BREAKING DOWN BATON ROUGE

AFTER

CRÈME BRÛLÉE

2015 - 2016

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An inconvenient end-of-year essay
of distinctly American recollections and ramblings for
fireside Cognac reflections and intoxicating digestion

by

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PROLOGUE

The opinions expressed I entirely take *sole* responsibility for, after all, it was this damp rainy afternoon of applied effort that propelled me to put thoughts and ideas down as events of the year simply compelled and cornered me to get finally cracking. I looked to my left and right and just couldn't see anybody else better qualified to do it and it had to be done! My effort a year ago was met with a resoundingly inconsequential silence as those who did read it were perhaps not amused of having historical facts pulled up from a deep well with the wooden ladle of cool fresh water passed roundly for consumption; stagnant cold tea in a shallow pot that one knows from a near monopoly of a dominant Western perspective I suppose, is preferred on many delicate topics. Tampering with glass stems is acceptable at tastings but blowing dust off of sacrosanct subjects and pulling out a fresh lens to take a good look at the labels makes many uncomfortable digging deep in the cellar. Leave it alone! That is precisely the problem: nearly everybody is addicted to the notion that the easy way out is feathered by stringently complying to maintaining comfort in what you say, hear, read and do; ultimately clinging to what you already know at any cost. We shy away from whatever is uncomfortable to the detriment of realizing that in the tension is the opportunity for real understanding and growth by recognizing the aggregate. The best vineyards, we know, have a terroir to force the vines to find their character, find their ways with guidance and organization- not just giving away everything the vines want on a silver platter as though spoiled children thriving as bramble. The roots must mature and grow up to work for it; we are the ultimate beneficiaries of their search whom with each circumspect taste from a glass, can value their intrinsic yet inconspicuous hard earned labor. Let us put aside the base pipedreams of easy, which is oversold as though free for all, and let us reward craftsmanship and work which requires skill, thought and investment as applied by adults. Free, as we may agree, is for fools.

This essay, because of recent horrific events in France and California in diabolical sequence, is extraordinarily coupled with last year's and the reader is forewarned that if they do not wish to know more than what they are certain in the world, then they should defer to not read any further but happily continue living their lives unabated in all the awe struck pleasure of being enwrapped in the splendor of the cornucopia of their hermetically fragile bubbles with a faithful reliance on the routine of their own known facts, delusions (which we all have so not to be taken personal) and opinions that they prefer to not be challenged, as doing so may otherwise prove detrimental by opening paths to be explored on some long held beliefs and perhaps gain a new understanding upon current topics for reflection. That's a tall order and a trembling one at that! These have been a especially uncomfortable years and this essay highlights this obvious fact. If the yellow rotary-dial wall telephone with twisting extension cord still has a recognized dial tone for ET to phone home, I recommend you stick with it and keep your peace please and stay analog in a digital world. No harm, no foul and I wish to not impose on your domain. I am a man of principles, second only to peace.

The world has proven to be unpredictable but we prefer events, people and opinions relayed to us to be just the opposite. Stability is what we hold to be most precious even when evidence points to a pending teetering. We often do not prefer needles pricking what is valued as precious. We need to be reassured, not challenged, on what we already believe we know. This intellectual complacency that pervades I most certainly find pernicious and is apparent irrespective of national boundaries. No one country has a monopoly on dubious human nature or conduct. The three-wings and mashed potatoes with gravy lunch special at KFC, Kentucky Fried Chicken, is categorically more fulfilling and tastier than the people and history of the state of Kentucky. People have sold themselves on the idea that living in a quasi-stupor full of entertaining flashing screens of distractions with headphones glued on and being faithfully reliant on the notion that income, neighborhood, latest autos, jet aircraft, yacht size, reserved seating at ball games, stock options and smartphone models define categorically your level of success and happiness; hence,

your value as a person- shiny silver teaspoons of your brimming measure of honey in the world for tangible tasty consumption obvious for all to see. Self-esteems are too often based upon how others perceive us and how we internalize this external measure, not upon the much more truthful and intimate gauge of how we each can actually understand how to value ourselves and gain the confident clarity of listening to the majesty of our own voices.

I am emboldened that I carry the weight of a unique perspective in this sphere that I have chosen to unload on the rest of you to generously lay my burden down for the holidays momentarily, before picking it back up and shuffling along as best as I can down a raggedy road. I would consider the option to be irresponsible if I did not, as being outraged at the kitchen table at events yet mute and fully composed in public, is a measure of complicity. It is an easier strategy but hardly the best. There are festering cancers devouring upon the lands and not acknowledging them aids in not checking their progress, even if they cannot be entirely caged and ultimately eradicated. These mutations thrive by codes of silence often with tacit approvals. As a man, some points need to be examined, and I am far too seasoned and mature to be swayed by fears in their many prickly forms to not lunge bravely forward. Nobody respects a coward and that applies reflectively to him or herself. The old adage of "a man dies once, a coward a thousand deaths," perhaps is apropos. People foolishly let commerce, associations and friendships shut their mouths to conform when they should shout out loud at what is inherently wrong. That game is for amateurs who drift on wayward currents as flotsam and jetsam and not for salty graying captains with a long eye, sextant and deep rudder to navigate the rogue waves of survival surrounded at night with the endless comfort and bounty of sparkling enlightening stars, magnificent in only the naturalness of their stellar beings which is emanated throughout the cosmic heavens. The wise realize that energy is merely transformed and is never destroyed; death is but a technicality of transition into the Hereafter. The gold on Earth we hold so dear, was born from an exploding star that gave birth to our Sun and solar system. Everything we hold precious is a beneficiary of events far beyond our imaginations of both time and

scale; we injure this sacred legacy from the cosmos billions of years later with our primitive pettiness. We can observe other lifeless planets in our own solar system yet we still dysfunctionally default to finding ways to foment death and destruction upon our very own species for purely the most superficial of reasons: we are deluded that somehow race and religion trumps species- which is categorically false. This is the cart being way ahead of the horse without any guidance going over a cliff. As cliché, its much like "pearls before swine", we don't know how to value what we do have until it's far too late. We enjoy grunting loudly and wallowing in our own self-righteous constructs of squalor even though we have a choice to clean our acts up. The idea of tolerance and compassion have become extraordinarily precious. There is hope somewhere in that wretched pile but we need to get busy and start to dig for it with a concerted effort.

I come from a long line of victims of terror and, as a consequence am hardened by the experience; indeed, holding a higher threshold of being shock retardant. The Age of Terror that commenced at the turn of this century is a recent phenomenon for all Americans but has been abnormally normal for us of color denied the same protections and rights supposedly in the our Constitution. The wanton randomness of the terror this year shed light that anybody could be fatally put in harm's way irrespective of age, race or religion. That's troubling yet it seems everybody is a full blooded American until tested; caveats crackle and pop like dormant popcorn kernels exposed to high heat depending on the situation and then intrinsic values are exposed for open examination: there is a social pecking order and some of us are more American than others. Those that have underestimated my tenacity have most often not received a word of the results they may have expected through the test of time. There is nothing in this life that could equate to the hardships and despair put upon my ancestors; whatever aches and pains life serves, such as finding the remote control for a basketball game or running out of Dijon mustard for a sandwich or even finding a devious flea in the mayonnaise, I often remind myself that this has been thus far a complete life and no trials could dare compare with those in the holds of ships and put on sugar, cotton and tobacco plantations, not as long ago as

we would wish to believe, requisite with brutal beatings by whips. My maternal great-great grandmother was born a slave in South Carolina, perhaps of a white father as both her daughter and my grandmother was definitely later, and was about ten years old when the Civil War ended. My paternal grandmother was also fair with long black hair which hinted of a few feathers of Native American blood in her. Both she and my grandfather had lineage in Virginia. When I was a baby I had thin blond hair. My entire life I have been asked why I am so fair with hazel eyes, often out of a benign curiosity to be generous or with a blatant ignorance to be austere. Like most things in life, it didn't magically happen. There is a past in the genes that lives in the present with my every breath. The damaging legacy of America's crimes against humanity with slavery lives with us presently as indeed through the colonized Western hemisphere by competing European powers universally exploiting African labor for their own commercial gains, exchanging human blood for trade and equity to build developing economies.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the excellent California wineries who have had the grace and fortitude to believe in my acumen and integrity in coordinating exports of their wines through many years now which, as so often, proudly carry their family's sterling names. One needs to consider that it is a high responsibility to put your name on products without any games or concealment, letting your flag fly freely, which is what a label is: a declaration of independence, adhering to your own values and being true to your terroir and craft without apologies. The wineries stand up on their own two feet without crutches, with their shoulders back and chins up. The wineries are not running or hiding from what they produce which in a finger-pointing world to escape blame, as is so often the case, is what those whom are less than in character will instinctively default as a first option to scurry for dark corners and reappear when hopefully safe to nibble morsels of Roquefort another day. What is so transparently honest by the wineries is declaring by this affirmation is that they are in some respects the minority by making themselves as the producers wholly conspicuous, not arrogant, but justly proud of their investment and patient efforts to be captured all in a time capsule of a bottle, letting the chips of

the open market fall where they may; living and dying by their own swords with their names. They are not appealing to assuage and gain favor with mongers of mediocrity but to those who are *enlightened* to value some of the best made, aware that time is fleeting currency and moments are best respected properly by not cutting corners cheaply as evident by integrity of their wine. There is a difference with clipping coupons and cutting gemstones as a jeweler in the craft and let us in the wine trade not confuse the two, as some are so conveniently apt to do. The requests to squeeze for lower pricing for entry level wines by importers especially should reach a quality point commiserate for cellblock cider or, as more politely known on the hierarchy of Death Row, Pinot Bars du Pénitencier. Those that rely on price only without wise consideration to the composite are as ignorant as the oft told capitalist who sells a rope for a profit in the morning to be hung by it later at sundown, hastily buried with coin proudly earned in pocket. Let the winds blow as the wineries of caliber stand firm reaping the awards and admiration so deserving!

This essay may surprise many as it has its roots deep from France, from Bordeaux to specific, as the chains of the past were broken to blaze a fresh unpretentious and intimate personal trail in style of literature, which I for one am very thankful. I am guided as well by the sage insight of Gustave Flaubert which has been thoughtfully preserved and is undoubtedly encouraging as reverently lifted from *The Confessions of Nat Turner* by William Styron, he a native of Virginia and a recipient of the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Art at des Lettres and the Commandeur Légion d'Honneur: " Be regular and ordinary in your life like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work."

Our present world is indeed indebted to France for a great many things in arts, literature, music, culture, mathematics, philosophy, politics, industry and sciences- both medical and military which is ironic in thoughtfully both saving and taking lives as opposites on the same coin- in which a dull penknife stab in a bleak winter's fog has been made to bring some accomplishments out of the shadows and into the sunshine. I do hope you as the reader will enjoy this "try" but more importantly gain

new thought provoking perspectives on some critical topics as a catalyst to be discussed and shared, even if I have not hit the mark flat as Charles Martel stopping the Arab advance at Tours and Poitiers saving Christian Europe from more northern Muslim encroachment; holding it in check in Spain for hundreds of years before the capitulation of 1492 when the Americas were discovered, but merely glanced the brass dinner bell in your esteemed estimation for a telling ring.

The impetus of this essay is tabling topics from nonconforming yet pragmatic angles to refreshingly spark a challenge on pertinent popular beliefs, anchored with facts from mainstream sources without reliance on fickle innuendo to set the course. The tension mounts naturally when evidence keeps stacking up on evidence of what is going on! Events – historically and presently - are not as isolated as we can be lead to believe when placed next to each other like cards in a deck. Topics on their own may seem to be standing alone monolithic, yet I can assure you under observation, have grown out of something else as offspring or surprising as parallels perhaps not previously considered or swept under the rug. Sweeping different inputs from different sources starts to polish the magnifying lens to see in detail the colors in our world and to better understand the constructs we are challenged to live in. The purpose of the effort is not to offend but to allow us each an opportunity to put a wedge in the painful lunacy of the collective past on some points, as each breath we all must breathe is fresh in the present. Understanding past motivations gives us a perspective on why we should be cognizant that we now do actually have choices to not default to the same childlike modus operandi of being contentedly spoon fed pabulum for the sake of perceived comfort presently; challenge why some hallowed institutions are really organized and motivated to protect a dominant group's claim to ascendancy, to the tantamount subjugating injustice of others, thereby giving insight to their broad insidious ramifications. Much as casinos have games inclined by the natural powers of numbers put in their favor, inclinations have been built legally to preserve dominance in the favor of powers commercially and socially. Whistling, being happily superficial as we stroll along and simply unaware greases the wheels of chance with a continuation of clearly dubious policies constantly at

work. We live in an integrated world, and facts when analyzed with independent inputs, compels one to start seeing patterns emerging regardless if whether we agree or disagree of the composite image coming into view.

I believe the topics that I put a focus on, you as the reader will hopefully enjoy to provoke a pinch of thought and become aware of the coded world operating around us beyond just algorithms in web searches. The topics are not out of the blue but volleyed from recent events. I can rest this holiday season knowing, I did not however squander my right of free speech which has been so long denied in America's history to especially my Saturday afternoon barbecue and white lightning sipping kind. For those intensely gentle souls that may take a modicum of umbrage, for whatever inane reasons as I can selfishly measure, I absolutely encourage them wholeheartedly to take the challenge to pull themselves away from the glare of the market's limelight and rip themselves away from the pressure of their peers to find a few modest hours to write and substantiate their points to lend credence to their observations. No bottle should go uncorked and no mouth is to be muffled regardless of how disagreeable ultimately the opinion may be to others. A thoughtful and comparative effort should always be respected if the intentions were legitimate and sources credible. This is a facet of being civilized we presume to add to an enriching discourse. Making one's voice heard is one of the pillars of a true democracy that should stand firm without inclinations in any other direction than straight and skyward- thrusting tall as boldly as the Washington Monument in America's capital- which is singular in the fact that an obelisk is indeed of African origin, truth be told.

Centuries passed in Western literature before authors let themselves be themselves in what they wrote. Dominated by classical conventions, the literati found no forms in which to describe themselves freely and randomly. We should not be shocked, then, by Oscar Wilde's paradox "Being natural is only a pose." Saintly epiphanies and confessions like Saint Augustine's person, usually not intended for publication, was governed by the

candor and the good manners of the writer. But how could an author show himself naked, unboastful and unashamed?

For literary self-portrait a new form was created by a French provincial landowner of the Renaissance. Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) christened his creation "Essays." From the French for *essayer*, "to try," the name itself revealed that the task Montaigne had set himself seemed difficult and uncertain. He dared claim only that he had made some "tries" in this new exercise of self-revelation. Montaigne preface to his 1580 Essays declared:

This, reader, is an honest book….I want to appear in my simple, natural, and everyday dress, without strain or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My imperfections may be read to the life, and my natural form will be here in so far as respect for the public allows. Had my lot been cast among those people who said still to live under the kindly liberty of nature's primal laws, I should, I assure you, most gladly have painted myself complete and in all my nakedness.

