
From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>
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DEAR FRIEND.....

Michael Brown, and Now Eric Garner

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At some point between the moment a Missouri grand jury refused to indict a police officer who had shot and killed Michael Brown on a Ferguson street and the moment a New York grand jury refused to indict a police officer who choked and killed Eric Garner on a Staten Island sidewalk — on video, as he struggled to utter the words, “I can’t breathe!” — a counter narrative to this nation’s calls for change has taken shape. This narrative paints the police as under siege and unfairly maligned while it admonishes “E2” and, in some cases, excoriates — those demanding changes in the wake of the Ferguson shooting. The argument is that this is not a perfect case, because Brown — and, one would assume, now Garner — isn’t a perfect victim and the protesters haven’t all been perfectly civil, so therefore any movement to counter black oppression that flows from the case is inherently flawed. But this is ridiculous and reductive, because it fails to acknowledge that the whole system is imperfect and rife with flaws. We don’t need to identify angels and demons to understand that inequity is hell.

The Mike-or-Eric-as-faces-of-black-oppression arguments swing too wide, and they miss. So does the protesters-as-movement-killers argument. The responses so far have only partly been specific to a particular case. Much of it is about something larger and more general: racial inequality and criminal justice. People want to be assured of equal application of justice and equal — and appropriate — use of police force, and to know that all lives are equally valued. The data suggests that, in the nation as a whole, that isn’t so. Racial profiling is real. Disparate treatment of black and brown men by police officers is real. Grotesquely disproportionate numbers of killings of black men by the police are real.</=pan>

No one denies that police officers have hard jobs, but they volunteer to enter that line of work. There is no draft. So these disparities cannot go unaddressed and uncorrected. To be held in high esteem you must also be held to a higher standard. And no one denies that high-crime neighborhoods disproportionately overlap with minority neighborhoods. But the intersections don't stop there. Concentrated poverty plays a consequential role. So does the school-to-prison pipeline. So do the scars of historical oppression. In fact, these and other factors intersect to such a degree that trying to separate any one — most often, the racial one — from the rest is bound to render a flimsy argument based on the fallacy of discrete factors.

Yet people continue to make such arguments, which can usually be distilled to some variation of this: Black dysfunction is mostly or even solely the result of black pathology. This argument is racist at its core because it rests too heavily on choice and too lightly on context. If you scratch it, what oozes out reeks of race-informed cultural decay or even genetic deficiency and predisposition, as if America is not the progenitor — the great-grandmother — of African-American violence. And yes, racist is the word that we must use. Racism doesn't require the presence of malice, only the presence of bias and ignorance, willful or otherwise. It doesn't even require more than one race. There are plenty of members of aggrieved groups who are part of the self-flagellation industrial complex. They make a name (and a profit) saying inflammatory things about their own groups, things that are full of sting but lack context, things that others will say only behind tightly shut doors. These are often people who've "made it" and look down their noses with better-like-me disdain at those who haven't, as if success were merely a result of a collection of choices and not also of a confluence of circumstances.

Today, too many people are gun-shy about using the word racism, lest they themselves be called race-baiters. So we are witnessing an assault on the concept of racism, an attempt to erase legitimate discussion and grievance by degrading the language: Eliminate the word and you elude the charge.

By endlessly claiming that the word is overused as an attack, the overuse, through rhetorical sleight of hand, is amplified in the dismissal. The word is snatched from its serious scientific and sociological context and redefined simply as a weapon of argumentation, the hand grenade you toss under the table to blow things up and halt the conversation when things get too "honest" or "uncomfortable." But people will not fall for that chicanery. The language will survive. The concept will not be corrupted. Racism is a real thing, not because the "racial grievance industry" refuses to release it, but because society has failed to eradicate it.

Racism is interpersonal and structural; it is current and historical; it is explicit and implicit; it is articulated and silent. Biases are pervasive, but can also be spectral: moving in and out of consideration with little or no notice, without leaving a trace, even without our own awareness. Sometimes the only way to see bias is in the aggregate, to stop staring so hard at a data point and step back so that you can see the data set. Only then can you detect the trails in the dust. Only then can the data do battle with denial. I would love to live in a world where that wasn't the case. Even more, I would love my children to inherit a world where that wasn't the case, where the margin for error for them was the same as the margin for error for everyone else's children, where I could rest assured that police treatment would be unbiased. But I don't. Reality doesn't bend under the weight of wishes. Truth doesn't grow dim because we squint.

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We mu=t acknowledge — with eyes and minds wide open — the world as it is if we want to change it. The activism that followed Ferguson and that is likely to be intensified by wha= happened in New York isn't about making a martyr of "Big=Mike" or "Big E" as much as it is about making the most of a moment, counter narratives notwithstanding. In this most trying of moments, black men, supported by the people who understand their plight and feel their pain, are saying to the police culture of America, "W= can't breathe!"

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Charles M. Blow — D=cember 3, 2014 — The Washington Post

=eb Link: h=tp://www.hiaw.org/garner/ <http://www.hiaw.org/garner/>

Video Web Link: http://youtu.be/En5linhM7Qo <http://youtu.be/En5linhM=Qo>

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Who=are you going to believe me (the prosecutor & grand jury)? Or your ow= eyes?

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Richard Pryor

Perhaps the most su=prising thing about yesterday's announcement from the Staten Island grand jury is our own surprise at the outcome. After years of hearing of the killing of unarmed black men by police officers with no accountability and no widespre=d acknowledgement beyond particular communities that a problem even exists, t=e news that there would be no criminal liability for the death of a man at th= hands of a phalanx of police officers in the course of an "investig=tion" into the sale of loose cigarettes is just the latest installment in a sad, unending serial about the improper use of force by law enforcement against people of color.

B=t this time seemed different because of the existence of a videotape that clearly showed the grotesque use of what turned out to be deadly force by a group of police officers the size of which would have been appropriate for the investigatio= of a serious, deadly offense rather than the most minor of nuisances. Su=ely, in the face of the shocking video, no grand jury could decline to initiate a criminal proceeding during which all=of the facts could be explored and presented in a public proceeding with all o= the due process protections which attach to those proceedings. But th=se

hopes turned out to be unrealistic. When the results were announced, I found myself thinking, improbably, of an old Richard Pryor comedy routine in which a man, caught in bed with his girlfriend by his wife, argues his innocence of clear infidelity by asking, "Who are you going to believe, me? Or your lying eyes?"

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President Obama's executive order on immigration could exempt from deportation more than five million undocumented immigrants -- almost half of the total undocumented population in the country, which is about 11.5 million (depending on the DATA you're looking at). The population is vast and diverse, coming from different countries and living in very different proportions in different states. We took a look at some of the demographic breakdowns of the group PULLED together by the Pew Hispanic Trends Project and the Department of Homeland Security.

Here is what we found:

1. Illegal immigrants make up 3.5 percent of the U.S. POPULATION

The vast majority of the POPULATION has roots in North America -- particularly Mexico and Central America. China, the Philippines, Korea and Vietnam are among the top 10 countries of origin for the Asian illegal immigrant population, which has remained stable at 1.3 million -- about 11 percent of all undocumented immigrants.

2. DECLINING numbers from Mexico

The POPULATION of unauthorized IMMIGRANTS over the last 4 years has largely flat-lined, remaining stable. Yet the Mexican undocumented POPULATION, which is 52 percent of the total, has consistently declined. Partly it's the difficult economy, which hasn't FULLY recovered, and a more secure border. And President Obama, nicknamed the "deporter-in-chief" by some, has been aggressive at sending people back to their country of origin -- more than two million to date.

