

Sade – ***The Sweetest Taboo*** -- <http://youtu.be/KWy3X7f4MyY>

Sade – ***No Ordinary Love*** -- <http://youtu.be/WcWHZc8s2I>

Sade – ***By Your Side*** -- http://youtu.be/C8QJmI_V3j4

Sade – ***Never As Good As The First Time*** -- <http://youtu.be/UfzmVUrZplw>

Sade – ***Nothing Can Come Between Us*** -- <http://youtu.be/oVioGW-Xd4>

Sade – ***Your Love Is King*** -- <http://youtu.be/k1jplQ1V6Y>

Sade – ***Soldier of Love*** -- http://youtu.be/IR5_rTCi-Bo

Sade – ***Love Is Found*** -- <http://youtu.be/15WDBuvovXo>

Sade – ***Cherish The Day*** -- <http://youtu.be/c6vh3jluqxE>

Sade – ***Is it a Crime?*** -- <http://youtu.be/PLynoQBwMMo>

Sade – ***In Another Time*** -- <http://youtu.be/V7FoKGsT7Ww>

Sade – ***Bullet Proof Soul*** -- <http://youtu.be/Z9-vG1jOwsU>

Sade – ***Skin*** -- <http://youtu.be/mY2Bd5j2Bvk>

Sade – ***Jezebel*** -- <http://youtu.be/9CBhIQG5PYs>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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