So, reader, I am myself the substance of this book, and there is no reason why you should waste your leisure on so frivolous and unrewarding a subject. Despite this uninviting invitation the book survived to become a model for our most popular, most influential, and most widely imitated form of non-fiction….Yet in contrast to the '"forms" of rhetoricians, the essay was not really a form at all. Rather it was a way of literary freewheeling, a license to be random and personal…The "central theme" that held his Essays together, Montaigne repeatedly reminds his reader, was nothing but Montaigne himself….And his focus, not on morality but on the elusive, ever-changing, contradictory self, was courageously new. Not as a prescription of the Good Life, but for the sheer joy of exploration and self-discovery. Offering not the Good, but the Unique. Here was a landmark in man's movement form the complacency of divine certitude to the piquancy of experience and human variety.

…His father, Pierre Eyquem, sometime mayor and prosperous merchant of Bordeaux, bore the name " de Montaigne" because Pierre's grandfather had bought the Montaigne château and feudal territory that came with it. His mother descendant from a Spanish Jewish family, the Lopez de Villeneuva, who lived in Aragon at the height of the Inquisition in the late fifteenth century. Three members of the family, including Michel's great-great-great grandfather Micer Pablo (in 1491) were burned at the stake. They were prominent marranos, Spanish Jews who had gone through the motions of conversion to escape persecution, but who continued to practice Judaism secretly. The marrano memory could not have been lost on Michel. He frequently expressed his sense of the injustice done to the Jews, which confirmed his doubts of force as an effective agent of persuasion…

…Dolet urged his countrymen to write in French, their mother tongue, rather than in Latin, "so that foreigners won't call us barbarians." …On his way to be burned alive at the stake he punned, "Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pro ratione dolet." (Dolet does not suffer for himself, but he suffers for the sake of reason). 1546.

Under Mamun the Great, culture flourished as never before in the closed community of Islam. He opened windows to the world, especially to the West. In his new capital Baghdad, Mamun set up his House of Wisdom, or more precisely House of Knowledge. There he collected scholars, seeking out remote capitals like Constantinople great works of "foreign" sciences, and he brought translators to put works from Greek, Syriac, Persian and Sanskrit into Arabic. Now Believers could read works of Aristotle, Galen, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Euclid in their own language. Mamun had an observatory built by the great astronomer-astrologer Al-Farghani, who wrote treatises on Ptolemaic astronomy, on mathematical theory of the astrolabe, and made a new estimate of the circumference of the Earth. The great Al-Khwarizmi wrote a treatise on algebra, introduced Hindu numerals (later misnamed "Arabic"), and surveyed Greek and Hindu science. Never before and probably never since, was the community of Islam so receptive to creativity and novelty wherever found…

- Daniel Boorstin
The Creators: A History of Heroes of the Imagination

Motto of Quebec Canada

Je me souviens
Que né sous le lys
Je croîs sous la rose. - E. E. Taché.

Trinity

As West and East
In all flatt Maps—and I am one—are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection.
- John Donne (1572-1631)
Poem came to light and lives in memory with the Trinity Site

The **Lafayette Escadrille** (French: *Escadrille de Lafayette*) was an escadrille of the French Air Service, the *Aéronautique Militaire*, during World War I composed largely of American volunteer pilots flying fighters. It was named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette, hero of the American and French revolutions.

Dr. Edmund L. Gros, medical director of the American Field Service (AFC), and Norman Prince, an American expatriate already flying for France, led the efforts to persuade the French government of the value of a volunteer American air unit fighting for France. The aim was to have their efforts recognized by the American public and thus, it was hoped, the resulting publicity would rouse interest in abandoning neutrality and joining the fight. Authorized by the French Air Department on March 21, 1916, the ***Escadrille Américaine*** (Escadrille N.124) was deployed on April 20 in Luxeuil-les-Bains, France.

Not all American pilots were in Lafayette Escadrille; other American pilots fought for France as part of the Lafayette Flying Corps.

The squadron was then moved closer to the front to Bar-le-Duc. A German objection filed with the U.S. government, over the actions of a supposed neutral nation, led to the name change to Lafayette Escadrille in December 1916, as the original name implied that the U.S. was allied to France rather than neutral.

The unit's aircraft, mechanics, and uniforms were French, as was the commander, Captain Georges Thenault. Five French pilots were also on the roster, serving at various times. **Raoul Lufbery, a French-born American citizen, became the squadron's first, and ultimately their highest scoring flying ace with 16 confirmed victories before the pilots of the squadron were inducted into the U.S. Air Service.**

Tributes

- Lafayette Escadrille Memorial, Villeneuve-l'Étang Imperial Estate, in Marnes-la-Coquette, Hauts-de-Seine, outside of Paris, France, the final work of French architect Alexandre Marcel, 1928

- Memorial to the American Volunteers. On 4 July 1923, the President of the French Council of State, Raymond Poincaré, dedicated a monument in the Place des États-Unis, Paris, to the Americans who had volunteered to fight in World War I in the service of France.

- A statue by the sculptor Gutzon Borglum titled *The Aviator* (1919) was erected on the grounds of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville in the memory of James R. McConnell, who was killed during the war.

- Two other memorials are dedicated to McConnell and located in Carthage, North Carolina. The first is a granite column flanked by two cannon, the other is a granite stone inscribed in French at the community house Community House Monument to James R. McConnell

- Norman Prince tomb, Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.

- There is a plaque in the memory of Kiffen Yates Rockwell in Lee Chapel at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, the college Rockwell attended before the war. - Wikipedia

Nat Turner Revisited

by

William Styron

The Confessions of Nat Turner

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize of 1968

(Complete text amended and truncated for this essay's purpose)

The story of Nat Turner had long been gestating in my mind, ever since I was a boy- in fact, since before I actually knew I wanted to be a writer. I could scarcely remember a time when I was not haunted by the idea of slavery, or was not profoundly conscious of the strange bifurcated world of whiteness and blackness in which I was born and reared. In the Virginia Tidewater region of my beginnings, heavily populated by blacks, society remained firmly in the grip of the Jim Crow laws and their ordinance of a separate and thoroughly unequal way of life. The evidence was blatant and embarrassing even to some white children, like myself, who were presumably brought up to be indifferent to such inequities as the ramshackle black school that stood on the route we traveled to our own

up-to-date and well-equipped edifice, with its swank state-of-the-art public address system, very advanced for the late 1930s. Many black schools in Virginia at that time had outside privies.

Despite our own fine local facilities, Virginia- in the era of the hidebound Harry Byrd political machine- ranked in public education among the lowest of states, down there with Arkansas and Mississippi, and the quality of instruction in the black schools had to be even worse than what we white students were given, which (except for a few individually outstanding teachers) was desperately mediocre. I was painfully conscious of this disparity, just as I was sensitive to the utter strangeness of this whole segregated world: the water fountains and restrooms marked "White" and "Colored," the buses in which black folk were required to sit in the rear, the theaters with blacks seated at balconies (in the larger towns, there were actually separate theaters); even the ferryboats crossing the rivers and bays enforced a nautical apartheid, with whites starboard and Negroes portside. I was perpetually bemused by this division, and the ensuing isolation.

It was a system both ludicrous and dreadful and I sensed its wrongness early, probably because of my parents, who, while hardly radical, were enlightened in racial matters, but also out of some innate sense of moral indignation. Although of course I was an outsider, I fell under the spell of negritude, fascinated by black people and their folkways, their labor and religion and especially their music, their raunchy blues and ragtime and their spirituals that reached for, and often attained, the sublime. Like some young boys who are troubled by their "unnatural" sexual longings, I felt a similar anxiety about my secret for blackness; in my closet I was fearful lest any of my conventionally racist young friends discover that I was an unabashed enthusiast of the despised Negro. I don't claim a special innocence. Most white people were, and are, racist to some degree but at least my racism was not conventional; I wanted to confront and understand blackness.

Then there was the incomparable example of my grandmother. In a direct linkage I still sometimes find remarkable, I am able to say that I remain separated from slavery by only two generations, and that I was related to and was familiar with and spoke to someone

who owned slaves. Born in 1850 on an eastern North Carolina plantation, my father's mother was the proprietress of two slave girls who were her age, twelve or thereabouts, at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation. Many years later, when she was an old lady in her eighties and I was eleven and twelve, she told me at great length of her love for these children and of the horror and loss she felt when that same year, 1862, Union forces from an Ohio regiment under General Burnside swept down on the plantation, stripped the place bare and left everyone to starve, including the little slave girls, who later disappeared. It was a story I heard more than once, since I avidly prompted her to repeat it and she, indulging her own fondness for its melodrama, told it again with relish, describing her hatred for Yankees (which remained undiminished in 1937), the real pain of her starvation (she said they were reduced to eating "roots and rats"), and her anguish when she was separated forever from those like black girls who were called, incidentally, Drusilla and Lucinda, just as in so many antebellum novels. All of the deliciously described particulars of my grandmother's chronicle held me spellbound, but I think that nothing so awed me as the fact that this frail and garrulous woman whom I beheld, and who was my own flesh and blood, had been the legal owner of two other human beings. It may have determined, more than anything else, some as-yet-to-be born resolve to write about slavery.

Nat Turner entered by consciousness through brief references to his revolt in my text on Virginia history. But most memorably he appeared in the form of an historical highway marker adjoining a peanut field in Southampton County, where I traveled with our high school football team in the fall. This was a remote, down-and-out farm region, whose population was 60 percent black. I was transfixed by the information conveyed by that marker, paraphrased thus: Nearby, in August of 1831, a fanatical slave named Nat Turner led a bloody insurrection that caused the death of fifty-five white people. Captured after two months in hiding, Nat was brought to trial in the county seat of Jerusalem (now Courtland) and he and seventeen of his followers were hanged. I recall how this sign set off my mind extraordinary resonances, which were clearly in conflict with my grandmother's story: what was the connection, if any, between her loving memories an this cryptic notation of horror and mayhem? Perhaps more importantly, I

remember wondering whether that bygone moment of sudden disaster didn't reflect something sinister in the divided black and white world in which I lived, so outwardly peaceable yet, except to the blind, troubled and jumpy with signs of resentment, sullenness, covert hostility and anger. The Virginia of my boyhood, like virtually all of the South, was a place where the amiable if often edgy relations between the races rose from an impulse that was mutually self-protective, keeping in abeyance much white fear and much black rage.

Daily life produced an unstated precariousness. There were strong, even passionate bonds of affection between individuals, black and white, but the social arrangement was a different matter; in the vast rural areas a form of pseudo-slavery prevailed, and the white man's whim was law. Urban existence, not much better, gave rise to ghettos where crimes by blacks against blacks went ignored and unrecorded. At its worst, the South was filled with intimidation and brutality on a terrifying scale; in the Deep South lynchings were still more than occasional. At its best, kindheartedness and decency, along with genuine love spontaneously reciprocated, were the rule, but even so the South suffered, in its Jim Crow shackles, from the sickness of alienation. It was a bizarre, culturally schizoid world with falsity at its core, not to speak of a glaring inhumanity. I'm sure that my early fascination with Nat Turner came from pondering the parallels between his time and my own society, whose genteel accommodations and endemic cruelties, large and small, were not really so different from the days of slavery. I think I must have wondered whether this tautly strained calmness might not someday be just as susceptible to violent retribution.

I wrote several works of fiction before I finally tackled Nat Turner. Then in the early 1960s I decided that they time was ripe; certainly I was never anything but intensely aware of the way in which the theme of slave rebellion was finding echoes in the gathering tensions of the Civil Rights movement. Although it didn't dawn on me at the time, I later realized that one of the benefits for me in Nat Turner's story was not an abundance of historical material but, if anything, a scantiness. This was a drama that took place in a faraway backwater when information gathering was primitive. While it may be satisfying and advantageous for historians to feast on rich archival material, the writer of

historical fiction is better off when past events have left him with short rations. A good example might be the abolitionist John Brown, who made his prodigious mark on history only thirty years after Nat Turner but whose every word and move were recorded by enterprising journalists, producing documents enough to fill a boxcar.

….At the time of writing Nat Turner, I felt that as an amateur historian I had absorbed a vast amount of reading on slavery in general, not only by way of a great number of antebellum books and essays but through much recent scholarship in the exploding field of the histiography of the slave period; thus, while my command may scarcely have been magisterial, I felt I reasonably fulfilled the first of Lukacs's conditions. It was perhaps serendipitous that Lukacs's other condition, regarding the relative unimportance of facts, made my task easier since I had chosen a man about whom so little was known.

But facts can never be simply ignored, and the principal item I had to deal with, and freely reject, was that which involved the character of Nat Turner himself. The fact: he was a person of conspicuous ghastliness. I eventually read the original Confessions countless times, trying to pick up useful clues about the man and his background, but early on I was struck by the impression that our hero was a madman. A singularly and gifted and intelligently madman, but mad nonetheless. No attempts on my part of sympathetic reinterpretation could alter this conclusion: his apocalyptic and deranged vision, his heavenly signs and signals, his belief in his own divinely ordained retributive mission, his obsessive fasting and prayer, his bloodthirsty megalomania and self-identification with the Deity (to a provocative question about himself by Gray, he replied: "Was not Christ crucified?") – there was no shaking that on the record Nat Turner was a dangerous religious lunatic. I didn't want to write about a psychopathic monster. While the institution of slavery was so horrible that it could produce psychopathology, and often did, I wished to demonstrate subtler motives, springing from social and behavioral roots, that could drive a young man of thirty-one to embark on his fearsome errand of revenge. So, without sacrificing the essence of Old Testament vengeance that plainly animated Nat, I attempted to moderate this aspect of his character and in so doing give him

dimensions of humanity that were almost totally absent in the documentary evidence. When stern piety replaced demonic fanaticism, the man could be better understood.

….In the Confessions of Nat Turner I strove to present a complex view of slavery, and Nat and Margaret's story would occupy a relatively small place in the larger scheme. But from the first page I was drawn irresistibly to that final scene of horror in the August heat, knowing that, to my own satisfaction at least, I had discovered a dramatic image for slavery's annihilating power, which crushed black and white alike, and in the end a whole society….

…In 1962, when I began writing the book, the Civil Rights movement still had the quality of conciliation; Martin Luther King's, Jr.'s grand and impossible dream was dreamed in a spirit of amity, concord and hope of a mutual understanding. The following years demonstrated the harsher truths: Birmingham, the bombings, Selma, the death of Medgar Evers, the three youthful martyrs of that Mississippi summer, churches set on fire, unbounded terror. James Baldwin, who was a friend of mine and who had made notes for his great essay The Fire Next Time while living in my house, had seen his prophecy come to pass in the smoke and flames of Watts, and of Newark and Detroit…

I took an enormous liberty with historical actuality when I began to deal with Nat's childhood and upbringing. I placed the boy in a milieu where he could not have possibly have belonged. During the course of Nat's brief life, Southhampton County, where he was born and reared, had already suffered the impoverishment that had come to Virginia long before as the result of overcultivation of tobacco and other crops, leaving a surplus of slaves who were constantly in danger of being sold off to the thriving plantations of Alabama and Mississippi- the "Far South". Virginia's Southside, as the region below the James River is known, was in those days dotted with small farms and modest holdings, patches of cotton and corn for home use (peanuts had yet to come into their own), apples grown for cider and brandy, pigs in their wallows or rooting in the wild. This bore no resemblance to the romantic view of Old Dixie. The average farmer owned one or two deprived slaves. It was a forlorn, down-at-the-heel section of the Tidewater, where there

never existed the celebrated plantations which gave the South its sheen and legendary glamour.