3. Unauthorized IMMIGRANTS are settling in the South

President Obama began the public push for his executive order in Nevada, but while that state does have a high Latino population and the highest PERCENTAGE of illegal immigrants in the country, it doesn't make the top 10 of states as far as total undocumented population. (Roughly 215,000 undocumented immigrants live in Nevada.) This list, which is mostly made of blue states, isn't exactly surprising. Georgia and North Carolina are part of a more widespread Latino population boom in the South. Relative to the overall population, Latinos -- undocumented and otherwise -- make up a small share. But their growth is rapid, doubling in some states in recent years.

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4. Well over half of the illegal IMMIGRANT population arrived after 1995=/p>

Obama's executive action will cover people who have citizen or legal permanent resident CHILDREN who have been here for at least five years, meaning 2009 or before. His move will also expand the time frame used for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) measure to include any children who were brought to this country illegally before 2010.

5. The population is very young

Back in 2012 during a GOP presidential debate, Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney sparred over deporting "grandmothers and grandfathers," zeroing in on a demographic that is actually a very small part of the illegal-immigrant population. Some 80 PERCENT are 45 years old and under, meaning they have a number of working and childbearing years in front of them. This means an expanded tax base for those that get work permits, but also means that in some instances people live "off the grid," while still utilizing SCHOOL systems and hospitals.

=. Illegal immigrants make up a 5.1 PERCENT of the workforce

Because of that youth, illegal immigrants are over-represented in the workforce -- 5.1 percent versus 3.5 percent of the overall population. During his speech announcing his executive order, Obama made several references to illegal immigrants' roles in the workforce. He talked about "workers who pick our fruit and make our beds" and "the determination of immigrant fathers who worked two or three JOBS without taking a dime from the government." Dating back to 1995, as their population rose, illegal immigrants have steadily joined the workforce, peaking in 2011. The parents of lawful permanent residents and citizens who have been here for more than five years will be able to apply for work permits and temporary relief from deportation.

7. 7 percent of k-12 STUDENTS have an undocumented PARENT

Another area where the undocumented are over-represented versus their share of the population is as parents. In fact, 7 percent of non-college students have at least one parent who is undocumented. Obama talked a lot about students in his speech, acknowledging "the courage of students who, except for the circumstances of their birth, are as American as Malia or Sasha; students who bravely come out as undocumented in hopes they could make a difference in the country they love." And it's no accident that he gave his first speech outside of the beltway at a SCHOOL IN Nevada, where 17.7 percent of school children have a parent who is an illegal immigrant.

Falling apart: America's neglected infrastructure.

<<http://www.minnpost.com/sites/default/files/asset/5/522=53/522153.jpg>>

Not so long ago, America's infrastructure was the envy of the world. The U.S., which used to have the finest infrastructure in the world, is now ranked 16th according to the World Economic Forum, behind Iceland, Spain, Portugal and the United Arab Emirates. Our nation's infrastructure is crumbling. Aging schools, roads, bridges, and power, water and sewer systems put the public's health and safety at risk. The problem is well documented and grows more severe with each passing year. Nearly one of every four U.S. bridges is structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; 4,000 of the country's dams are in need of repair; and insufficient freight rail infrastructure results in 39,000 additional truck trips to the Port of Los Angeles alone each day. I remember the day that the Westside Highway collapsed in Manhattan due to lax maintenance because I remember as a young teenager a decade earlier, speculating with my father that it might fall down if New York City officials kept cutting (deferring maintenance) funds.

- * Of the 84,000 dams in the U.S., 14,000 are considered "high hazard" and 4,000 are deficient. It would cost \$21 billion to repair these aging dams.
- * 42% of the country's major urban highways are considered congested, and 32% of major roads in the U.S. are in poor or mediocre condition.
- * Even though a third of Americans don't drive cars, 45% of households lack access to transit.
- * There are 240,000 water main breaks in the U.S. each year, and many water mains and pipes are over 100 years old.
- * The Federal Aviation Administration anticipates that the national cost of airport congestion and delays will nearly double from \$34 billion in 2020 to \$63 billion in 2040.
- * 90% of locks and dams experienced an unscheduled delay or service interruption in 2009. Barges being stopped for hours can prolong transport of goods and drive up prices.
- * Congestion on rail lines is costing the U.S. economy about \$200 billion a year, or 1.6% of economic output
- * Although public school enrollment is gradually increasing, national spending on school construction declined to \$10 billion in 2012, about half of what was spent before the recession.
- * National Park Service facilities saw 279 million visits in 2011 and has a deferred maintenance backlog of \$11 billion.
- * There are 14,000 miles of operating high-speed rail around the world and not one mile in the United States
- * Public spend on has falling to its lowest level since 1947

Crumbling infrastructure endangers the physical and economic well-being of all Americans. In 2007 the I-35W Mississippi River Bridge in Minneapolis, which had been categorized as structurally deficient, collapsed, resulting in the death of 13 people and 45 injured. Two years earlier, New Orleans' levees failed to hold back the flood waters of Hurricane Katrina, claiming the lives of more than 1,800 people, and causing at least \$125 billion in economic damage. Both disasters illustrate the cost of neglecting the country's infrastructure.

Moreover, infrastructure investment holds the promise of accelerating the sluggish economic recovery. Infrastructure spending pumps money into local economies by creating work for private-sector companies and good-paying construction jobs. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, found in 2011 that new federal spending for infrastructure improvements to highways and public schools would generate \$1.44 of economic activity for each \$1 spent. Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, estimates that every billion dollars spent on transportation infrastructure creates 35,000 well-paying jobs. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office found that infrastructure investments had one of the strongest economic impacts of all the policies included in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

Building our crumbling infrastructure is a daunting, but achievable, goal. The nation needs an additional \$129.2 billion per year investment to meet the current backlog of infrastructure repairs and improvements, according to a report by American Progress's Donna Cooper, "Meeting the Infrastructure Imperative: An Affordable Plan to Put Americans Back to Work Rebuilding Our Nation's Infrastructure." Center for American Progress Action Fund | States at Work: Progressive State Policies to Rebuild the Middle Class This will require states to raise and spend much more on infrastructure. And although funding is scarce due to the Great Recession and the slow economic recovery, states are using new and creative methods to fund infrastructure projects.

Except that some states lag behind. On average the federal government provides 20 percent of surface-transportation funding to state projects while state and local spending accounts for 50 percent and 30 percent, respectively. But in 17 states, federal funds were the primary source of transportation dollars, as of 2006. Even with a heavy reliance of federal dollars in some states and cities, a significant amount of federal money is going unused. Cooper's analysis for American Progress shows that based on the loan-matching requirements established by Congress, at least \$20 billion in private, state, local, or public authority capital could be drawn into U.S. infrastructure projects if the federal loan and loan-guarantee programs were fully tapped. As such this is an opportune time for state governments to catch up on our long backlog of infrastructure priorities. Interest rates available to states are historically low and policymakers who act now to finance their infrastructure can lock in inexpensive financing for many years into the future.

According to Bloomberg News, most states—regardless of which political persuasion dominates them—are issuing less of the debt that ordinarily pays for roads, bridges, and airports. Municipal bond issuance was down 12 percent in 2013. More than half of the debt raised went toward renewing funding for existing obligations rather than financing new projects. Overall spending on infrastructure fell. Former Reagan economic advisor, Larry Summers argues that today's low interest-rate environment makes this an ideal time to invest in infrastructure. A just-released report from Standard

and Poor's (MHFI) explains why states are not doing this. Henry Henderson, a director of public finance at Standard and Poor's, says borrowing for anything, including infrastructure projects, requires states to account for future interest payments in budget projections. Even with low interest rates, that's money they just don't want to spend. Instead resources are going toward other services (such as schools), lowering taxes, and funding pension and health care. About 10 states are proposing tax cuts for 2015, but hardly any states are planning significant infrastructure expansion.