But I felt I had to create a plantation anyway. The plantation was as integral and characteristic part of Southern life in slave times; it was the very metaphor for the capitalist exploitation of human labor, and the plantation owners often represented the best and worst of those whom history had cast as masters in the peculiar institution, carrying within themselves all the moral frights and tensions which slavery engendered…

But while the book remains alive and well and widely read by white people, it is, as I say, largely shunned by blacks, sometimes with amazing hostility neither articulated or nor explained, as if the admonitions of those ten black writers a generation ago still provided a stony taboo. I am less bothered by this boycott in itself- for despite what I've just said, I am far from believing that my book, or any novel, has any real relevance to the contemporary crisis- than the way in which it represents a continuation of that grim apartness that has defined racial relations in this country and which seems, from all signs and portents, to have worsened over the years since The Confessions of Nat Turner appeared. That year much of Newark and Detroit burned down; in 1992 the fires of Los Angeles seemed anniversary fires too cruelly symbolic to accept or believe….

—

On October 13, 1761, the Calas family gathered in their rooms over the store. Gaubert Lavaysse, a friend of Marc Antoine, had just arrived from Bordeaux; he accepted the father's invitation to stay for dinner. After the meal Marc Antoine went down to the shop. Wondering why he did not return, Pierre and Lavaysse descended, and found him hanging from a bat that he placed between two doorposts. They took him down, called the father, and sent for a doctor. They tried to revive him, but the doctor pronounced him dead.

At this point the father made a tragic error. He knew that a law then in force required that a suicide be drawn naked through the streets, be pelted by the populace with mud and stones, and then be hanged; and all his property was to be forfeited to the state. The

father begged, and persuaded his family to report the case as a natural death. Meanwhile the cries of Pierre and the arrival of the doctor had brought a crowd to the door of the shop. An officer came up, heard the story told him, saw the rope and mark it had left of on the dead man's neck, and ordered the family, Lavaysse, and Jeanne Vigniere to the Hotel de Ville. There they were locked up in separate cells. On the next day each of them was questioned. All abandoned the claim of a natural death, and testified to a suicide. The commandant of the police refused to believe them, and charged them with having killed Marc Antoine to prevent his becoming a convert. The accusation was taken up by the populace and by many members of the Toulouse Parlement. A frenzy of revenge closed the minds of the people.

It seems incredible to us now that anyone should believe in the murder of a son by his father to prevent a change of faith; but that is because we are thinking as individuals, and after two centuries of decline in religious faith. The people of Toulouse thought en masse, as a crowd; and crowed can feel but they cannot think. The frenzy was fed by a ceremony which the White Penitents staged in their chapel; over an empty coffin a skeleton was suspended, holding in one hand an inscription, "Abjuration of Heresty," and in the other a palm branch, symbolizing martyrdom; below was the name "Marc Antoine Calas." Assuming the youth was not a suicide, they buried the corpse with great pomp in the Church of St. Stephen. A part of the clergy protested in vain against this anticipation of a verdict of murder.

The trial of the Calas family took place before the twelve judges of the municipal court of Toulouse. An admonition was sent out, to be read on three successive Sundays in every church, summoning to the witness stand all who knew anything about the death. Several persons appeared. A barber testified that he had heard a cry from the Calas house on the fatal evening: "Ah, mon Dieu, they are strangling me!" Others claimed to have heard such cries. On November 10, 1761, the municipal court pronounced Jean Calas, his wife, and Pierre guilty, and sentenced them to be hanged; it condemned Lavaysse to the galleys, and Jeanne Vigniere to five years' imprisonment. The Catholic governess had sworn to the innocence of her Protestant employers.

The decision was appealed to the Parlement of Toulouse, which appointed a panel of thirteen judges. Sixty-three additional witnesses were heard. All the hostile evidence was hearsay. The trial dragged on for three months, during which the Calas family and Lavaysse were kept in separate confinement. The final decision condemned only the father. No one explained how a 64 years old, unaided, could have overcome and strangled his mature son. The court that Calas, under torture, would confess. He was subjected to the *question ordinaire:* his arms and legs were stretched until they were pulled from their sockets. He repeatedly exhorted to confess; he repeatedly affirmed that Marc Antoine had committed suicide. After half and hour's rest he was put to the *question extraordinaire;* fifteen pints of water were poured down his throat; he still protested his innocence; fifteen further pints were forced into him, swelling his body to twice its normal size; he still maintained his innocence. He was allowed to expel the water. Then we was taken to the public square before the cathedral; he was laid upon a cross; an executioner, with eleven blows of an iron bar, broke each of his limbs in two places; the old man, calling upon Jesus Christ, proclaimed his innocence. After two hours of agony he was strangled. The corpse was bound to a stake and burned (March 10, 1762).

…He wrote (Voltaire) to friends in Languedoc, "both Catholics and Protestants replied to me that the guilt was beyond reasonable doubt."…He appealed to other authors to lend their pens to the effort to rouse the conscience of Europe. He wrote to Damilaville: "Cry out yourself, and let other cry out; cry out the Calas family and against fanaticism." And to d'Alembert: "Shout everywhere, I beg you, for the Calas family against fanaticism, for it is l'infame that has caused their misery."

- Will & Ariel Durant
  The Age of Voltaire

Jean Cocteau was an addict and an enthusiast. To express an opinion about the drug, he wrote, is like trying to express an opinion about human nature- not human nature at its most placid and rational but **human nature at is most grotesque, tragic, creative and holy**. Like other devotees, he never quite succeeded himself…Indeed to millions of users opium would never be a drug. **Baudelaire compared it to 'a dear and old woman friend…full of caresses and alas, full of deception….**

> "The opium I had taken made me arrive on the stage in a semiconscious state, delighted with the applause I received but not quite sure what the applause was about…My feet glided along the carpet without any effort, and my voice sounded to me as if it came from a great distance…I was in that delicious stupor that one experiences after morphine but afterwards I felt bad despite the curtain calls."
>
> …Sarah Bernhardt

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

Prince death: Singer died of fentanyl painkiller overdose

3 June 2016, BBC

US singer Prince died from an accidental overdose of the painkiller fentanyl, medical examiners have found.

The report, from the Midwest Medical Examiner's Office in Minnesota, comes more than a month after the singer was found slumped in a lift at his home. Detectives have already questioned a doctor who saw the 57-year-old twice in the weeks before he died.

Prescription painkillers were in the singer's possession following his death, officials told US media in May.

A police warrant has also revealed that Dr Michael Schulenberg prescribed medication to the singer on 20 April - the day before he died.

The warrant does not say what was prescribed or whether Prince took the drugs.

According to the autopsy report, Prince self-administered fentanyl, an opioid many times more powerful than heroin. In March last year, the US Drug and Enforcement Administration warned the drug, which it said was often laced in heroin, was a "threat to health and public safety". It said even small doses of fentanyl could be lethal and that "incidents" and overdoses related to the drug were "occurring at an alarming rate".

Prince was found unresponsive in a lift at his Paisley Park Studios on the morning of 21 April, local officials said. First responders tried to revive him with CPR but he was pronounced dead shortly afterwards.

He is believed to have suffered from knee and hip pain from years of performing, the Associated Press news agency reports, citing a friend.

Artists from around the world and Prince's numerous fans later paid tributes to the star.

Prince was cremated in a private ceremony on 24 April. The singer's family are understood to be planning to stage a public memorial in August. He was a prolific writer and performer from a young age, reportedly writing his first song when he was seven. A singer, songwriter, arranger and multi-instrumentalist, Prince recorded more than 30 albums. His best known hits include Let's Go Crazy and When Doves Cry.

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is an extremely strong painkiller, prescribed for severe chronic pain, or breakthrough pain which doesn't respond to regular painkillers.

It is an opioid painkiller which means it works by mimicking the body's natural painkillers, called endorphins, which block pain messages to the brain. It can cause dangerous side effects, including severe breathing problems. The risk of harm is higher if the wrong dose or strength is used.

A Point of View: Why people shouldn't feel the need to censor themselves
8 November 2015, BBC Features & Analysis

Self-censorship can be as much a threat to free speech as its government equivalent, argues Roger Scruton. Any discussion of free speech needs to deal with two important issues - jokes and race. Jokes are not opinions, but they can cause just as much offence. So should there be the same freedom to make jokes as to express opinions?

The issue of race has been the subject of deep self-questioning in modern communities. The most horrible genocide in recent history - the Holocaust - occurred because people felt free to hate the Jews and to broadcast that hatred in speech that was protected by law. The oppression of black people in America and their exclusion from the privileges of citizenship was advocated freely and destructively throughout recent times. And again the opinions were protected by law. Don't these and similar cases justify the current belief that free speech is not a good in itself, and that groups liable to be targeted by collective hatred should be protected from its abuse?

These two issues are of pressing concern to us. The Charlie Hebdo affair in France reminds us that jokes can give such offence as to inspire the most violent response to them. And we should surely not be surprised if the French comedian Dieudonne, who

regularly includes anti-Semitic jokes in his stand-up shows, is now banned from many places in France and Belgium.

We should remember, however, that offence can be taken even when it has not been given. There are radical feminists who search every innocent remark about women for the hidden sexist agenda. Even using the masculine pronoun in the grammatically sanctioned way, so as to refer indifferently to men and women, can cause offence and is now being banned on campuses all across America. It is not that you wish to give offence. But you are up against people who are expert in taking it, who have cultivated the art of taking offence over many years, and who are never more delighted than when some innocent man falls into the trap of speaking incorrectly.

Typically a joke tries to cut things down to size, so that you can feel at ease with the thing you laugh at. Most ethnic jokes are like that - ways of dealing with ethnic diversity, by helping people to feel content with their own group, and not threatened by the others. Sometimes it is your own group that is cut down to size - as in the many Jewish jokes that show some Jewish foible to be an amusing eccentricity rather than a threat. Jokes become popular because they soften things, making reality, with all its divisions, less of a threat. Here is a well-known joke from the Northern Ireland troubles - one man stops another in the street and points a gun at his chest. "Catholic or Protestant?" he demands. "Atheist," comes the reply. To which the response is "Catholic atheist or Protestant atheist?" Humour of that kind is pointing both to the absurdity of sectarian conflict, and also to the fact that it is a pretence, an excuse for hatred rather than a response to it. It is reminding us that the art of taking offence is used by small-minded people to gain an unwarranted advantage over the rest of us.

Of course there are jokes in bad taste, jokes that express unpleasant or malicious attitudes. We teach our children not to tell jokes of that kind, and not to laugh when others tell them. Humour is informed by moral judgment. We hope to turn it towards acceptance and forgiveness, and away from malice and contempt. But how should we deal with the joke that gives offence?

You cannot legislate against offence. No legislation, no invention of new crimes and punishments, can possibly introduce irony, forgiveness and good will into minds schooled in the art of being offended. This is as true of radical feminists as of sectarians and radical Islamists. While we have a moral duty to laugh at them, they have also made it dangerous to do so. But we should never lose sight of the fact that it is they, not we, who are the transgressors. Those who suspect mockery at every turn, and who react with implacable anger when they think they have discovered it, are the real offenders. So what about racist speech? Is this any different from the other kinds of protected speech, or is there some special reason for criminalising it? Does the Holocaust justify banning the opinions that gave rise to it? Many people think so, and in France the legislature has gone further and criminalised those who deny that the Holocaust occurred.

Racist opinions won't go away just because we forbid their expression. Indeed, forbidding them may give them a special allure. What was most destructive about the Nazi propaganda against the Jews was not so much the expression of those nasty opinions, but the suppression of those who sought to refute them. It was the lack of free speech that allowed the opinions to rampage out of control, free from the arguments that would have exposed them to ridicule. By contrast, black people in America earned their status as equal citizens partly because of free discussion, which persuaded ordinary Americans that racial stereotyping is both irrational and unjust. It is because they gave voice to their opinions that the racists were defeated.

The case is of vital importance to us in Britain. The policing of the public sphere with a view to suppressing "racist" opinions has caused a kind of public psychosis, a sense of having to tiptoe through a minefield, and to avoid all the areas where the bomb of outrage might go off in your face. And this bomb has been planted and primed by people many of whom see the accusation of racism as a useful way to undermine our belief in our country and its way of life. Hence police forces, public officials, city councillors and teachers have hesitated to think what they know to be true, or to act against what they know to be wrong. We have seen this in the cases of sexual abuse in Rotherham and

elsewhere when reluctance to single out an immigrant community for blame has been one reason for failing to act. My recent novel The Disappeared is an attempt to explore the depths of the moral disorder that has entered our society, through this kind of self-censorship, which prevents a teacher, a police officer or a social worker from acting, precisely when most sure that he or she must act.

Self-censorship is even more harmful than censorship by the state. For it shuts down the conversation completely. Because of mass migration our society has undergone vast and potentially traumatic changes, but without the benefit of public discussion, and as though we had no choice over our future. The depths of confusion and resentment are beginning to be perceivable, not only here but all across Europe, and it is discussion alone that would have prevented them. Those who have tried to initiate that discussion have been subjected to witch-hunts and character assassination of a kind that few people can easily endure. The result has been a loss of reasoned argument in places where nothing is needed so much as reasoned argument.

One last word about the art of taking offence. Nowhere has this art been more assiduously cultivated than on American campuses, where an entirely new culture of trepidation has set out to capture the adolescent psyche. When discussing any of the matters in which the secular dogmas have staked a claim - race, sex, orientation, sexual politics - the professor may now be required to issue "trigger warnings", lest he stray into areas that might trigger the memory of some traumatic event in the life of the student. Visiting speakers with heretical views about feminism or homosexuality are also preceded by trigger warnings. Some campuses even provide safe rooms where the trembling students can retire for consolation should they have been exposed to the contamination of an unorthodox point of view. Amusing though this is, you have to be careful not to laugh at it, at least if you are a professor who has not got tenure. Those who wish to maintain the student mind in a condition of coddled vulnerability, unhardened by opposition and unpractised in argument, now police the campus, with the result that these places which should have been the last bastion of reason in a muddled world, are instead the places where all the muddles come home for nourishment. The example vividly illustrates the

way in which the attacks on free speech can go so far as to close off the route to knowledge. And in the end that is why we should value this freedom, and why John Stuart Mill was so right to defend it - as fundamental to a free society - without it we will never really know what we think.

Roger Scruton is a writer and philosopher

Chilcot: Why we cover our ears to the facts

10 July 2016, BBC

Do people moderate their views when presented with overwhelming evidence to the contrary? Not necessarily, writes Matthew Syed.

We like to think that we apportion our beliefs to the evidence. After all, isn't this the hallmark of rationality? When information comes along which reveals we should change our minds, we do.

Or do we?

Consider an experiment, where two groups were recruited. One group was adamantly in favour of capital punishment. They had strong feelings on the issue, and had publicly backed the policy. The other group were adamantly against, horrified by "state-sanctioned murder".

These groups were then showed two dossiers. Each of these dossiers were impressive. They marshalled well-researched evidence. But here's the thing. The first dossier collated all the evidence in favour of capital punishment. The second collated all the evidence against.

Now you might suppose that, confronted by this contradictory evidence, the two groups would have concluded that capital punishment is a complex subject with arguments on both sides. You might have expected them to have moved a little closer in their views. In fact, the opposite happened - they became more polarised.

When asked about their attitudes afterwards, those in favour of capital punishment said they were impressed with the dossier citing evidence in line with their views. The data was rigorous, they said. It was extensive. It was robust. As for the other dossier - well, it was full of holes, shoddy, weak points everywhere.

The opposite conclusions were drawn by those against capital punishment. It was not just that they disagreed with the conclusions. They also found the (neutral) statistics unimpressive. From reading precisely the same material, they became even more entrenched in their positions.

What this (and dozens of other experiments) reveal is the way we filter new information when it challenges our strongly-held beliefs or judgements. We use a series of post hoc manoeuvres to reframe anything inconvenient to our original position. We question the probity of the evidence, or the credentials of the people who discovered it, or their motives, or whatever. The more information that emerges to challenge our perspective, the more creatively we search for new justifications, and the more entrenched we become in our prior view.

This tendency is called "cognitive dissonance".

You can see the hallmarks of cognitive dissonance in the build-up to and aftermath of the Iraq War. The Chilcot report made pointed criticisms over the legal advice, lack of cabinet oversight and post-war planning and policy. But let us focus on the way the primary evidence used to justify war - namely, the existence of WMD - was serially reframed.

On 24 September 2002, before the conflict, Tony Blair made a speech where he emphatically stated: "His [Saddam Hussein's] WMD programme is active, detailed and growing… he has existing plans for the use of weapons, which could be activated in 45 minutes…"

The problem with this claim is that Saddam's troops didn't use such weapons to repel Western forces, and the initial search for WMD drew a conspicuous blank. And yet, as the social psychologists Jeff Stone and Nicholas Fernandez have pointed out in an essay on the Iraq conflict, Blair didn't amend his view - he reframed the evidence. In a speech to the House of Commons, he said: "There are literally thousands of sites... but it is only now that the Iraq Survey Group has been put together that a dedicated team of people… will be able to do the job properly… I have no doubt that they will find the clearest possible evidence of WMD."

So, to Blair, the lack of WMD didn't show that they were not actually there. Rather, it showed that inspectors hadn't been looking hard enough. Moreover, he had become more convinced of the existence of WMD, not less so.

Twelve months later, when the Iraq Survey Group couldn't find the weapons either, Blair still couldn't accept that WMD were not there. Instead, he changed tack again arguing in a speech that "they could have been removed, they could have been hidden, they could have been destroyed".

So now, the lack of evidence for WMD in Iraq was no longer because troops hadn't had enough time to find them, or because of the inadequacy of the inspectors, but because Iraqi troops had spirited them out of existence.

But this stance soon became untenable, too. As the search continued in a state of desperation, it became clear that not only were there no WMD, but there were no remnants of them, either. Iraqi troops could not have spirited them away.

And yet Blair now reached for a new justification for the decision to go to war. "The problem is that I can apologise for the information that turned out to be wrong, but I can't, sincerely at least, apologise for removing Saddam," he said in a speech. "The world is a better place with Saddam in prison."

This is not intended as argument against Blair - rather, as an illustration of the reach of cognitive dissonance. Indeed, when you read the Chilcot report, this tendency, not just with regard to WMD, peppers almost every page.

Science has changed the world because it prioritises evidence over conviction. Judgements are subservient to what the data tells us. The problem is that in many areas of our world, evidence is revised to fit with prior assumptions - and the tragedy is that we are often unaware of this process because it happens subconsciously. It is noteworthy, for example, that the Chilcot report nowhere states that Blair was actively deceitful.

The good news is that we can combat this tendency, and measurably improve our judgements, when we become alert to it. Indeed, the hallmark of pioneering institutions is that they deal with cognitive dissonance not by reframing inconvenient evidence, but by creating systems that learn from it (and thus avoid related biases such as "group think"). This should be the most important lesson of Chilcot.

When so-called Islamic State launched a major offensive in Iraq in 2014, and the country was on the brink of a civil war - which some commentators linked to the 2003 invasion - Blair found another avenue of justification.

He pointed to the policy of non-intervention in Syria, which had descended into its own civil war. In an article written for his personal website, he said: "In Syria we called for the regime to change, took no action and it is in the worst state of all." In other words he might be suggesting: "If things look bad in Iraq now, they would have been even more awful if we had not invaded in 2003."

For our purposes, the most important thing is not whether Blair was right or wrong on this point, one which he re-affirmed this week. The vital thing to realise is that had non-intervention in Syria achieved peace, Blair would likely still have found a way to interpret that evidence through the lens of the rightness of his decision to invade Iraq. In fact, he would probably have become more convinced of its rightness, not less so. And this is why the Chilcot report, despite its mammoth detail, will have little effect on the core judgements of those involved with the Iraq War. As with everything else, it will simply be re-framed.

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The parallel with Khmer Rouge atrocities is striking. One way to try to understand why the Cambodian communists acted as they did is to enter into the mind of a well-educated, intelligent woman, who exacts vengeance by pouring acid over a girl's head, watching as it eats away over her body and every hope of happiness in her life. What can be more odious than destroy a child's future? The Khmer Rouges, at least, could argue that they were acting for a cause, not out of personal evil. But the result was essentially the same. It was Orwell's vision of the future: 'A boot stamping on a human face, forever.'

The unstated premise is that the horrors came from without- from the American bombing of Cambodian villages in the early 1970s; from Maoism; from Stalinism; from the legacy of the French Revolution, transmitted by colonial schoolteachers, from the vicious, warped minds of a small group of evil men.

Cambodians – not just the present government, dominated by former Khmer Rouges who have no interest whatever in raking up the past, but the nation as a whole – are oddly reluctant to look deeper. **To do so would require a degree of self-examination for which they are unprepared and which, instinctively, they prefer to avoid.** To the extent that people want a reckoning, the goal is to condemn the big fish, the perpetrators – 'them'; no 'us' – the small fry.

…The cardinal issue is what it is about Cambodian society that has allowed, and continues to allow, people to to turn their backs on all they know of gentleness and compassion, goodness and decency, and to commit appalling cruelties seemingly without conscience of the enormity of their acts and certainly without remorse. It is a question one can ask, in greater or lesser measure, about the Germans (and others) during the time of the Nazis; the Rwandans; the Turks (in Armenia); the Serbs (in Bosnia); the Bosnians (in Serbia); the Israelis in Palestine and the Palestinians in Israel; not to mention all the terrorist organizations occupying the moral high ground inspired by Islamic fundamentalism.

The explanation does not lie in some chromosomal abnormality, some genetic disposition predisposition to violence, a neuropathic 'Bell Curve' on part of the nations concerned. Cambodians, of that matter Rwandans, are not biologically more prone to cruelty than Americans or West Europeans. The causes are rooted in history – which creates the conditions for nations to seek extreme remedies to perceived ills; in geography – which generates the pressures that seem to justify them (lebensraum, said Hitler; 'national survival' said Pol Pot); in culture – which erects or fails to erect moral and intellectual prohibitions against them; and in the political and social system – which affords or denies the individual the right to act according to his own lights.

Context is not all, however. Evil is as evil does.

The individual, whatever the context, has a personal responsibility. Evil, at this level, consists in deliberately ignoring what one knows to be right. The weaker the moral code, the easier evil become to commit. Jacques Verges, a radical French lawyer who, as a student in the 1950s, befriended many of the future Communist leaders, maintains that what distinguishes men from animals is crime. Nature, know no human law, is savage. Man alone is criminal. Or, to put it in Old Testament terms, man alone is evil. When we contemplate what happened in Cambodia, we are looking not at some exotic horror story but into darkness, into the foul places of our own souls.

History, culture, geography, politics, and millions of individuals have all played their part in the Cambodian nightmare albeit in differing measures. The same is true of all such tragedies, which is why the particular agony of a small distant country has a larger significance, on which those who make policy, and public opinion, would do well to ponder. That is reason enough for recounting the story of the man who became Pol Pot. For if there is one lesson worth retaining from the travails of the Cold War and the miseries it brought in its wake, it is **the folly of seeking simple answers to complicated questions**. It is a lesson which governments still show no sign of learning.

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

I

WHOLE LEE TRINITY

In place of distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it. In the same way, our national dress came into favor and the toga was everywhere to be seen. And so the Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable – arcades, baths and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of novelties as 'civilization' when really they were only a feature of enslavement.*

- Tacitus
Agricola

Because several of their generations had lived in a transitional land, pitching their tents between the houses of their fathers and the real Egypt, they were now unanchored souls, wavering in spirit and without a secure doctrine. They had forgotten much; they had assimilated some new thoughts; and because they lacked real orientation, they did not trust their own feelings. They did not trust even the bitterness that they felt towards their bondage.*

- Thomas Mann
The Tables of the Law

*Quotes pilfered from Louisana Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal, graduate of Oxford University, who is still learning about himself and our all-American values with a hard street beating lesson on his delusional political chances to reach the presidency.

Oh, my bad. I meant V.S. Naipaul who went to Oxford too from "A Flag on the Island"…Oh wait…sorry….I meant "The Middle Passage," but *we* knew that already.

And so he made his way north through the dark nights, sometimes losing the road so completely that he was forced to backtrack for several days until he regained the route. His shoes wore out and collapsed and for two nights he walked close to the road on bare feet. Finally one morning he entered the open door of a farmhouse while its people were in the fields and made off with a pair of patent leather boots so tight that he had to cut holes for the toes. Thus shod, he pushed through the gloomy woods toward Washington. It must have been August by now and the chiggers and sweat flies and the mosquitoes were out in full swarm. Some days on Hark's pine-needle bed were almost impossible for sleep. Thunderstorms rumbling out of the west drenched him and froze him and scared him half out of his wits. He lost sight of the North Star more times than he could count. Forks and turnings confused him. Moonless nights caused him to stray away from the road and lose himself in a bog or thicket where owls hooted and branches crackled and the water moccasins thrashed drowsily in brackish pools. On such nights Hark's misery and loneliness seemed more than he could bear. Twice he came close to be being caught, the first occasion somewhere just south of Washington when, traversing the edge of a cornfield before nightfall, he nearly stepped on a white man who happened at that moment to be defecating in the bushes. Hark ran, the man pulled up his pants, yelled and gave chase, but Hark quickly outstripped him. That night, though, he heard dogs baying as if in pursuit and for one time in his life fought down his fear of high places and spent the hours perched on the limb of a big maple tree while the dogs howled and moaned in the distance. His other close call came between what must have been Washington and Baltimore, when he was shocked out of his sleep underneath a hedge to find himself in the midst of a fox hunt. The great bodies of horses hurtled over him as if in some nightmare and their hooves spattered his face with wet stinging little buttons of earth. Crouching on his elbows and knees to protect himself, Hark thought the end had come when a red-jacketed horseman reigned in his mount and asked curtly what a strange nigger was doing in such a dumb position- obtaining in reply the statement that the nigger was praying- and believed it a miracle when the man said nothing but merely galloped off in the morning mists.

He had been told that Maryland was a slave state, but one morning when he happened upon a town which could only have been Baltimore he decided to risk exposure by creeping out to the edge of the hayfield in which he had concealed himself and calling in a furtive voice to a Negro man strolling toward the city along the log road. "Squash-honna," Hark said. "Whichaway to de Squash-honna?" But the Negro, a yellow loose-limbed field hand, only gazed back at Hark as if he were crazy and continued up the road with quickening pace. Undaunted, Hark resumed the journey with growing confidence that soon it would be all over. Perhaps there were five more nights of walking when at last, early one morning, Hark was aware that he was no longer in the woods. Here in the gathering light the trees gave way to a grassy plain which seemed to slope down, ever so gently, toward a stand of cattails and marsh grass rustling in the morning breeze. The wind tasted of salt, exciting Hark and making him press forward eagerly across the savanna-like plain. He strode boldly through the marsh, ankle-deep in water and mud, and finally with pounding heart attained a glistening beach unbelievably pure and clean and thick with sand. Beyond lay the river, so wide here that Hark could barely see across it, a majestic expanse of blue water flecked with whitecaps blown up by a southerly wind. For long minutes he stood there marveling at the sight, watching the waves lapping at the driftwood on the shore. Fishnets hung from the stakes in the water, and far out a boat with white sails bellying moved serenely toward the north- the first sailboat Hark had ever seen. In his patent leather boots, now split beyond recognition, he walked up the beach a short distance and presently he spied a skinny little Negro man sitting on the edge of a dilapidated row boat drawn up against the shore. This close to freedom, Hark decided that he could at last hazard a direct inquiry, and so he approached the Negro confidently.

"Say, man," said Hark, remembering the question he was supposed to ask, "whar de Quakah meetin' house?"

The Negro gazed back at him through the oval spectacles on wire rims- the only pair of glasses Hark had ever seen on a black man. He had a friendly little monkey's face with smallpox scars all over it and crown of grizzled hair whining with pig grease. He said

nothing for quite some time, then he declared: “My, you is some big nigger boy. How old is you, sonny?”

“I’se nineteen,” Hark replied.

“You bond or free?”

“I’se bond,” said Hark. “I done run off. Whar de Quakah meetin’ house?

The Negro’s eyes remained twinkling and amiable behind his spectacles. Then he said again: “You is some big nigger boy. What yo’ name, sonny?”

“I’se called Hark. Was Hark Barnett. Now Hark Travis.”

“Well, Hark,” the man said, rising from his perch on the rowboat, “you jes’ wait right here and I’ll go see about dat meetin’ house. You jes’ set right here,” he went on, placing a brotherly hand on Hark’s arm and urging him down to a seat on the edge of the rowboat. “You has had some kind of time but now it’s all over with,” he said in a kindly voice. “You jes’ set right there while I go see about dat meetin’ house. You jes’ set right there and rest you’self and we’ll take care of dat meetin’ house.” Then he hurried up the beach and disappeared behind a copse of small stunted trees.

Gratified and relieved to be at last so close to the end of his quest, Hark set there on the rowboat for a long moment, contemplating the blue windy sweep of the river, more grand and awesome than anything he had ever seen in his life. Soon a lazy, pleasant drowsiness overtook him, and his eyelids became heavy, and stretched out on the sand in the warm sun and went to sleep.

Then he heard a sudden voice and he awoke in terror to see a white man standing over him with a musket, hammer cocked, ready to shoot.

"One move and I'll blow your head off," said the white man. "Tie him up Samson."

It was not so much that Samson, one of his own kind- the little Negro with glasses – had betrayed him which grieved Hark in later times, although that was bad enough. It was that he had really journeyed to the ends of the earth to get nowhere. For within three days he was back with Travis (who had liberally stickered the countryside with posters); he had walked over six weeks in circles, in zigzags, in looping spirals, never once traveling more than forty miles from home. The simple truth of the matter of Hark, born and raised in the abyssal and aching night, had no more comprehension of the vastness of the world than a baby in a cradle. There was no way for him to know about cities, he had never seen a hamlet; and thus he may be excused for not perceiving that "Richmond" and "Washington" and "Baltimore" were in truth any of a dozen nondescript little villages of the Tidewater – Jerusalem, Drewrysville, Smithfield- and that the noble watercourse upon whose shore he stood with such trust and hope and joy was not "the Squash-honna" but that ancient mother-river of slavery, the James.