This is short-term thinking. Neglecting infrastructure now increases the cost of repairs in the future, both because there will be more damage and because the cost of borrowing money will probably rise. Interest rates aren't likely to stay so low for long, and the federal government is considering restricting states' ability to issue tax-exempt bonds. Meanwhile competing budget pressures will probably intensify. As of now, 74 percent of the liabilities that states owe are unfunded retirement benefits according to the Standard and Poor's report. The ratings agency predicts that the private sector will eventually have to step in. The government has already teamed up with private entities to finance infrastructure projects in 33 states. These arrangements, called P3s (for public-private partnerships), are already popular abroad—especially in emerging markets whose high borrowing costs and political corruption have stymied adequate infrastructure investment. Municipalities may find that P3s can serve a similar purpose in the U.S.

Last week, Steve Kroft on 60 Minutes did a distressing segment — Falling apart: America's neglected infrastructure. There are a lot of people in the United States right now who think the country is falling apart, and at least in one respect they're correct. Our roads and bridges are crumbling, our airports are out of date and the vast majority of our seaports are in danger of becoming obsolete. All the result of decades of neglect. None of this is really in dispute. Business leaders, labor unions, governors, mayors, congressmen and presidents have complained about a lack of funding for years, but aside from a one time cash infusion from the stimulus program, nothing much has changed. There is still no consensus on how to solve the problem or where to get the massive amounts of money needed to fix it, just another example of political paralysis in Washington. Tens of millions of Americans cross over bridges every day without giving it much thought, unless they hit a pothole. But the infrastructure problem goes much deeper than pavement. It goes to crumbling concrete and corroded steel and the fact that nearly 70,000 bridges in America -- one out of every nine -- is now considered to be structurally deficient.

Web Link: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/falling-apart-americas-neglected-infrastructure>
<<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/falling-apart-americas-neglected-infrastructure>>

Steve Kroft reported on why our roads, bridges, airports and rail are outdated and need to be fixed. "You could go to any major city in America and see roads, and bridges, and infrastructure that need to be fixed today." Ray LaHood: Our infrastructure is on life support right now. That's what we're on. Few people are more aware of the situation than Ray LaHood, who was secretary of transportation during the first Obama administration, and before that a seven-term Republican congressman from Illinois. He is currently co-chairman of Building America's Future, a bipartisan coalition of current and former elected officials that is urgently pushing for more spending on infrastructure. Steve Kroft: According to the government, there are 70,000 bridges that have been deemed structurally deficient. Ray LaHood: It means that there are bridges that need to be really either replaced or repaired in a very dramatic way.

Steve Kroft: They're dangerous? Ray LaHood: I don't want to say they're unsafe. But they're dangerous. I would agree with that. Steve Kroft: If you were going to take me someplace, any place in the country, to illustrate the problem, where would you take me? Ray LaHood: There is a lot of places we could go. You could go to any major city in America and see roads and bridges, and infrastructure that need to be fixed today. They need to be fixed today.

Steve Kroft: We decided to start in Pittsburgh, which may have the most serious problem in the country. Our guide was Andy Herrmann, a past president of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Steve Kroft: From up here you can see why they call it the city of bridges. Andy Herrmann: Yeah. Between the highway and the railroad bridges. There's many of them. Steve Kroft: And most of them old. Andy Herrmann: Most of them old. They're nearing the end of their useful lives, yeah. There are more than 4,000 bridges in metropolitan Pittsburgh and 20 percent of them are structurally deficient, including one of the city's main arteries. Steve Kroft: This is the Liberty Bridge ahead? An important bridge for Pittsburgh. Andy Herrmann: A very important bridge for Pittsburgh. A connection from the south to the city itself, and then to the north. It was built in 1928 when cars and trucks were much lighter. It was designed to last 50 years -- that was 86 years ago. Every day in Pittsburgh five million people travel across bridges that either need to be replaced or undergo major repairs. Andy Herrmann: One of these arch bridges actually has a structure built under it to catch falling deck. See that structure underneath it? They actually built that to catch any of the falling concrete so it wouldn't hit traffic underneath it. Steve Kroft: That's amazing.

Andy Herrmann: It all comes down to funding. Right now they can't keep up with it. Three hundred bridges become structurally deficient each year in the state of Pennsylvania. That's one percent added to the already 23 percent they already have. They just can't fix them fast enough. Pennsylvania is one of the worst states in country when it comes to the condition of its infrastructure, and Philadelphia isn't any better off than Pittsburgh. Nine million people a day travel over 900 bridges classified as structurally deficient, some of them on a heavily traveled section of I-95. Ed Rendell is a former Democratic governor of Pennsylvania. Steve Kroft: How critical is this stretch of I-95 to the country?

Ed Rendell: It's a nation's number one highway. Twenty-two miles of it goes through the city of Philadelphia. There are 15 structurally deficient bridges in that 22-mile stretch. And to fix them would cost seven billion dollars -- to fix all the roads and the structurally deficient bridges in that 22-mile stretch. Rendell says no one knows where the money is going to come from and this stretch of I-95 has already had on brush with disaster. In 2008 two contractors from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation stopped to get a sausage sandwich, and parked their cars under this bridge. Ed Rendell: And fortunately they wanted that sausage sandwich because they saw one of these piers with an eight foot gas in it about five inches wide. And oh, they knew automatically that this bridge was in deep trouble. Politicians in Washington don't have the political courage to say, 'This is what we have to do.'

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The section of I-95 was immediately shut down and blocked off while construction crews buttressed the column with steel girders. It was closed for three days, creating havoc in Philadelphia. But the city was lucky. Ed Rendell: I mean, it was unbelievable. It's so fortuitous. Steve Kroft: And if they hadn't wanted a sausage sandwich? Ed Rendell: There's a

strong likelihood that bridge would have collapsed. These all are tragedies waiting to happen. The I-95 bridges were built in the early 1960s and are now more than 50 years old. The same vintage as the I-35 Bridge that collapsed in Minnesota back in 2001, killing 13 people and injuring 145. The antiquated Skagit River Bridge in Washington State that collapsed last May after a truck hit one of the trusses was even older. And it's not just bridges. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, 32 percent of the major roads in America are now in poor condition and in need of major repairs. Yet the major source of revenue -- the federal Highway Trust Fund, which gets its money from the federal gas tax of 18 cents a gallon -- is almost insolvent. Former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood says it will go broke by next spring unless something is done.

And the problems with transportation infrastructure go well beyond roads and bridges and the gas tax. There's aviation. A shortage of airports runways and gates along outmoded air traffic control systems have made U.S. air travel the most congested in the world. And then there are seaports: when a new generation of big cargo ships begin going through an expanded Panama Canal in another year or so, only two of the 14 major ports on the East Coast will be dredged deep enough to accommodate them. There are more than 14,000 miles of high-speed rail operating around the world, but none in the United States. In Chicago, it can take a freight train nearly as long to go across the city, as it would for the same train to go from Chicago to Los Angeles. But perhaps the most glaring example of neglect and inaction may be this sad little railroad bridge over the Hackensack River in New Jersey. It was built 104 years ago and is, according to Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman, critical to the U.S. economy.