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

Skipping along after a flight inside the aged terminal section that is occupied by lesser discount carriers, worn with tired gates yet curiously complete with one-arm bandits at the ready to aid the cause of desperately leaving Las Vegas chances, I was in search of not the ethereal truth but the much more pressing down-to-earth need for the red and yellow tiled men's room. Nature called and I knew, if I really and truly tried, I could find it on my very own. It's a rather common experience and I'm grateful to live in an age where any man of any race can be granted access to the same facilities. It was not always this way with many of the states under Stars & Stripes whipping in winds overhead. If I was in an earlier age as my grandfathers, indeed my father when younger, I probably would have been a 50+ imitator of a pre-school boy by being first embarrassed at my predicament but then as a man, enraged at the gross double-standards put upon my imported auction block race,

not voluntarily immigrated with aspirations for better lives with Angel & Ellis Island memorial parks lined with the optimistic promise of American flags, but suffering so contrary to all humane Christian decency and dignity suffocating in crowded dank holds and its compendium of repugnant prejudices, vile laws and chain gang sentiments of reactionary God-fearing white supremacy prevailing below Stars & Bars.

A singular display caught my attention as I was dashing by and being duly relieved moments later of my requisite obligation of generously repaying the liquid loan at friendly terms of what I drank earlier before departure, since water in all life is merely borrowed for a short spell and surrendered for recycling in the atmosphere in due course, I meandered coolly back weighed down with my credit cards of comfortable balance limits and thick burning stacks of new cold cash in one's and five's to take a better look before heading to the main concourse to the baggage claim area in my proudly brushed faux Wuhan ostrich cowboy boots with Zhejiang souls and Kaoshiung polymer heels sans apologies. Wow. I was finally meeting Howard Hughes face to face. The Big Man. Okay, I give. I was meeting a facsimile of Howard Hughes via way of this leather flight suit made in exotic hamburger stand lined Compton or palmed studio set Culver City by perhaps immigrant hands. This was hardly the analogous moment in Spain when Julius Caesar dropped painfully onto both his knees with tears spilling from his eyes lamenting that nothing he could accomplish in his life could approach equating to the uncontested power and glory of Alexander the Great conquering the known world. JC, as a general who controlled legions with limitless ambition, was put into his place by a stone statue of a boy-king transformed into a demigod that mocked his minor northern victories and was long dead in Egypt with his deeds securely pocketed, towering over mankind, not much after the ripe age of thirty. "Only the good die young and what have I done?" paraphrasing what the general asked of himself. Julius Caesar was keenly aware he was already years older in comparison and was shoving around backward barbarians in forests and mountains in Gaul, not yet toting triumphant treasures

accrued from the mysterious East to wild rampant acclaim back to Rome. The best for him was yet to come.

Months named like August, for Augustus, will remain and not change their names after we all slip away. I am a little man just trying to split open the Heinz ketchup packet on the JR Simplot fries to survive in the world, not beat the world, with a McDonald's chocolate stirred milkshake and Sysco supplied salt shaker on the side, handled by all happy Big Mac chomping and MacBook Wi-Fi dwelling humanity. That was why I dropped before Hughes to such a lowly vantage point, I assure you. I wasn't paying open homage in the concourse to his brilliant majesty, oblivious to what others thought, as they trotted by not caring a bit what I was doing as their minds were fixed on hitting the nearby Strip; nor was I lamenting my lack of resolve for producing B-movies and flying friendly photogenic faces in my own multi-engine aircraft for posh lunches at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco; genuinely bored with their conversations and trite small-town small talk that missed the mark of being intellectually stimulating yet young, fresh with life and tolerantly captivatingly charming in their spring. There is a time to open a winter night's Bordeaux; at others, being just amused with a sunny summer Tavel rosé quaff surely will do.

So there I was fumbling around on my bended knees in my polished ostrich boots peeking and probing around below the display's four corners, then getting sucker-punched flush with a tall wave of being conscious, therefore grossly insecure to my exposure, that unseemly it would be if a real Western cowboy who knows how to break Wyoming mustangs and rope New Mexican cattle would take notice not of my unfortunate predicament but notice the boots, loudly scoffing at the misspelled English of an unknown brand called *Cowbuy* with Chinese characters painted on the soles with a constellation of yellow stars aligned the same as on the flag of China-not the single star resonating strength, determination and independence from the former legal slave owning Lone Star State. The state's former governor, Rick Perry, was chastised after the happy hour debate for Republican bottom dwellers by being roundly beaten by a fired CEO in Fiorina and lambasted by a buffoon of a billionaire

in Trump that he wears glasses to try to look smart, implying he is not. He dropped out of the race soon after. I guess some cynics were waiting for his brain to do another public lock on points which perhaps was cruel. Some things should be made in America by mindful Mexican craftsmanship and I was going out on a limb in the public to get myself busted for not wearing expensive no-excuse Dan Post's by that damned George.

…If anything, the prerequisite for a man to who dared to wear them was a powerful stride and a take-no-prisoners attitude; until this point, the only breed of 20th century American dude to regularly walk in heels was the cowboy-and he practically invented swagger. A cowboy could get away with wearing elevated boots because they're useful for riding horses. While a flat shoe might slide too easily out of a stirrup, the heel stops the foot from moving forward and thus allows a rider more control from his comfortable perch on the saddle. In fact, high-heeled shoes came into fashion for precisely this reason, appealing to men because they allowed for additional mastery over an animal. "Heels were worn through the Near East for centuries before they were introduced into Western dress," one wall plaque reads at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, Canada. They were embraced by both Western men and women at the end of the sixteenth century because of the "political and economic developments between Europeans and powers to the East, specifically the rising importance of Persia on the political stage."

…But just as women's shoes have evolved to communicate things like economic rank and social status, men's footwear has also developed as a mode of distinguishing the haves from the haves-not, the tastemakers from the followers. Take, for instance, the poulaine: a flat-soled shoe with a long, skinny tip a la Pinochio's nose. When the Crusaders arrived home in Europe with these unusual shoes from the East, poulaines caught on with the aristocracy, but then "people of modest means imitated this eccentric fashion…The authorities responded by regulating the length of the shoes' points according to social rank: a half foot for commoners, one foot for the bourgeois, and one and half feet for knights, two feet for nobles, and two and half feet for princes, who had to hold the tips of their shoes up with gold or silver chains attached to their knees in order to walk. The shoe

hierarchy led to the French expression 'vivre sur un grand pied' (to live on large foot) denoting the worldly status represented by shoe length." At time when social status was so culturally ingrained, codifying shoe lengths was gratuitous yet nonetheless the poulaine became yet another form of exclusivity, another way of driving a wedge between the elite and the masses*. Later, in the palace of Louis XIV, aristocratic men not only wore high-heeled shoes but their heels were also painted red to indicate that they were members of the court. The fashion flourished up until the French Revolution, when Louis's lavish and impractical tastes went abruptly out of style.

*The shoe's phallic shape also interested William Rossi, author of the Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe, who claims that at civilized dinners, "the man's erect pouliane would reach across to lift the skirt hem of the female guest seated opposite him."

- Rachelle Bergstein
Women from the Ankle Down

My humble pursuit was of trying to find the recalcitrant 1776-1976 bicentennial quarter with a frozen profile of the Virginia planter's head that I ineptly dropped between my fingers before Hughes, that may have rolled behind the glass suit display if not somehow guided by Murphy's Law, that wedged miraculously underneath a tight edge of it. I knew there was something special about that coin! It just had a special feel to it and it was like it was trying to communicate with me by urging me to take it to Vegas. Now this! If I spent a lifetime trying to deliberately do just what happened, the day would never come. I carried the quarter with me from the well in the car as I felt it might be lucky to put it into a magic slot machine waiting just for my arrival, win a few glad million, shave and smile and tell my happy reflection that I finally made something out of myself in this life from honest planning, drive, work and toil to my wife's unsuppressed excitement of vindication that, indeed, she didn't kiss a hot air croaking frog-on-a-log after all. After the frustrations and protestations leveled that could be finally laid to quiet rest, a prince -just less the charm- that just took his own time for his ship to come in, would arrive

with streaming banners high and trumpets ablaze. It could happen to you. Who? Howard who?

Howard Hughes for a lot of people, certainly of a younger generation, would be treated with indifference, unable to compete with dollar machines, smartphone apps and tawdry cocktail servers. Like Alexander the Great, Steve Jobs died a modern day god duly placed in the pantheon of greatness and unlike both men dead at the zenith of their real power and prestige, Hughes morphed into an unkempt recluse, a man with everything and ironically with nothing. Hughes' suit I could see better being in Washington, DC but he did own casinos in Vegas and owned stakes in Trans World Airlines, then Hughes Airwest so I supposed it wasn't out of the blue either. Howard needs to respected. He did not call himself Howie. He was Howard, Mr. Hughes. He made something of himself and pushed limits and boundaries with a creative boldness and tenacity that few have. Hughes could have been just another factory heir just content to be fabulously wealthy but that wasn't enough for him. He tested himself and tested those around him. For the era, high technology was about aircraft yet he always was rooted to the rewards and risks of commerce. He took on the world, not the world steamrolling him. His family's oil drilling tool company made him not intimidated of the demands of aircraft manufacturing and high finance. Most people exist but this was a man who really lived. He knew what it was to fly and break records and also how to survive crashes, not shielding himself from possible adversity. Unlike the majority, he had a lot at stake and assets valuable to lose. He was seen at the best parties with beauty queens and stars yet still an enigma to those who knew him. Hughes & Co. built an oddity called the Spruce Goose which was envisioned to be a large troop carrier that was completed after the end of WWII at the dawning of the jet age, which he flew at the controls, that was DOA -Dinosaur On Arrival- which rotated off the water with baited breaths. He ordered it mothballed after only winging lowly in the air one time. If you went to the kitchen to grab a quick snack and returned to the television, the flight would have already come and gone. Howard, pardon, Mr. Hughes. What a life.

Hughes, with Indiana Jones hat on, before a bevy of instruments and dials, and levers looked smart unlike Rick Perry who can be confirmed once flying in the Air Force. The man was a genius. He could handle it. He never did fade from the responsibility. The levers you pull up and down make you look competent especially in multi-engine aircraft. Women can give up the Amelia Earhart vibe. Unsurprisingly we now have FADEC: Full Authority Digital Electronic Control. The dynamic and static external receptors are integrated to give the computers, of course, the optimal harmonious performance détentes with engine power settings, fuel management, propeller pitch angles, etc. FADEC, is kind of like an automatic transmission in the car doing everything you used to do manually via stick and most likely better than you since everything is so coldly calculated in real time. Just basically move the power levers forward for more thrust. It's a fine line between admiring and scoffing since it monopolizes performance settings and indiscreetly hints that a potato chip gobbling video gamer who should be doing their homework instead, might as well sit shotgun and let you nod off asleep at the wheel.

The detriment to all this integration unfortunately showed itself with the crash soon after takeoff in Spain of an Airbus heavy lift military behemoth that had possibly software erased or corrupted in hard drives to control the engines and propellers. I am not entirely sure of what exactly but it was not from general pilot negligence upon preliminary investigation. This is a brave new world of code and chips where its wonderful when working in harmony and catastrophic when not. Times have changed and changing with the times is not so easy as advertised.

I wonder what Hughes would conclude about our current world. He was beyond being just from the old school but instrumental in advancing it. I reasoned he would be amazed with what has been achieved with avionics in particular since his spiritual departure in the '70s. He was both a hands on visionary and then an escape artist not seen for months, then years finally, at the end. He made an indelible footprint, not as a man gone mad as some would surely cynically snicker to disparage his memory, but as a man who challenged life in contrast to the many

millions just content skipping into casinos for buffet pleasures and are irretrievably lost in the sands of time. Robert Schumann lives by virtue of the power and grace of his symphonic compositions; Hughes too deserves to be afforded the comfort of compassion for his disparate contributions before his decline and fall.

> …A few years earlier he had discussed building an airplane with them, in negotiations Hughes insisted be conducted by flashlight in the middle of the night at the Palm Springs municipal dump. The plans went nowhere.
>
> He was odd and getting odder. He liked to fly airplanes in his bare feet; he got a better feel for them that way, he explained.
>
> - Sam Howe Herhovek,
> Jet Age

In June 2015, an elderly man in Tokyo immolated himself on a train. Since he didn't have a gun, things we love as much as the flag, apple pie and the woman's soccer team in America, he decided that he was going to do the next best thing and get on a bullet going to nowhere. Broke and lonely in a very expensive city with a genuinely brisk attitude, I suppose this was the next best option in a society without hardly any private gun ownership, by giving up the ghost in public. His neighbors said they could hear the television on all the time in his humble apartment to keep him company. If you have ever been to Tokyo, one of the best things to do is to keep the television off. The quality of programming is so mundane and campy that it makes a mockery of such an intelligent and productive people. Consider versions of Harpo Marx without any talent making ridiculous faces over nothing and a lot of commotion over the perfect poached egg with a single strand of seaweed lovingly laid on top. To be fair, I don't speak Japanese but I certainly came away with a general feeling that a lot can be improved upon. It's a cultural thing, no doubt, and my understanding hit the wall early. Perhaps the television eventually took its toll on his soul and he was determined to show that although he was at the end of the

line, he was going to make a staged departure to the Hereafter with a fusion of Buddhist leanings on a contemporary public vehicle in protest to his dire plight.

Police in Japan have dealt with more elderly crime than juvenile crime in the past six months, it's reported.

It's the first time that people over the age of 65 have surpassed teenagers in crime statistics since 1989, when Japan's National Police Agency started publishing age-related crime data, the Kyodo News Agency reports. Officers took action against more than 23,000 elderly people in the first half of the year, compared to fewer than 20,000 youngsters aged between 14 and 19, officials figures show.

Japan has seen a fall in overall crime rates over the past 10 years, but not among its growing elderly population. The new figures show that violent crime committed by the over-65s rose by more than 10% compared to the same period last year. Of the country's 127 million people, more than a quarter are now of retirement age, but the government has warned that the figure is likely to grow significantly in the coming decades.

South Korea, which has a similarly long-lived population, has also been dealing with a sharp rise in elderly crime rates. Experts in the country suggest a combination of isolation and poverty are to blame, and there have been calls for the government to do more to support people later in life.

The incident reminded me of a mention in lakeside Oakland that I nearly forgot. A man on a weekend night drove to a park going up into the foothills with a wide view of the bay. Alone in the parking lot in early evening, he handcuffed himself to the steering wheel and let himself ablaze without giving himself the slightest hope for escape or change of heart. His moment of truth came and he was guaranteeing his intention would not fail. I shook my head at the time and wondered what became of his personal circumstances to do so. What can drive a man to lose all hope in his future and not die a natural death but to bring death upon himself so violently?