"This is the Achilles heel that we have on the Northeast Corridor," "It's almost 500 trains a day. It's the busiest bridge in the Western Hemisphere for train traffic, period." "It's safe....., but it's not reliable. And it's getting less reliable. It's old. Its systems are breaking down. There's an inability to make it work on a regular, reliable basis." Boardman says the Portal Bridge is based on a design from the 1840s and was already obsolete shortly after it was completed in 1910. It's a swing bridge that needs to be opened several times a week so barges can pass up and down the river. It takes about a half an hour. The problem is it fails to lock back into place on a regular basis. Joe Boardman: It causes trains to stack up on both sides. And actually, when a train stacks up here, it can stack up all the way down to Washington and all the way back up to Boston. This is a single point of failure. That's one of the biggest worries we have on this corridor is these single points of failure. Amtrak's president says the bridge has to be replaced, the design work has already been completed, and the project, which would cost just under a billion dollars, is shovel ready. Therefore, If Congress wants to do something now, build this bridge. It's ready to be done. It's been ready for two years. Build it. It's tangible evidence that they can really get something done.

The American Society of Civil Engineers says that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, the country needs to seriously need to improve the nation's public infrastructure. And to achieve that goal it estimates the country needs to invest \$3.6 trillion by 2020. But none of this isn't going to happen until the country has the political will to make fixing the country's infrastructure a priority. And for a reminder one of the bridges that you will be crossing probably has a failing grade... The goal for any great civilization is to leave more for the descendants. Obviously this is not the thinking of today's leadership.... Everyone knew that levees in New Orleans were a problem prior to Katrina, just like people in Sacramento, CA know that their levees could easily fail as well... Why then do we have to wait until the disaster happens to address the problem?

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Missouri National Guard stand watch at the scene where a beauty salon was burned to the ground in the riots following Monday's grand jury announcement, Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2014.

Lawlessness happens when the law breaks down. That sounds like a tautology. It's not.

The urban — and now, with Ferguson, suburban — riots of the past half-century have characteristically broken out only after the notion that we're all equal before the law has been mocked by judicial verdicts or police practices that fairly scream that blacks are not the equals of whites — indeed, that they're fair game for hyped-up, bigoted police. The Los Angeles riots of 1992, which I covered, didn't break out when the videotape of four policemen beating the prone Rodney King was aired. They erupted when the cops, all evidence to the contrary, were found not guilty. The fires of Ferguson, Mo., blazed not when Michael Brown was killed but when a plainly biased county prosecutor announced that the grand jury he'd guided refused to indict Brown's killer.

The lawlessness of Ferguson began, then, with the lawlessness of its discriminatory police practices, just as the lawlessness of the Watts riots of 1965 and the Rodney King riots of 1992 began with the discriminatory practices of the Los Angeles Police Department — in those days, a paramilitary force feared and loathed throughout the city's black and Latino communities and beyond. In his classic "The Making of the President: 1960," Theodore White referred in passing to the department as "among the most efficient, if the most cruel, in the nation." But two decades after the 1992 riots, the LAPD has been substantially transformed — statutorily, demographically and behaviorally. Reforming the cops required federal monitoring, the constant pressure of civic elites and community organizations and the transformation of Los Angeles itself into a majority-minority city in which the political base of support for racist law enforcement was greatly diminished. Today, L.A. is a city where many cops actually look like the people in the neighborhoods they patrol and, most of the time, don't treat those people as enemy aliens. Those people generally don't treat the cops as enemy aliens, either.

Ferguson — a majority-black town with a police force that is almost entirely white — is past due for such a transformation as well. As in L.A., the federal government will have to step in to help create a department that understands what equal justice under the law means. As in L.A., the city's minority voters will have to assert their majority status at the polls if they're to change their police department into a force that doesn't threaten them.

No department has yet found a way to completely screen out those cops who actually like to pose such threats. Police work attracts idealists, but it also attracts thugs; in some places, police work can turn idealists into thugs. Psychological screening and ongoing monitoring can diminish police brutality; so can video cameras that record the cops' encounters. In a democracy, the legal monopoly on violence we accord the police requires the maximum possible accountability when the police employ violence. If we want the lawlessness of Ferguson to stop, we need to build a Ferguson, and an America, where law is enforced uniformly and where being young and black isn't grounds for a frisk, an arrest or a sudden death.

To believe that Justice in America is colorblind..... is to be naive....

It is the grand jury's function not 'to enquire..... upon what foundation [the charge may be] denied,' or otherwise to test the suspect's defenses, but only to examine, 'upon what foundation [the charge] is made' by the prosecutor. ...Neither in this country nor in England has the suspect under investigation by the grand jury ever been thought to have the right to testify or to have exculpatory evidence presented....

Justice Antonin Scalia

1992 Supreme Court case of United States v. Williams

When Prosecutor Bob McCulloch announced that a grand jury had decided not to indict Darren Wilson, the officer who killed Michael Brown. The decision was the result of a process that turned the purpose of a grand jury on its head. In the text above Justice Antonin Scalia, in the 1992 Supreme Court case of United States v. Williams, explained what the role of a grand jury has been for hundreds of years in the above text. Neither in this country nor in England has the suspect under investigation by the grand jury ever been thought to have a right to testify or have exculpatory evidence presented.

Web Link: <http://youtu.be/bsTEJiR4FSc>

This passage was first highlighted by attorney Isaac Samuel, a former clerk to Justice Scalia. The Young Turks hosts John Iadarola (TYT University), Steve Oh and Jimmy Dore (the Jimmy Dore Show) break it down on the web link above.

One of the biggest of Big Uglies in the United States is the explosion of homeless children. ♦=A0 The number of homeless children in America reached a staggering 2.5 million last year, an historic high, according to a new report released by the National Center on Family Homelessness. The report, titled "America's Youngest Outcasts" and published Monday, concluded the current population amounts to 1 child out of every 30 experiencing homelessness. From 2012 to 2013, the number of homeless children jumped by 8 percent nationally, with 13 states and the District of Columbia seeing a spike of 10 percent or more, and the total number of homeless children grew by 1 million since 2006. Children are homeless in every city, county, and state—every part of our country

Web Link for the report: <http://new.homelesschildrenamerica.org/media/docs/280.pdf>
<<http://new.homelesschildrenamerica.org/media/docs/280.pdf>>

Prevalence of Child Homelessness

Based on a calculation using the most recent U.S. Department of Education's count of homeless children in U.S. public schools and on 2013 U.S. Census data:

- * 2,483,539 children experienced homelessness in the U.S. in 2013 (2.5 million).
- * This represents one in every 30 children in the U.S.
- * This is an historic high in the number of homeless children in the U.S.

From 2012 to 2013 the number of children experiencing homelessness annually in the U.S.:

- * Increased by 8% nationally.
- * Increased in 31 states and the District of Columbia.
- * Increased by 10% or more in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Researchers behind the study cited several major drivers behind the recent surge including high poverty levels, insufficient affordable housing across the country, and traumatic stress experienced by mothers. Different reports have cited 90 percent of homeless mothers have been assaulted by their partners, with children overwhelmingly exposed to similar acts of violence.

Causes of Child Homelessness

Major causes of homelessness for children in the U.S. include: (1) the nation's high poverty rate; (2) lack of affordable housing across the nation; (3) continuing impacts of the Great Recession; (4) racial disparities; (5) the challenges of single parenting; and (6) the ways in which traumatic experiences, especially domestic violence, precede and prolong homelessness for children and families.