Perhaps he was a veteran from the Army of South Vietnam who found not the American dream but the common American nightmare. Many Vietnamese and other immigrants can attest that the dream does exist and they are exalted for their work ethic and thrift, just like a casino running up the flagpole its small town winners so you can try your big dream hopes to reach yours too; however, for the vast majority the Oscar Schindler's gift basket of bribed bounty is merely a fantasy of a hollow rotating flaky crusted pie in the sky with Trump in gold in the center suppressing your progress. California has always been vaunted as a land of opportunity but for many, and in his circumstances in the flatlands of Oakland, the stereotype of golden opportunity eludes many, so close yet so far from the wealth and techno-dynamism of Silicon Valley.

When I moved to Oakland, some clients would ask why did I move away from the action. The truth was for me as a supplier to chip test operations, the action was at the port to oversee imported consolidations that not only went to SV but throughout the entire US. I was less than an hour away from all the roads and buildings I knew from all my formative years. Taking a cue later, I noticed that the same port was perfectly located to take advantage of all the neighboring wine producing regions and I was already successful handling ocean containers from Asia. I was good, I reasoned, but this was a challenge that I could expand upon with greater trade, not by imports, but by reaching out to the world at large with quality exports- same port, dynamic wines. Undeniably California produces some of the very best wines in the world and in a world of growing demands for the best, we could supply. Some said I was crazy until the first 40' container was shipped to a little unknown country some may have heard of called China.

The track I took to wine is a bit unorthodox because I went to vineyards a lot but nobody noticed me. Then, again, I guess they didn't see me above them and we didn't have much of a chance for initiating a cordial dialog. My first successful landings were done not in populated areas but out over table grape vineyards and

strawberry fields so if anything went wrong the propeller would crush grapes and make smoothies so hopefully nobody would be hurt but just get generously red.

I learned to fly and was certified at eighteen thanks to the support of my parents and their generous checkbook. The experience I can say, looking back, has served me well in quarters of my life. There is an osmosis into other areas which skills of flying at some level give an advantage: value in preparation, planning, rates, distances, drags, leaning and others. I know why some pilots can be so extraordinarily cheap as they adopt too much of a good thing and always want to lean away from bills to their own detriment: leaning is less fuel consumed at higher altitudes for best performance. Less air density at higher altitudes requires less fuel giving real savings. Some pilots take their leaning inclinations too far with boots on the ground under the table. Lean on fuel but don't lean on the tip after a meal; everybody is trying to make it, Capitan.

Just to keep some skills sharp and playing with my iPhone app which is so easy it should be cheating compared to the old clunky circular flight computers, which were marvels in their own right and still work on demand without batteries or power sources when in a jam, the focus on components for flight planning came into view with a clarity I didn't see in younger years: TAS, TC, TA. The T's all equate to True: True Air Speed, True Course and True Altitude. In a world of lies, arguments, perspectives, sales pitches, political ideologies, finding True is precious. Each of us, if we have the courage, will seek the truth. We all want the truth to guide us. If you have no interest in tasting mountain summit dust at night, the truth will serve you well so you must factor in the lie of the Magnetic Variation which is unfailingly at work in good and less-than-good times. When you correct for the Lie, you can then carry on to your destination safely with Course Heading. The big lies are the magnetic polar bands that deflect the power of the Sun's energy and preserve the integrity of Earth's atmosphere. It serves a good purpose that saves the planet but inside the atmosphere we need to correct for it. If we do not, we will fly astray.

In navigating, you need to first know the truth, not the abstract truth, but the real truth, current conditions (winds aloft) and being aware of external Magnetic Variations and internal Compass Deviations, all a composite for an equation to find the Yin-Yang sweet spot to make sense out of the present predicament:

TC +/-WCA = TH +/- MV = MH +/- CD = CH

True Course +/- Wind Correction Angle = True Heading
+/- Magnetic Variation = Magnetic Heading +/- Compass Deviation
= Course Heading

True Airspeed was the initial calculation which first got my gears spinning. We move along in cars on the road, just as jolly as we roll along to our destinations, believing exactly what we are told by our ever faithful speedometers. We can take our speed at face value as being accurate. We can drive and be as naïve as babes in woods not doubting our speed as we go up or down. In flying, not so. We have no trees or other cars next to us, we have basically only ourselves, our unreliable selves to see us forward. If you are a black aviatrix you have the luxury of changing lanes over Texas towns without signaling and not being pulled over by the police then swiftly going to die mysteriously in the clink. Think of the Airspeed Indicator alone as your speedometer. We know that the old school Airspeed Indicators would be telling us as best as they could what the speed of the aircraft was but it was patently unreliable at higher altitudes because it had no temperature and no actual altitude in the mix. It was disconnected to other vital input sources and told us the speed it knew only. Much like us humans, it is both smart and less so.

Next time at the gate before a flight, notice the long steel tubes always sticking out near the nose of the jet much like gun barrels. These are not called Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc nor even Pinot Meunier tubes, if you have Premier Cru Champagne inclinations, and want to sound haughty at the next dinner party with pretentious friends or smiling politicians asking for your financial support via way of donations. They probably are not made in Nantes nor Saint-Nazaire. These are not used for

barrel tastings and most winemakers should not have them readily at hand. I am sorry to break your bubble if you thought so. You are close but put your glass down momentarily: these are *pitot* tubes. They are, however, another incredibly gifted French inspired contribution in aviation that can warm the hearts and souls of all Francophile wine lovers especially on their next flight generously served with regal Vins de Pays from the Languedoc in cozy elbow rows 30 – 43. Beyond any doubt , the world is indebted to France in modern times for standardizations of measurement, most notably the metric system. In hindsight, it makes sense that the pitot tubes were developed in France because of the inclined impulse to accurately measure the environments.

Take comfort that for all the many millions of dollars and countless engineering hours invested in the jet, those tubes as simple as they seemingly are, make the entire endeavor happen which is why they are at the pole position of the aircraft. They are not ornamental thing-a-dings to give a distinctive flair to the aircraft's front to convey high speed or reckon a sophisticated sense of style first envisioned by Christian Dior. The pitot tubes are conspicuously sampling the air first sans serviettes and pâté. They are never at the back, way down the fuselage, near the empennage, to sample a dosage of hot exhaust as a risqué homage to ingenuity. The pitot tubes are connected to the Airspeed Indicators and measure the ram impact of fresh air. Jets have a few so they are not relying on only one to feed the indicators like on small aircraft. The risk of faulty air input has now been mitigated so you can jet along and have the leisure and splendor to wonder why this year the crazy guy from Berkeley is in a nut rage yelling in the aisle about no cashews or something outlandish. The flight will successfully land not at its intended airport and will leave everyone invariably irritated and stranded yet, most importantly, alive.

The pitot tube position is also important. It must be placed at a point where the actual relative wind is measured, free from any interfering aerodynamic effects. A particularly

bad place would be just above the wing where the air velocity is greater than the free stream velocity.

The Airspeed Indicator is nothing more than a specialized air pressure gage. **The airspeed system comprises the pitot and static tubes and the Airspeed Indicator instrument**. An airplane moving through the air creates its own relative wind. This relative wind exerts a ram pressure in the pitot tube where its effects are passed on into a diaphragm linked to an indicating hand…The static tube acts as a neutralizer of the static pressure around the airplane and within the instrument, so that only the dynamic pressure (ram) is measured.

- William Kershner
The Advanced Pilot's Flight Manual

The Airspeed Indicator requires input from both the pitot (pressure) and static (unchanging sources). Air from the static port fills the instrument case, while air from the pitot tube is led to a diaphragm. **As airspeed changes, the pressure exerted on the diaphragm also changes and the movement of the diaphragm in response to these changes is transmitted to the indicator needle.** The designer tries to locate the pitot tube so that it registers pressure in free air and is not affected by local airflow around the supporting structure. **The Airspeed Indicator is the only instrument which uses air pressure from the pitot tube.**

…The Airspeed Indicator is calibrated to read the difference between impact air and still air- both inputs are required. **If either the pitot tube or the static port is blocked, the system will be useless, much like trying to get electricity from only one side of an electrical outlet.**

Blockage of the static system would disable the Airspeed Indicator, the Altimeter, and the Vertical Speed Indicator.

The airplane will have to move much faster through the less dense air at altitude in order to develop a pressure of 34 psf in the pitot tube, so the true airspeed will be faster…when the airspeed indicator (shows the same speed).

…You will use True Airpseed in flight planning, but most airspeeds that you will use in actual flight are indicated airspeeds.

- Bob Gardner
  The Complete Private Pilot

...The Mach-trim compensator mode is established when the MACH TRIM COMP switch is in the normal position and power is applied to the system. Pitot and static pressures, supplied by the air-data computer, control the Mach trim actuator output in relation to Mach number to compensate for the nosedown pitch moments generated during operation at high Mach numbers.

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

The tortuous search for Air France crash clues
5 June 2009, BBC

….Nevertheless, the messages have told the investigators that speed sensors on the aircraft were out of kilter with each other.

The Airbus information circular says "there was an inconsistency between the different measured airspeeds", and goes on to advise operators of the company's various aircraft what to do in a similar situation **- including using other technologies, such as GPS, to monitor the plane's speed.**

Messages leaked

The ACARS messages themselves have not been released but an unverified list has been leaked. The BBC cannot vouch for its accuracy.

Among the list is one line: "Nav ADR disagree".

This suggests a possible problem with the plane's Air Data Reference (ADR) systems, which use air pressure sensors to measure the plane's speed. If one ADR disagrees with the others, this fault message can be generated.

In previous crashes the sensors, or pitots, have got iced up in severe weather, despite being electrically heated. Yet at high altitude, the plane's safe speed margins are narrower. Push the limits, and pilots can end up flying in what they call "coffin corner". Other messages seem to show a string of systems either failing or giving warnings of failure.

Over the course of a few minutes, the autopilot switched off. The plane seems to have begun flying in what is called an "alternate flight law".

Fly-by-wire aircraft like the Airbus A330 actively "protect" pilots and passengers by preventing large or unstable manoeuvres, such as turning too hard. It is possible, in an alternate flight law, for some of that protection to be lost. **It may be the plane was no longer being prevented from suffering damage from turbulence, high speed or rapid changes of pitch.**

Air France replaces speed sensors

7 June 2009 , BBC

Air France has said it is accelerating replacement of speed monitors on Airbus planes following the disappearance of a jet over the Atlantic six days ago.

….It said it had noticed problems arising from icing on the monitors last year and had begun changing them in April. There has been speculation that faulty data on the old-type sensors may have caused the crash of the Rio de Janeiro-Paris flight with 228 people on board.

Brazil says two bodies from the missing plane have been recovered.

Investigators' warning

Investigators say that sensors on board the missing Airbus 330 were providing "inconsistent data" in the minutes before it went missing.

On Saturday, Air France said that in May 2008 it had begun noticing "incidents of loss of airspeed information during cruise flight" on its A330s and A340s jets - although only a "small number" of incidents had been reported. The airline said it then contacted Airbus, who sent a recommendation to replace the monitors. However, Air France stressed that the manufacturers had not made this a safety requirement.

The statement said that "without prejudging a link with the causes of the accident, Air France has accelerated this [replacement] programme".

It added that this did not necessarily mean the aircraft was not safe to fly.
French investigators also warned against drawing early conclusions.

Piecing together fate of Air France jet

2 July 2009, BBC

The report by French crash investigators into the crash of an Air France plane in the Atlantic last month runs to 126 pages. It is remarkably detailed considering how few facts have so far been established.

Instead the parts appear to have been compressed in one particular direction. Some have marks suggesting an impact on the bottom of the plane first.

The hypothesis is that the aircraft was intact when it hit the ocean, belly first, a fast vertical acceleration. The other major line of inquiry is the analysis of 24 messages sent out over the ACARS network. This is an automated satellite and radio system used for the transmission of operational information and fault reports**. Some of the messages suggest systems going off line, including the automatic throttle, the autopilot and the sensor that detects rapid changes of wind.**

Cabin pressure

There was a warning the cabin pressure was changing, and that the plane was operating with reduced fly-by-wire capabilities. **Most worrying are the messages indicating the plane's systems had unreliable readings of its speed - in one case detecting a decrease of around 25mph over the period of one second. This may be due to *problems with the plane's three pitot sensors*, mounted on the nose, which collect information about air speed. If they had failed they may in turn have tripped a number of the plane's computers.** But the problem with this information is discovering whether it represents the symptoms of technical failures, or the cause of them.

Experts say only the data and voice recorders - the black boxes - will really explain the crash, and finding them now seems unlikely.

Airplanes are operating on premises of speed to achieve optimal performance to adjust to current demands. There is a speed to rotate for take-off, a speed to land, a speed to put your landing gear down, speed ranges to put your flaps down, speeds to cruise at for given fuel consumption, best glide for power-off scenarios; the more complex the aircraft the more speed details need to be adhered. Different profiles are manipulated for different circumstances. For jets, at high speed, ailerons for turning are done inboard synchronized with an opposing wings spoiler; if done with an outboard aileron toward the wingtips they would unsafely twist the wings. Boo.

What caused Virgin Galactic spaceship crash?

28 July 2015, BBC

Investigators have concluded a Virgin Galactic spaceship crash was caused by structural failure after the co-pilot unlocked a braking system early.

Lorenda Ward, from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), said that resulting aerodynamic forces caused the brakes to actually be deployed, tearing apart the craft.

The accident killed co-pilot Michael Alsbury and badly injured the pilot during a test flight over the Mojave Desert 10 months ago.

If all this sounds grim, it is; however, it is also reserved for the inattentive or **ignorant pilot who is not aware of our knowingly exceeds aircraft limitations and warnings.** The overconfident, "I can fly anything through anything without no fancy training," attitude as always been diametrically opposed to long life as a pilot. The end just comes sooner for these folks in jets.

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

The preceding paragraph gives insight to the crash in the movie *Flight* starring Denzel Washington. The viewing public was probably the majority that missed the initial reason for the crash. I have randomly asked people and nobody has identified the pilot as the catalyst for the accident. It was provoked by the captain with the improper speed of the aircraft for the circumstances which proved ultimately reckless which put the jet and passengers into harm's way. The jet's integrity was put at risk; if flown less aggressively, the accident would not have likely happened. The issue was that it was far less about the aircraft and far more about the captain-the pilot in command. If after reading this and seeing the movie, this nuance will be easier to understand for those now initiated.

When you are making the approach for landing at slower speeds, now notice the outside ailerons near the tips active for best turning control. Notice the landing gear doesn't drop in the middle of the flight but only during landings because they drastically impede performance and give a lot of unnecessary drag. If so, it would be like a ship dragging anchor at full steam in the middle of the Pacific and then wondering why its not making the voyage to Asia on schedule. The landing gear is not designed for higher speed pressures that would put the aircraft's integrity in peril if deployed at cruise speeds. Loading up on Drag isn't bad if done at the right time, like wheels down before landing. After landing, the wing spoilers now are fully deployed 90 deg. perpendicular to create an air wall, unfriendly for airflow with full flaps, for maximum drag along with braking on the runway.