Impacts of Homelessness on Children

Research shows that homeless children are hungry and sick more often. They wonder if they will have a roof over their heads at night and what will happen to their families. Many homeless children struggle in school, missing days, repeating grades, and drop out entirely. Up to 25% of homeless pre-school children have mental health problems requiring clinical evaluation; this increases to 40% among homeless school-age children.

The impacts of homelessness on the children, especially young children, may lead to changes in brain architecture that can interfere with learning, emotional self-regulation, cognitive skills, and social relationships. The unrelenting stress experienced by the parents may contribute to residential instability, unemployment, ineffective parenting, and poor health.

Further research to identify evidence-based programs and services for children and families.

"The same level of attention and resources has not been targeted to help families and children," co-author of the report and director of the center Carmela DeCandia told the Associated Press.

Children are resilient and can recover from homelessness, but time is precious in their young lives. Services for children must be provided as soon as families enter emergency shelter or housing so that weeks and months critical to their development are not lost forever. Essential services must follow children into their permanent housing.

1 in 50 or (1,555,360) Children were homeless in the United States in 2006. And today that number has grown to 1 in 50 or (2,483,539) were homeless in the United States in 2013.

The federal government has made concerted efforts to reduce homelessness among chronically homeless individuals and veterans, and these efforts have shown significant progress. Children and families have not received the same attention—and their numbers are growing. Without decisive action and the allocation of sufficient resources, the nation will fail to reach the stated federal goal of ending family homelessness by 2020, and child homelessness may result in a permanent Third World in America. Child homelessness should not be tolerated, especially in the richest country in the world. The fact that it isn't a nation priority or even a major issue is beyond shameful and this is my rant or time week....

WEEK 1 READINGS

321,000

U.S. employers added a whopping 321,000 jobs in November, the biggest burst of hiring in nearly three years and the latest sign that the United States is outperforming other economies throughout the developed world. U.S. employers added a whopping 321,000 jobs in November, the biggest burst of hiring in nearly three years and the latest sign that the United States is outperforming other economies throughout the developed world. The Labor Department also said Friday that 44,000 more jobs were added in September and October combined than the government had previously estimated. The unemployment rate for white men rose to 5.4% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which measures employment in the US. The BLS added that the rates remained unchanged for other groups, including adult women at 5.3%, teenagers at 17.7%, blacks at 11.1% and Hispanics at 6.6%. Job gains have averaged 241,000 a month this year, putting 2014 on track to be the strongest year for hiring since 1999. The unemployment rate remained at a six-year low of 5.8 percent last month.

The robust job gains come after the economy expanded from April through September at its fastest pace in 11 years. The addition of jobs should support steady growth in coming months. Average hourly wages rose 9 cents to \$24.66 last month, the biggest gain in 17 months. Yet in the past 12 months, hourly pay is up just 2.1 percent, barely ahead of the 1.7 percent inflation rate. The job gains were fueled in part by strong hiring in retail, temporary services and transportation and warehousing. Those increases likely reflect seasonal hiring for the winter holidays. Shipping companies have announced ambitious plans: UPS has said it expects to add up to 95,000 seasonal workers, up from 85,000 last year. FedEx plans to hire 50,000, up from 40,000.

The improving U.S. job market contrasts with weakness elsewhere around the globe. Growth among the 18 European nations in the eurozone is barely positive, and the eurozone's unemployment rate is 11.5 percent. Japan is in recession. China's growth has slowed as it seeks to rein in excessive lending tied to real estate development. Other large developing countries, including Russia and Brazil, are also straining to grow. Most economists say the United States will likely continue to strengthen despite the sluggishness overseas. The U.S. economy is much less dependent on exports

than are Germany, China and Japan. U.S. growth is fueled more by its large domestic market and free-spending consumers, who account for about 70 percent of the economy.

That trend helps support the steady U.S. job growth. Most of the industries that have enjoyed the strongest job gains depend on the U.S. market rather than on overseas demand. Retailers, restaurants and hotels, and education and health care, for example, have been among the most consistent sources of healthy hiring since the recession officially ended in 2009. Manufacturing, which is more exposed to overseas ups and downs, has added jobs for most of the recovery but in smaller numbers. That is a likely reason why pay growth has been tepid since the recession ended. Companies and industries that are more exposed to international competition typically pay higher salaries. Most recent figures on the economy have been encouraging. Americans are buying more cars, which will likely keep factories busy in coming months. Auto sales last month rose to their second-fastest pace this year. Car sales are on track to rise 6 percent this year from 2013.

This is a strong jobs report and the unemployment rate of 5.8% is the lowest since 2008. More so the Labor Department says that there is broad strength across job categories; technical consultants, business professional services, computer systems workers, tech service workers, accountants, high-skilled manufacturing and not just the low-paid retail jobs anymore which is why this job report is so encouraging. We are on track for the strongest job creation since 1999, with 2.6 million jobs added this year and the most important trend is ten months in a row of more than 200,000 plus net new jobs created. And although wages are not growing as quickly as job creation this report shows that the kind of jobs created are getting better, there are more of these kinds of jobs — make no mistake this is a strong jobs report and the US economy has gotten its mojo back.... And to my Republican friends.... Please give the Obama Administration some credit....

The 4 Airports You Should Avoid At All Costs This Winter

 <http://i0.huffpost.com/gen/2268536/thumbs/n-456142062=large570.jpg>

If you are traveling this Christmas/New Year holiday period there are certain airports you should try to avoid if possible. While we have zero control over nasty holiday flight delays, we do have control over choosing the airports where they're least likely to happen. Hint: Chicago O'Hare is one of the airports that you definitely avoid if possible.

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Worst:

No. 1 ORD (Chicago O'Hare International Airport), 42 percent of all flights were delayed during winter 2013. That's more than two out of every five flights! Other terrible performers included:

No. 2 Fort Lauderdale International -- 3 percent of all flights were delayed

No. = Newark Liberty International -- 37 percent of all flights were delayed

No. = Denver International -- 37 percent of all flights were delayed

These results come via travel website Hopper, which analyzed government flight data from December through March 2013. Their map above, charts 20 of the nation's most popular airports -- the larger the circle, the more popular the airport. And the redder the circle's color, the more frequently it saw winter flight delays.

Best:

No. 1 ✦ Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) -- Flights Delayed: 12.9%

This Delta hub retained the top spot for punctuality for the fifth time since 2008, despite a 1.2 percent uptick in delays year over year. More than 90 percent of flights depart on time for 12 hours each day at SLC. Just avoid the dinnertime twilight zone, when nearly a third fall behind schedule.

No. 2 Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) -- Flights Delayed: 14.3%

No. 3 ✦ (tie) Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) -- Flights Delayed: 14.6%

No. 3 (tie) Portland International Airport (PDX) -- Flights Delayed: 14.6%

No. 4/5 Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) -- Flights Delayed: 15.6%

No. 6 ✦ Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) -- Flights Delayed: 15.8%

No. 7 Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) -- Flights Delayed: 16.2%

The Safest Cities in ✦ America

The number of violent crimes across the United States is estimated to have dropped by 4.4% in 2013 from the year before, according to data recently released by the FBI. In all, the number of such crimes declined by nearly 15% in the last 10 years.

Putting this drop into context, John Roman, senior fellow at the Urban Institute, told 24/7 Wall St., "A 4.4% reduction in violent crime is astonishing. If you saw a similar increase in GDP, or a similar decrease in unemployment, it would be huge national news."

Even as the nation becomes increasingly safe, a number of large U.S. cities still stood out for their low crime rate. Across the country, 368 violent crimes were reported for every 100,000 people last year. Such crimes include murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. In America's 10 safest cities, there were fewer than 100 such crimes for every 100,000 people. Based on violent crime data published by the FBI's 2013 Uniform Crime Report, these are America's safest cities.

In many of the safest cities, murder counts were extremely low. Nationwide, the FBI recorded 14,196 murders in 2013, or 4.5 murders for every 100,000 people. By comparison, each of America's 10 safest cities reported less than five murders overall last year. Naperville, Illinois and Frisco, Texas did not report a single murder in 2013.

In addition to a low violent crime rate, the nation's safest cities largely had extremely low property crime rates as well. As of last year, eight of these large cities were among the 25 cities with the lowest property crime rates. Nationwide, there were 2,731 such crimes for every 100,000 people. By comparison, in three of the safest cities — Naperville, Illinois; Irvine, California; and Cary, North Carolina — there were fewer than 1,400 property crimes per 100,000 residents.

According to the Urban Institute's Roman, reducing crime "is about economic policy, it's not about crime policy." He added, "The idea is that if you make a city more economically vibrant, you attract people to that city who bring with them resources to try and make that city better. And those resources benefit all of the people who are already there."

The especially high household incomes in areas with low crime rates, and the generally low incomes in areas with higher crime rates, appear to support Roman's statement. In fact, Frisco and Naperville had the highest median incomes among large U.S. cities. In all, eight of the nation's safest cities had median household incomes of more than \$70,000 last year. By comparison, the median household income across the U.S. was \$52,250 in 2013.

Educational attainment is another factor related to crime rates. More than 92% of adults 25 and older had completed at least a high school diploma in eight of the nation's 99 safest cities, well above the national rate of 86.6%.

However, higher incomes and an educated population alone may not explain all differences in local crime rates. Roman noted that, in some areas where crime is especially problematic, there are "structural disadvantages in that crime is seen as a cultural norm that it's hard to fix."

10. Sunnyvale, California

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 97
- > Population: 148,160
- > 2013 murders: 4 (87th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 7.3% (14th lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 92.1% (51st highest)

There were just 97 violent crimes committed per 100,000 people in Sunnyvale, the 10th lowest rate among large U.S. cities, and considerably lower than the national rate of 348 per 100,000 people. Robberies and aggravated assaults accounted for the bulk of the city's violent crimes, and there were just four documented murder cases last year. Like in other large cities, safety is often accompanied by financial well-being. A typical household in Sunnyvale earned nearly \$99,000 last year, more than in all but four other large cities. Sunnyvale residents were also among the least likely to live in poverty, with a poverty rate of just 7.3%. As is common among wealthier populations, Sunnyvale adults are well-educated. Nearly 60% of adults 25 and older had at least a bachelor's degree as of last year, one of the highest attainment rates nationwide.

9. Glendale, California

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 93
- > Population: 195,366
- > 2013 murders: 1 (tied-19th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 17.8% (120th lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 83.8% (102nd lowest)

Glendale is a suburb of Los Angeles and one of the safest cities in both California and the nation. Last year, just one murder was recorded in the city. Additionally, there were just 97 incidents of aggravated assault, or about 50 per 100,000 residents, which was one of the lowest rates in the United States. By comparison, nationwide there were more than four times the number of assaults for every 100,000 people. Also impressive, Glendale has been able to keep crime rates low despite lacking as wealthy residents as in many other extremely safe cities. The median household income in Glendale last year was \$50,172, lower than the national median of \$52,250.

8. Amherst, New York

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 90
- > Population: 118,296
- > 2013 murders: 1 (tied-9th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: N/A
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: N/A

After falling between 2010 and 2012, the violent crime rate in Amherst increased in 2013 to 94 from 75 reported incidents per 100,000 residents in 2012 to 90 per 100,000 residents last year. This was the exception among the safest U.S. cities, all of which reported declining crime rates in 2013. Despite the increase, the city, located just outside of Buffalo, is still quite safe. There was only one murder recorded in Amherst last year, and property crimes were also very rare. There were 27 motor vehicle thefts per 100,000 people in Amherst last year, lower than in every city except for Naperville, Illinois. Burglary was also extremely uncommon in the area. Just 172 burglaries were reported per 100,000 residents last year—the fourth lowest rate among large U.S. cities and substantially lower than the national rate of 610 burglaries per 100,000 Americans.

7. Gilbert, Arizona

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 86
- > Population: 225,232
- > 2013 murders: 1 (tied-19th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 5.9% (5th lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 94.1% (22nd highest)

Less than 6% of Gilbert residents lived in poverty last year, nearly the lowest rate in the nation, and likely a major factor in the region's low crime rate. There was just one murder reported in Gilbert last year, and only 21 robberies per 100,000 residents, a fraction of the national robbery rate of 109 per 100,000 people. Gilbert's stellar crime record may be a relatively isolated phenomenon, as surrounding areas reported far higher levels of violent crime. Nearby Phoenix, for example, reported a violent crime rate well above the national rate.

6. Temecula, California

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 85
- > Population: 106,680
- > 2013 murders: 3 (67th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 7.6% (15th lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 92.3% (48th highest)

Temecula is situated between Los Angeles and San Diego in the southwestern corner of Riverside County. In 2013, the city of nearly 107,000 residents had just 91 violent crimes in total. Temecula also recorded just 38 aggravated assaults last year, or 36 reported assaults per 100,000 residents. This was lower than in all but two cities. Property crime in Temecula, however, was comparatively more common. Last year, Temecula reported 2,670 such crimes for every 100,000 people, not much lower than the national property crime rate of 2,731 per 100,000.

5. Frisco, Texas

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 76
- > Population: 131,769
- > 2013 murders: 0 (tied-the least)
- > Poverty rate: 4.5% (2nd lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 94.0% (23rd highest)

Frisco reported a total of just 100 violent crimes in 2013, fewer than almost any other city. Few large cities had less incidents of robbery and aggravated assault. Also, the city did not record a single murder last year. High incomes may contribute to the area's low crime rates. Interrelated factors such as family wealth, and well-funded schools, may help discourage crime. Frisco had the highest median household income of any large U.S. city last year, at almost \$110,000. Additionally, Frisco was one of just two large cities with a poverty rate of less than 5% last year.

4. Naperville, Illinois

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 73
- > Population: 144,221
- > 2013 murders: 0 (tied-the least)
- > Poverty rate: 4.4% (the lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 97.8% (the highest)

Naperville is one of the wealthiest cities in the United States, with a median household income of more than \$105,000 last year. Naperville also had the lowest poverty rate of any large U.S. city, at just 4.4%. A lower poverty rate may help explain the city's extremely low levels of violent crime. There were no reported murders in Naperville in 2013, while few cities reported less cases of rape per 100,000 residents. Adult residents are also exceptionally educated. Nearly 98% of people 25 and older had at least a high school diploma, the highest rate nationally, while more than 63% had at least a bachelor's degree, also among the highest rates.

3. Cary, North Carolina

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 69
- > Population: 148,905
- > 2013 murders: 1 (tied-9th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 5.5% (4th lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 95.0% (10th highest)

Cary's median household income of \$89,405 in 2013 was one of the highest among large U.S. cities. High incomes and the area's remarkably low poverty rate of just 5.5% likely contributed to Cary's low crime rates. There were just 69 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 2013, down from 82 per 100,000 the year before. Most violent crimes in Cary were aggravated assaults. Still, Cary had one of the lowest assault rates in the nation, at 55 per 100,000 people. Economic

growth often leads to declining crime rates, according to the Urban Institute. The Raleigh-Cary metro area was identified by IHS Global Insights as among the fastest growing metro areas in the country in 2013.