The recent digitized instrument layouts in small aircraft can now give unprecedented information instantly on so many requirements such as jets but one of the automatically calculated keys is True Airspeed: calibrated airspeed corrected for temperature and altitude. Now you know in the air, without any wind inputs, what speed you are really travelling at in the current air mass. You also know your face value Airspeed Indicator has the very best intentions but has been limited and

faithful to a lie, not malicious, but a white lie. It only knows the facts about air pressure it is given from pressure provided by the pitot tubes. We need to extract all the color out of the lie and try to reach the truth. As an analogy, think of a cold winter day then having the ability to now factor in the wind chill to know what it really feels like outside. The truth is best transparent and we don't want the truth to hide from us or play games. We can now compare instantly our Indicated (Calibrated with Instrument Deviations if you're sharp) Airspeed with automatically calculated True Airspeed to get the difference. In the old school we would do this on our own. For example, maybe at take-off close to sea level if you were in a cruise-climb you are doing 200 knots (nautical miles per hour) which is accurate; however, at 10,000 ft. high in an aircraft we are really doing 229 knots in standard atmospheric conditions (for simplicity's sake) but the Airspeed Indicator is smiling along telling us it is still only 200 knots (13% error). It does not know we are actually going faster. The higher the altitude, the less air, therefore, less air molecules cueing inside the pitot tubes exerting dynamic pressure on the Airspeed Indicator which measures both static and dynamic to reach conclusions prematurely.

This is critical so let's take a look at needs of navigation. The True North Pole has a line of longitude named the Prime Meridian that runs into Greenwich UK which is why we have Greenwich Mean Time (GMT); to be politically correct, we now call it Universal Time Coordinated (UTC). The British had the best charts and based the Prime Meridian as the line, of course, back to the United Kingdom at the Royal Observatory. The British understood they could calculate their positions accurately on their ships from their present locations on the globe back to the British Isles, which makes sense. This is therefore a fixed line – the prime line – from the True North Pole, not be confused with the flux of the Magnetic North Pole. The trick is the Prime Meridian is really convenient to calculate time for celestial navigation with a sextant; however, the juice for navigating defaults to the mysterious Magnetic North Pole where the compasses align North. Any other country could have created a Prime Meridian, such as Ghana and if the standard was adopted by the rest of the

world, then the Prime Meridian would have gone through that former British colony which would have also have gone directly through the UK just as now, but called perhaps Accra Mean Time, for example. The other major shipping powers as the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Turks, Venetians and French were all capable of creating a prime meridian but the British gained leverage on the high seas which is why the Prime is confirmed at Greenwich, hence adopted worldwide. The Prime Meridian is what we all can readily recognize and sleep at night on whatever line of longitude East or West we live on.

The low altitude propeller maps, called sectional charts (vfrmap.com), show us the True Course and will allow us to calculate the True Headings after wind corrections for a perfect world but then it all must come to terms and deal with the ugly lies, the Magnetic Variations, that are real and surrounds us so, as we know, we may steer to our intended destinations. This planet of ours was made really for our own benefit in a week, as some truly believe, is perfectly imperfect and this is our proof.

We need to know the truths and know the complexities of the lies at varying latitudes and longitudes in order to negotiate where we are from to our present objective. Reviewing the charts also illuminates just how integrated and important general aviation is to the overall American economy with the plethora of small and satellite airfields supporting communities in both urban and rural areas. Much like trucks on the road for a reason, ships docked at ports, so are airplanes landing at destinations for a purpose.

For more than ten years Serturner and his discovery were ignored. He had no professional standing and his literary style was clumsy. Single mindedly he contined to experiment on himself. He discovered most of the important effects of morphine, from early euphoria to late depression, from the dulling of pain to constipation. It was a remarkable achievement: in similar cases it would have been the combined effort of a dozen independent investigators. He almost certainly became an addict and was aware of the risks. It was these risks which impelled him to continue to press his discovery on the

scientific community. In1812 he wrote: 'I consider it my duty to attract attention to the terrible effects of this new substance I called morphium in order that calamity maybe averted…One evidence dating back to Descartes that all biologically active organic compounds were believed to be acidic, their acidity being a key to their potency. Serturner sent to Professor von Buon in Cologne. The professor commended Serturner for his industry but expressed the view that the pharmacist's results had to be mistaken. Such mistakes were unavoidable in one lacking a systematic grounding in the principles of chemistry.

Five years later the warning attracted the attention of Joseph-Louis Gay-Lassac, professor of chemistry at the Ecole polytechnique in Paris. Gay-Lussac was already famous**. In 1802, at the age of 24, he had ascended in a balloon to record height of 6.4 km to study the Earth's magnetic field and the composition of atmospheric gasses**. More recently, in collaboration with Baron Alexander von Humboldt, he had established the structure of water. Like most good scientists he was not without a streak of paranoia and even accused his colleagues of keeping Serturner's discovery deliberately hidden because of the young pharmacist's German nationality and lack of academic standing. He was probably wrong: but without him Serturner might have remained unrecognized. Even with Gay-Lussac's championship another ten years elapsed before the *Institut* awarded the no-longer-so-young German a prize of 2,000 francs for 'having opened the way to important medical discoveries by his isolation of morphine and exposition of its alkaline nature.

Serturner's work was revolutionary, extending beyond morphine, it triggered another burst of activity in organic chemistry. In 1832 Thiboumery ad Pelletier isolated and named another opium derivative, thebaine after the ancient Egyptian home of high quality poppy; and a few months later Robiquet identified the second most useful alkaloid in opium, codeine. 'The spirit of Lavouisier is alive again in France,' Jean Marchais exulted…Two French chemists, Caventou and Pelletier, developed a comparatively cheap and simple process for isolating morphine of nearly 90% purity; and Francois Magendie, leader of a cohort of bright young doctors who deplored the traditional hit-and-miss

approach to treatment and claimed to be a new breed of *medicin-savants*, described the first case where the substance was used for deliberate palliation.

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

Gay-Lussac's law can refer to several discoveries made by French chemist Joseph Louis Gay-Lussac (1778–1850) and other scientists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries pertaining to thermal expansion of gases and the relationship between temperature, volume, and pressure.

Gay-Lussac is most often recognized for his law of volumes that established the volume of an enclosed gas is directly proportional to its temperature, which he was the first to formulate (c. 1808).[3] He is also sometimes credited, rightfully according to many modern scholars, with being the first to publish convincing evidence that, in Gay-Lussac's words, "All gases have the same mean thermal expansivity at constant pressure over the same range of temperature", or when heated, a wide variety of gases respond in the same predictable way.

- Wikipedia

The truths and the lies are dependent on each other as much as sea and sky, both instrumental to the composition of our atmosphere. These elements are often what we down on the ground are in stress about dealing in our own arenas by constantly balancing, or measuring, what is real from what is not real. What is striking, if not unnerving, is that what we believe is real is really somewhat deceptive, a facsimile of what is truly real. How good are we to never question the truth, if we do not account for errors of the isogonic lines that penetrate our minds from societal/cultural norms, like Magnetic Variations and take account for personal Deviations, consistently at work to guide us off course? Our programmed biases, aversions and

personal predispositions are the errors- Variations & Deviations we each shoulder- that so often lead us astray if we do not harness the courage to acknowledge them and then sagely correct for both our external plus internal errors which never rest. To navigate an aircraft or ship, you categorically must do this to stay out the news cycle and avoid another "stay tuned, details at 5" by the reporter.

Zero is powerful because it is infinity's twin. They are equal and opposite, yin and yang. They are equally paradoxical and troubling. The biggest questions in science and religion are about nothingness and eternity, the void and the infinite. The clashes over zero were the battles that shook the foundations of philosophy, of science, of mathematics, and religion. Underneath every revolution lay a zero- and an infinity….And it is a history of the paradoxes posed by an innocent looking number, rattling even this century's brightest minds and threatening to unravel the whole framework of scientific thought.

But the fear of zero went deeper than unease about the void. To the ancients, zero's mathematical properties were inexplicable, as shrouded in mystery as the birth of the universe. This is because zero is different from other numbers. Unlike the digits in the Babylonian system, zero was never allowed to stand alone – for good reason. **A lone zero always misbehaves.** At the very least it does not behave the way other numbers do.

…Emptiness and disorder were the primeval, natural state of the cosmos, and there was always a nagging fear that at the end of time, disorder and void would reign once more. Zero represented that void.

- Charles Seife
Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea

In the study of the Earth's magnetic field, the term **isogon** or **isogonic line** refers to a line of constant magnetic declination, the variation of magnetic north from geographic north. An **agonic line** is drawn through **points of zero magnetic declination**. An **isoporic line** refers to a line of constant annual variation of magnetic declination.

- Wikipedia

A quantity is something or nothing; if it is something, it has not yet vanished; if it is nothing, it has literally vanished. The supposition that there is an intermediate state between these two is a chimera.

-Jean Le Rond d' Alembert

Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea

For flight planning purposes you must recognize that although the lines of latitude and longitude on charts are neatly perpendicular and relate to the True North Pole there is nothing in your airplane that relates to True North. The magnetic compass indicates the direction to the Magnetic North Pole, which is in northern Canada….You must take the variation between true north and magnetic north in account when flight planning….isogonic lines, or **lines of equal magnetic variation, across the continent.**

-Bob Gardner
The Complete Private Pilot

The North Magnetic Pole is located close to 71 Deg. N Latitude, 96 Deg. W Longitude and is about 1,300 sm (2,100 km) from the geographic or True North Pole…The amount of Variation, which change slightly from time to time, are shown on most aeronautical charts as broken magenta lines, called isogonic lines, which connect points of equal magnetic Variation…

To determine Compass Heading, a correction for Deviation must be made…This deflection is Deviation. The Deviation is different for each aircraft and it may also vary for different headings in the same aircraft…Some adjustment of the Compass, referred to as compensation, can be made to reduce this error, but the remaining correction must be applied to the pilot.

- FAA Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

We do not have quantitative tables from engineers or detailed maps from cartographers with calculated isogonic Variations we can refer to in our minds for the best headings and decisions going forward. Our minds are fickle and subjective, prone to moods, prejudices, temperaments and circumstances. Our values on certain subjects change slowly as we mature, as do our priorities. The Lie and the Truth are separate and distinct but far too often we rush to believe the lies in total: the Indicated Happy-Go-Lucky-Face-Value Airspeed uncorrected, not True; we make decisions with True Headings without the necessary corrections for Magnetic Variations and internal Deviations for best Course Headings.

GPS and Loran-C* receivers give us the reassurance of automatic calculations to extract as much as possible with hardly worry where we are from and, more importantly, where we are headed taking into account many factors combined. The promises of technology are munificent in these marvels. If only we as a species could calculate with precision in our own life-paths with the best and most accurate methods, we would all make better decisions for ourselves and be further at peace, with our surroundings and certainly more with our fellow man and woman in our own time and space. We wish.

*Note:

LOng RANge; first used for maritime navigation well before orbiting satellites, complete with master and slave stations emitting earth-hugging parabolic low frequencies primarily for complete coastal coverage that also penetrate well inland. Instructors would get that uncomfortable look saying master-slave when explaining to me yet at ease with others as it was purely technological without historical baggage lifted.

I looked down and say a freckled ginger-colored Negro, squat and muscular, with thick lips and a sparse reddish head. Thirty-five or perhaps forty, he had the blood in him somewhere of an Irish overseer or the scion of a James River manor or a traveling Pennsylvania tinker; from the way he sat with a certain shabby yet subtle prestige- maybe it was the manner in which the two boys chained on either side had cozied up against him, or the impudence of the jew's-harp clutched in on thick clumsy had- I could tell that deference was paid to him and due him: the was a Raymond on every plantation. It was surely owing to his white blood that Raymond achieved his eminence but also to some native bankerish wit and sagacity which, however forlornly crippled, made him store up a meager authority and was ever a beacon for all the others. What caused as eclipse of the moon? Raymond knew. *Hit caused by a gret mystery cloud flyin' up out'n de swamp*. Was there a way to cure rheumatism? Ast old Ray. *Make you a portice of turkentine wid red earthworms and de juice of a red onion, dat's de onliest way*. Having a little trouble with your old woman at night? *Git de cotton dat she's throwed away when she got her monthlies and wear sewed up inside yo' pant, dat'll start a woman humpin'*. When would niggers be free? *In 1842, I seed it in a dream, niggers led by a wooden-legged white man from up in Paris, France.* And so the talk round among the niggers: Ast ole Ray. Raymond he know near 'bout ev'ything in de whole wide world. Won't it be bad time down in Georgia? *Naw, dat's rich peopleses' country, dat's why us is goin' dar. Niggers down in Georgia east fried eggs three times a day….*

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

Earth magnetic shield is older than previously thought

31 July 2015, BBC

The Earth's magnetic field, which shields the atmosphere from harmful radiation, is at least four billion years old, according to scientists.

This is 550 million years older than it was previously believed to be.
Scientists at Rochester University in New York analysed crystals found in Western Australia. Data on our planet's magnetic field was found to be preserved in ancient crystals embedded in rock formations in the region.

The findings have been published in the journal Science

As the Sun slowly loses mass, it emits particles which have the potential to erode the Earth's atmosphere. The magnetic field protects Earth from these solar winds. The research has overtaken the 2010 estimate of 3.45 billion years.

"Understanding how the magnetic field is generated is important because it's a fundamental property of the Earth. It sets it apart from other planets," Dr Jonathan Mound, from the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds, explained to BBC News. (July 31st)

The Earth's magnetic field is generated because of the motion of molten iron in its outer core, referred to as a geodynamo. To work, heat must be regularly released, which is aided by plate tectonics.

———

The **solar storm of 1859**, also known as the **Carrington event**, was a powerful geomagnetic solar storm in 1859 during solar cycle 10. A solar coronal mass ejection hit Earth's magnetosphere and induced one of the largest geomagnetic storms on record. The associated "white light flare" in the solar photosphere was observed and recorded by English astronomers Richard C. Carrington and Richard Hodgson.

Studies have shown that a solar storm of this magnitude occurring today would likely cause widespread problems for modern civilization. The solar storm of 2012 was of similar magnitude, but it passed Earth's orbit without striking the planet.

On September 1–2, 1859, one of the largest recorded geomagnetic storms (as recorded by ground-based magnetometers) occurred. Aurorae were seen around the world, those in the northern hemisphere as far south as the Caribbean; **those over the Rocky Mountains in the US were so bright that their glow awoke gold miners, who began preparing breakfast because they thought it was morning.** People in the northeastern US could read a newspaper by the aurora's light. The aurora was visible as far from the poles as Sub-Saharan Africa…

- Wikipedia

Understanding Mother Earth's magnetic field Variations are easy: East is Least and West is Best. In America, take in the Pacific Coast minus some teen number for Magnetic Heading; for the Atlantic Seaboard add some number to get Magnetic Heading. This is subtle but an important characteristic of Magnetic Variations not often mentioned because it happens apparently slowly and we like to go fast: degrees of Variations constantly change over time. A retired Air Force pilot pulled out his old charts from the late 1950's and 1960's through the '80's to demonstrate this movement in a navigation class I took thirty years ago. If not, I would have never really paid attention to this point of interest. I thought it was very compelling and now pleased to share this observation with my current and old charts.