2. Murrieta, California

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 65
- > Population: 107,768
- > 2013 murders: 1 (tied-19th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 8.4% (22nd lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 92.9% (36th highest)

Murrieta reported 38 aggravated assaults per 100,000 people last year, the lowest in the nation. While Murrieta had a higher violent crime rate than Irvine in 2013, the city reported a total of just 70 violent crimes last year, the lowest nominal figure among all large cities. Property crimes were also relatively uncommon, with 1,522 reported per 100,000 people last year, versus a national rate of 2,731 per 100,000 people. Larceny accounted for the bulk of property crimes in Murrieta, with 1,066 incidents reported per 100,000 people. This was still among the lower rates compared with other large U.S. cities. Residents were quite well-off financially. A typical household earned \$72,385 in 2013, among the higher incomes among cities reviewed.

1. Irvine, California

- > Violent crimes per 100,000: 48
- > Population: 235,830
- > 2013 murders: 2 (44th lowest)
- > Poverty rate: 12.1% (53rd lowest)
- > Pct. of adults with high school degree: 95.3% (7th highest)

Just 113 violent crimes were reported in Irvine last year, a city with more than 235,000 residents. As a result, the city's violent crime rate was just 48 per 100,000 people, the lowest among large U.S. cities. This is the 10th straight year in which Irvine has had the nation's lowest violent crime rate among large cities. Irvine's property crime rate was also extremely low, ranked ninth lowest in the nation. The city's consistently low crime rates are likely due, at least in part, to its high-earning and well-educated population. Last year, the median household income in Irvine was \$87,830, and more than 61% of adults had at least a bachelor's degree, both among the highest figures in the nation.

I actually live in the #9th safest city and I appreciate the fact that home invasions and robberies are extremely rare and one can walk around the neighborhood with their children in the evenings without the fear of violence. And one of the reasons that this middle-class city is so safe is that there is little or no economic inequality within the local population. Because if you and your neighbors have the same, there is little incentive to steal from one another.....

By Alexander E.M. Hess & Thomas C. Frohlich -- 24/7 Wall St. -- November 12, 2014

Every President's Executive Orders In One Chart

<=>=img src="cid:ii_149f9e445552944f" alt="Inline image 7" style="margin=right:0px">

PRESIDENT Obama is due to announce an executive action Thursday, one that will change the legal status of millions of IMMIGRANTS and is likely to be remembered as a major effort to change the country's immigration system. The action would reportedly allow up to 4 million undocumented immigrants legal work status, and an additional 1 million PROTECTION from deportation. It would be one of the most wide-reaching executive actions in history.

That has made Republicans furious. The New York Times has a good roundup of the reaction, including quotes from Sens. John Cornyn ("I believe his unilateral action, which is unconstitutional and illegal, will deeply harm our prospects for immigration reform") and Tom Coburn ("The country's going to go nuts, because they're going to see it as a move outside the authority of the president, and it's going to be a very serious situation"). The spokesman for House SPEAKER John Boehner has called the president "Emperor Obama," implying that the executive action is an unlawful decree, and Sen. TED CRUZ said on Fox News that "the president is behaving in an unprecedented way."

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If it's unprecedented, it's because of the scope of the executive action, not the executive action itself. For decades, executive orders have been a fairly common tool for U.S. presidents. We LOOKED at data from the American Presidency Project and found that the use of executive orders peaked in the era of the New Deal (FDR set the record) and has been on the decline since. In the past 100 years, Democrats have used them more than REPUBLICANS. Here's every president's tally per year that he served in office.

. As Danny Vinik said at the New Republic, conservatives are noting that Bush's action EXPANDED upon congressional intent, but Obama's would be in defiance of it.

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Paraphrasing the meaning of Andy Warhol's most famous idiom, Russia's fifteen minutes may be coming to an end. The Russian government publically acknowledged this week that the country will fall into recession next year, battered by the combination of Western sanctions and a dramatic plunge in the price of its oil exports. The news caused the stock market to drop and pushed the ruble to a fresh record low against the dollar. The economic development ministry on Tuesday revised its GDP forecast for 2015 from growth of 1.2 percent to a drop of 0.8 percent. Russian households are expected to take a hit, with disposable income seen declining by 2.8 percent against the previously expected 0.4 percent growth.

Russia's economic outlook is at the mercy of the global market for oil, a key export that finances the bulk of the state budget. Sanctions over Moscow's role in eastern Ukraine are making things worse, hurting Russian banks and investment sentiment in particular. The national currency, the ruble, has dropped by more than 40 percent this year as the economic troubles mounted. That in turn risks spawning more problems, such as a spike in inflation that would pinch consumers.

While Russia's troubles could do some economic damage to Europe, they are unlikely to have much impact on the U.S. economy, the world's largest. Russia is the 28th-biggest market for the United States, absorbing \$11.1 billion worth of U.S. goods last year. "Russia-U.S. trade is hardly large," said Eric Lascelles, chief economist at RBC Global Asset Management. "I don't think we should be worried" about the impact of a Russian recession on U.S. exports.

In fact, the U.S. is benefiting from the lower oil prices that are driving Russia toward recession, and the money being pulled out of Russia is being pumped into U.S. and European financial markets, helping to keep interest rates low, Lascelles said. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, agreed, saying: "I don't think there's any direct economic impact" on the United States. However, he noted that Russian President Vladimir Putin could respond to the economic trouble by trying to divert the Russian public's attention with even more belligerent policies toward Ukraine and the West, raising tensions and perhaps rattling financial markets.

The release of the forecast on Tuesday afternoon weighed on the Russian stock market and the ruble, which fell 5.4 percent lower against the dollar, to a new all-time low of 53.97 per dollar. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov attempted to talk up the ruble, arguing that the new forecast for Russia's economy is too gloomy. He told Russian news agency it is only "an early estimate and it is still being discussed." Siluanov said the ruble is oversold and its current exchange rate would correlate to the oil price of \$60 per barrel. The global price of oil, Brent, traded around \$70 a barrel on Tuesday.

Russia's economic stability is important for the region. It is a major trading partner for Western Europe, selling raw materials and oil and gas to the West and importing consumer goods and foodstuffs. European agricultural producers reported big losses following the Kremlin's ban on some imports. A weaker economy and a weaker ruble would also mean that fewer Russians will be traveling abroad and spending their money there.

THIS WEEK's QUOTE

In America, if you fraudulently sell cigarettes the cops will literally kill you but if you fraudulently sell mortgages you will get a bonus.

Chris Rock

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

2014 World Championship of Public Speaking 1st Place winner

Totally Inspiring..... Because there is always someone who sees something in you even if they don't know what it is.....

<http://www.worldchampionsedgenet.com/wp-content/uploads/Danajaya-2014.jpg>

Have you ever tried public speaking? I have heard it is feared even more than death by many. Dananjaya Hettiarachchi seems to have overcome his fears with this "2014 World Championship of Public Speaking 1st place speech (And what a speech it is.)"

Web link: = <http://1funny.com/public-speaking-1st-place/#yLF=td4bqWVPI2yh.99> <<http://1funny.com/public-speaking-1st-place/#yLF=td4bqWVPI2yh.99>> and <http://youtu.be/RfAz9v2TZcE> <<http://youtu.be/RfAz9v2TZcE>>

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Good people are everywhere Antony.... They are all around you and waiting for you. Yet, you have to have a WILL and DETERMINATION to meet with them. Get away=from BAD PEOPLE and you'll see GOOD PEOPLE will flock around you. That's how WE BUILD UP OUR LIVES. Your choice.... Good luck my friends.....

TRULY AMAZING=C2◆

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=span lang="EN-GB" style="font-size:14pt;font-family:Georgia,serif;colo=:red">I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS....YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE TO GET ON A PLANE AGAIN..... Pick out any interesting location around the world and click on it. =span lang="EN-GB" style="font-size:12pt;font-family:Georgia,serif;colo=:black"> A page will come up with a photo. =span lang="EN-GB" style="font-size:12pt;font-family:Georgia,serif;colo=:black">In the centre is a circle with a triangle.

Click on the triangle. =span lang="EN-GB" style="font-size:12pt;font-family:Georgia,serif;colo=:rgb(31,73,125)"> Now you get a full picture.=C2◆ If it's not a full=screen, click on the 4 dots in the lower right corner.

Now with full screen, place your c=rser anywhere on the screen and slowly drag the picture in any direction you wan=. Left, right, up, down, slow or stop.

Try the Egyptian P=ramids in Egypt or Moscow, Kremlin to get started. =span lang="EN-GB" style="font-size:12pt;font-family:Georgia,serif;colo=:black">This is a one e-mail you will want to save. Enjoy.

Panoramas and 3D Tours of the Most Beautiful Places around the World! Click on the below City Names & Enjoy!

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 <http://www.airpano.=om/360Degree-VirtualTour.php?3D=the-twelve-apostles-australia> • =C2 Sydney,
 =C2 =A0 Australia <http://www.airpano.=om/360Degree-VirtualTour.php?3D=Sydney-Australia> •
 Buenos=Aires, =C2 =A0 Argentina <http://www.airpano.com/360Degree-
 VirtualTour.php?3D=3DTango-Buenos-Aires-Argentina> •

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THIS WEEK's MUSIC

Grateful Dead in 1970. Left to right: Bill Kreutzmann, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Mickey Hart, Phil Lesh

The Grateful Dead was an American rock band formed in 1965 in Palo Alto, California under the name of The Warlocks but quickly change its name when it was discovered that another East Coast band (Velvet Underground) had the same name. The band was known for its unique and eclectic style, which fused elements of rock, folk, bluegrass, blues, reggae, country, improvisational jazz, psychedelia, and space rock, and for live performances of long musical improvisation. "Their music," writes Lenny Kaye, "touches on ground that most other groups don't even know exists." These various influences were distilled into a diverse and psychedelic whole that made the Grateful Dead "the pioneering Godfathers of the jam band world". They were ranked 57th in the issue The Greatest Artists of all Time by Rolling Stone magazine. They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994 and their Barton Hall Concert at Cornell University (May 8, 1977) was added to the Library of Congress's National Recording Registry. The Grateful Dead have sold more than 35 million albums worldwide.

The Grateful Dead was founded in the San Francisco Bay Area amid the rise of counterculture of the 1960s. The founding members were Jerry Garcia (guitar, vocals), Bob Weir (guitar, vocals), Ron "Pigpen" McKernan (keyboards, harmonica, vocals), Phil Lesh (bass, vocals), and Bill Kreutzmann (drums). Members of the Grateful Dead had played together in various San Francisco bands, including Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions and the Warlocks. Lesh was the last member to join the Warlocks before they became the Grateful Dead; he replaced Dana Morgan Jr., who had played bass for a few years. With the exception of McKernan, who died in 1973, the core of the band stayed together for its entire 30-year history. Other longtime members of the band include Mickey Hart (drums 1967–1971, 1974–1995), Keith Godchaux (keyboards 1971–1979), Donna Godchaux (vocals 1972–1979), Brent Mydland (keyboards, vocals 1979–1990), and Vince Welnick (keyboards 1990–1995).

The fans of the Grateful Dead, some of whom followed the band from concert to concert for years, are known as "Deadheads" and are known for their dedication to the band's music. The band and its following (Deadheads) are closely associated with the hippie movement and were seen as a form of institution in the culture of America for many years. Former members of the Grateful Dead, along with other musicians, toured as the Dead in 2003, 2004, and 2009 after touring as the Other Ones in 1998, 2000, and 2002. There are many contemporary incarnations of the Dead, with the most prominent touring acts being Furthur, Phil Lesh & Friends, Bob Weir & Ratdog, and the Rhythm Devils with drummers Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann. Whether they are your cup of tea or not, the Grateful Dead is definitely in the front row of the Pantheon of Rock & Roll and as such I invite you to enjoy the iconic and wonderful music of one of America's great bands and the most successful band in the world to have never had a hit record.....The Grateful Dead.....

Grateful Dead – Dear Mr. Fantasy – 1987 -- <http://youtu.be/xhyTYHa9ZRE> <<http://youtu.be/xhyTYHa9ZRE>>

Grateful Dead – Just a Little Light – 7/10/89 -- <http://youtu.be/M3JzmvGRHt0> <<http://youtu.be/M3JzmvGRHt0>>

Grateful Dead – Blow Away =C2◆– 03.16.90 Landover, MD -- http://youtu.be/Z=CuA2nt_6A
<http://youtu.be/ZXCuA2nt_6A>

Grateful Dead – I Will Take=You Home – 9/30/89 -- http://youtu.be/HnW8WMx_94E
<http://youtu.be/HnW8WMx_94E>

Grateful Dead – The Weight =C2◆– 1990 -- [h=tp://youtu.be/XWL4JH5OGB0](http://youtu.be/XWL4JH5OGB0) <<http://youtu.be/XWL4JH5OGB0>>

Grateful Dead – So Many Roa=s – 7/9/95 -- <http://y=utu.be/6sFyRQPraJ8> <<http://youtu.be/6sFyRQPraJ8>>

Grateful Dead – He's Go=e – (10/06/73) -- <http://youtu.be/p=EQc668kY4> <<http://youtu.be/paEQc668kY4>>

Grateful Dead – Birds=ng -- <http://youtu.be/OYA16z2-xFg>

Jerry Garcia Band – Wonderful World – 11-18-93 Richmond, VA -- <http://youtu.be/MzaYdjWQwxA>
<<http://youtu.be/MzaYdjW=wxA>>

Jerry Garcia Band – I Shall=Be Released -- <http://youtu.be/ffilJ4vW2IU> <<http://youtu.be/ffilJ=vW2IU>>

Grateful Dead 7-24-87 Oakland Stadium Oakland CA -- <http://youtu.be/m92FGd4tAhY>
<<http://youtu.be/m92FGd4=AhY>>

Grateful Dead October 17, 18 &19 1974 Winterland San Francisco CA -- <http://youtu.be/l=QFZ7Lx-rg>
<<http://youtu.be/lWQFZ7Lx-rg>>

Grateful Dead 17.4.1972 Denmark -- <http://youtu.be/8=QkKF-LF6s> <<http://youtu.be/84QkKF-LF6s>>

Grateful Dead Radio City Music Hall 10/31/1980 -- <http://youtu.be/W=YEE5mgEOY> <<http://youtu.be/WTYEE5mgEOY>>

Grateful Dead Compilation of Performances from the </=pan>1990's -- [h=tp://youtu.be/7_zY_oTrhLg](http://youtu.be/7_zY_oTrhLg)
<http://youtu.be/7_zY_oTrhLg>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown</=>

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Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
Glo=alCast Partners, LLC