The current 2015 Magnetic Variation sweeping directly over Yountville, south of St. Helena in Napa Valley is 14.5 deg. East (vfrmap.com; Napa). If you are tasting at Domaine Chandon you will not feel it and the bubbles from the sparkling wines will not be affected in some way sideways. Sadly, fourteen bubbles will not congregate on the eastern side of your flute with "Don Ho's Maui Waui Live at the Pineapple Playpen, Bonus Duet with Johnny Mathis Singing Tiny Bubbles," CD playing incessantly with guests wearing leis. Vladimir Ashkenazy's recording of Rachmaninoff's "Corelli Variations" will not ring with purer resonance either as it would be a bit thick for summer. In 1997, the same Magnetic Variation value was much further south on the Central Coast a bit north of Santa Barbara; in 1994 14.5 deg. East was just shy south of Santa Maria, slicing directly over Vandenburg Air Force Base a bit further down in Southern California.

1985:

A pilot in **Los Angeles** who measures a course line on an aeronautical chart in relation to the longitude line (or True North) must subtract **14 deg** from that course to get a Magnetic Course…

- Bob Gardner
  The Complete Private Pilot
  Aviation Supplies & Academics

2015:

The Magnetic Variation over Los Angeles is **12.5 deg, East**
(vfrmap.com, LAX)

Magnetic declination (Variation) has a very important influence on air navigation, since the most simple aircraft navigation instruments are designed to determine headings by locating magnetic north through the use of a compass or similar magnetic device.

Aviation sectionals (maps / charts) and databases used for air navigation are based on true north rather than magnetic north, and the constant and significant slight changes in the actual location of magnetic north and local irregularities in the planet's magnetic field require that charts and databases be updated at least twice each year to reflect the current magnetic variation correction from true north.

For example, as of March 2010, near San Francisco, magnetic north is about 14.3 degrees east of true north, with the difference decreasing by about 6 minutes of arc per year.

When plotting a course, most small aircraft pilots plot a trip using true north on a sectional (map), then convert the true north bearings to magnetic north for in-plane navigation using the magnetic compass. During flight, the pilot derives the correct compass course by a deviation correction card—usually located near the compass.

Magnetic declination varies both from place to place and with the passage of time. …The magnetic declination in a given area may (most likely will) change slowly over time, possibly as little as 2–2.5 degrees every hundred years or so, depending upon how far from the magnetic poles it is.

-Wikipedia

Variation varies (sorry) from year to year. You'll notice that in the southeastern United States the variation is moving "westerly" by 10 min per year (or at least that was the rate during 1980). The rate may vary from year to year…**The area on the Agonic Line has westward movement of variation at the rate of 10 min per year;** in other words, variation lines are moving westward at that rate….

Note that in **1960 the Agonic Line was Knoxville** but in **1982** that line had **moved geographically west to just east of Nashville**, from there meandering southward to near Sewanee. Looking at a point just east of Nashville where the 1982 Agonic Line and the 1960 3 deg. E isogonic line cross, you can see that variation at that geographic point

has changed 3 deg. (180 minutes) in 22 yr, an average of a little over 8 minutes per year. This was slightly below the actual change of 10 minutes given for 1980.

- William Kershner
  The Advanced Pilot's Flight Manual

(Kershner is a native of the state of Tennessee in Sewanee which drew his obvious interest to the Agonic Line)

The 7th Congressional District of Tennessee is a congressional district located in the middle and southwestern parts of the state, connecting suburbs of Nashville to suburbs of Memphis…. **Many of the state's most politically active churches are located in the suburban areas of the district, giving the 7th a strong** social conservative **bent typical of most affluent Southern suburban districts.** Republicans dominate every level of government in the suburban areas, which tend to elect some of Tennessee's most conservative state legislators…. The 7th is a very safe seat for the Republican Party. In fact, it has long been reckoned as the state's most Republican area outside the party's traditional heartland in East Tennessee.

Ethnicities:

84.6% White, 11.5% Black, 1.5% Asian, 2.2% Hispanic, 0.3% Native American, 0.1% other.

- Wikipedia

There was neither non-existence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred? Where?

- The Rig Veda

Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea
by Charles Seife

The distance of the exact same Magnetic Variation, the Lie, has moved 236 nautical miles (437km / 271 sm) over 21 years, a baby born then is now an adult. If we average the change it is 11 nm (20km/ 13sm) per year moving North. What is detected and measured for being stable by our Compass is actually unstable, lies moving on their on accord at their own pace. Compass is distinctly a here and now kind of guy, all about the present state of affairs. However, apparently the lies have life and are therefore, dynamic. As Galileo once said, "And yet it moves." They are not little white lies but capital offense State vs. Magnetic Variation kind of lies which is exactly why they are examined, tagged, dated, documented and warehoused by government bodies. These are not the mumbled kids lies with crumbs around their mouths around the kitchen's corner for "Who ate the last oatmeal and raisin cookie saved for your grandfather's tuna fish sandwich lunch tomorrow? You know that's his favorite and he'll ask for it," kind of lies. Bigger than that, like radiation, the lies are odorless and tasteless yet surround our every movement rudely without our written permission nor even a discussion to clear the air. These lies we have no control of even though we know we are being brazenly *lied* to. This is an affront that we have resigned ourselves to live with. The True North Pole has not moved, however, the Magnetic Variations from the Magnetic North Pole move absolutely.

Consider that if you planned a California flight with an old Variation factored and not the present Variation's value, without the comfort of electronic navigation but Hughes & Earhart old school, just how far off you would be from your intended airport. I'm not implying it happened as it was not the case, but imagine an old Variation incorrectly factored into the present to find a dot in the South Pacific without the aid of ground references, other than big rolling waves and great white shark dorsal fins waving back and inviting you down to visit with tea & cookies, when every straight line nautical mile you fly count critically as your engines will soon be gasping for fuel. You probably are a bit stressed, irritable and fatigued in

need of soap and hot water too. In all or nothing conditions, think how the value of a few degrees matter *in the present.*

If you make long flights over water or featureless terrain, deviation and compass course will be very important to you, and an accurate compass correction card may be a lifesaver.

- Bob Gardner
  The Complete Private Pilot
  Aviation Supplies & Academics

The pilots who risk their lives flying tiny planes over the Atlantic

12 October 2015, BBC

…."Whatever plane you're in you have to find a way of making it fly that distance, which many small planes ordinarily would not," says pilot Julian Storey, 43.

These are aircraft that might typically fly 200-400 miles at a time (320-645km). But the shortest stretch of water you cross on an Atlantic crossing is 700 miles. Because most small light aircraft are unpressurised, it's not advisable to fly above 10,000ft. This makes them more susceptible to extreme weather conditions as they have less leeway able to cruise above stormy clouds and ice caps. Airliners, by contrast, can fly at higher altitudes of about 36-40,000ft.

It's a slow aircraft that doesn't have the sort of high-tech equipment to deal with icing and the weather you might expect in larger or more up-to-date aircraft. "So you are very much using your judgement, skill, experience to pitch yourself against nature and hopefully survive," Storey says.

This is what I always worried about, especially when my father was flying over the sea. I knew he carried specialist survival equipment - a precaution all ferry pilots take to prepare for the possibility of ditching in the ocean.

"The main thing that is going to kill you in the ocean is hypothermia," says pilot Dave Henderson, 60, who has made almost 100 trans-Atlantic crossings in light aircraft.

"If you do end up in the water, the important thing is to get into your life raft but also I have a thick neoprene survival suit, which completely encloses the body and you've probably got a few hours survival in that."

He knows of other ferry pilots who have landed in the sea and survived, but admits it's not something he cares to dwell on.

Ferry flying is a lucrative but high-risk industry. Elite pilots deliver small planes across oceans and continents - distances these aircraft were not designed to fly. Flying alone across the Atlantic Ocean in a tiny, single-engine plane at low altitudes, sometimes in extreme weather conditions, is not for the faint-hearted. Things can and do go wrong….

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The compass has an instrument error due to electrical equipment and the ferrous (iron) metal parts of the plane. This error varies between headings and a correction card is placed near the compass, showing these errors for each 30 deg….If you lost all gyro instruments and had no other method of keeping the wings level during a descent to get out of the clouds, the magnetic compass could be used. Set up a heading of South on the mag compass. A deviation from this heading would mean that the wings were not level and the airplane was turning. You would make corrections as necessary to stay on the South heading. Why South? One reason is that the acceleration errors are smallest on North or South headings. Another is that the compass deviations on a South heading are in the proper direction and exaggerated. (On a heading of North, any bank will cause the compass to swing in the opposite direction. This could be confusing for wing leveling purposes). …The magnetic float compass has many quirks, but once you understand them, it can be a valuable aid. **One thing to remember- the mag compass "runs" on its own power and doesn't electricity or suction (vacuum) to operate.**

This feature may be more important to you some day when your other more expensive direction indicators have failed.

- William Kershner
  Instrument Flight Manual

If we cling to old lies, from another place and time holding them granite static, without adequately correcting for the present Lie in its place and time, would we not be sorely led astray? Knowing the context of the past and the prevailing moving tendency certainly gives us a sharper edge to recognize our position in the present and how we arrived to the present position. We need to be sensitive to the Lie in the context of its time for where it once was and observe how its values change over where it now lands. The same value will either sharpen or soften in time over the same topography or topic; however, on each position the values will remain in a gradual flux, never entirely ceasing to move thereby changing in context to its time and place.

The same Lie, the Variation if you prefer, over Napa Valley will one day slip over the northern California-Oregon border very quietly with no fanfare in decades ahead. It will be nearly inconceivable for future generations to know, let alone care, that the Lie traveled up from distant Mexico. Over the same land, the values change and the lies either soften their degrees or increase with added exaggerations, depending on where they are, from what they were originally at specific places and points in time. The present lies over the same known landmarks have changed, not vice versa. Landmarks are not moved to accommodate maintaining the integrity of lies at any ridiculous cost thereby insulting our collective intelligence. I wish Yountville had an obelisk marking True North, Magnetic North and listing the Magnetic Variation every five years (which nobody does) so this phenomenon would reveal itself to the general public and how it affects our present world…silently.

I was looking at a Stanford University football game in which they upset University of Southern California way down south in September. They had the obligatory commercial quip about their achievements- which are astronomical- if you compare their alma mater's unhindered success in the world. When I saw the red domed Hoover Tower I was struck with how constant that edifice remains and how drastically my life, my values, my circumstances have changed. I was looking at the same tower when I was probably four years old in the mid-sixties first with my parents; now in mid-age at over fifty there it still stands above the campus as though nothing has happened, a landmark frozen in time. The tower is static but my life is dynamic relentlessly changing as I continue to age. How could I as a grown man, dare carry the same values when I first gazed at the tower, as a young child? I would be out of my mind to even attempt to try to maintain the same kindergarten values from exactly the same geographic location looking at the tower with the same eyes half a century later.

We would not conceive of keeping the Golden Gate Bridge under the same Magnetic Variation over San Francisco Bay when it was completed in 1936 to keep its values always static and sacrosanct in its own time, mandating everything needs to remain the same surrounding it. If so, what could not be controlled and held even with the best of high intentions is the isogonic line location closest to the Golden Gate upon its completion. That Variation value which is registered on nautical charts has surely moved decades hence and dissipated North long ago.

We recognize the bridge is from another era but we need to navigate container ships under it with California wine in the present with current charts, not old. When it was built, there were no container ships, not even a concept most probably. Any captain using '36 charts and not current, 80 years ago, will soon find him or *herself* sailing gone sinking with a lot of tasty Zinfandel getting wasted which upsets us enormously.

Likewise, a lot of people sentimentally reminisce about the 'good ol' days' when in reality they probably were not that good in many respects. They cherry-pick what was good. Nurses looked like nurses prim and proper with little white hats pinned down and not running around with colored scrubs with pierced noses and hair dyed in three colors. Cheese and crackers meant simply cheddar and Ritz at parties- no need for Manchego and Taleggio on imported crackers. Jug wine was fine and nobody even cared what varietal. Needles skipped on records. They were just younger in better health or fruit was just fruit and not needed to be labeled organic. Perhaps it is just that they defer to known old values, old charts in the head that can no longer apply for Variations in the present. Consider what was an indomitable battleship in youth has become a harmless obsolete relic of only sentimental value for family friendly tours. If we hypothetically put the same battleship under the Golden Gate Bridge with 1944 charts only, no GPS or Loran, and told it to sail to Tokyo Bay by a Great- circle course* it would steam surely missing Japan into most likely Russia because it never changed values with the times. The course it would sail would be doomed from the beginning directly off the California coast. The great ship would be a fish out of water when it was at one time a reigning king of the oceans. **This demonstrates we have a capacity to change our values with manmade technology far better than we can change values about the value of mankind.**

*** Great-circle navigation** is the practice of navigating a vessel (a ship or aircraft) along a great circle. A great circle track is the shortest distance between two points on the surface of a sphere; the Earth isn't exactly spherical, but the formulas for a sphere are simpler and are often accurate enough for navigation. - Wikipedia

The point I am bringing to bear is that lies must change over time to accommodate agendas in the present. The maintaining of wrong past values are insidious to us steering our best course *presently*. Many past values we keep alive with vicious

stereotypes and patent nonsense counter to solid science and fact that is handed down and utilized without scrutiny, which we continue to place bankable currency on, are shrewdly polished and brightened up for present digestion. Some values are so ridiculous it boggles the mind of why they are even defended. What is esteemed as platinum is really Monopoly game currency. We are using old charts with old Variations in our heads about ourselves, ethnic groups, religions, races, regions and countries that are categorically pernicious, if not disastrous.

Consider if charts printed in current 2015 digital color and format that are using original '45 isogonic lines from 70 years ago. During the War, in its time, it would have been a dream; printed exactly the same this year, reliant on the original obsolete headings and references, a nautical nightmare! It would be analogous to giving current ship and aircraft officers candy-coated cyanide, running ships into rocks and aircraft into buildings deliberately to the detriment of crews, passengers and society in general. If you don't encourage this, why would you encourage defaulting to 70 year old values, 200 year old values, categorically no longer useful for positive and safe conduct? The new digitally produced charts fickle with old Variations is analogous to what citizens, communities, ethnic groups, corporations, institutions and governments do. The old values no longer serve us beyond a past reference. **The values are worthless for present digestion and GPS or Loran receivers simply would not *accurately* calculate positions with these past values if not updated; however, to our dismay those gazing at iPhones and Androids do.** GPS receiving equipment (navigators) receive signals based on True North coordinates, then calculate to current Variations where we are presently to guide us. Why? The Magnetic Variations are different all over the globe- plus always on the move - therefore would make a real hash of things to figure out what is our best choice of heading from each geographic location. The GPS satellites do not care about the Magnetic Variations as that is our problem as to where we are or where we are going. Therefore, the navigators need to change with the times and be aware of the current Magnetic Variations! Think of GPS signals much like GMT/ UTC with one coordinated time for the world and then the world adding or subtracting time

from Greenwich to set their clocks accordingly. So, it's evident that the best standard is firm and true; however, our local reality is mercurial, navigating unending streams of multiple lies.

A "single channel" GPS receiver makes calculations for one satellite at a time…but they exist only in avionics museums….most panel mounted units have twelve or more. **More channels means faster calculation and almost seamless position updating.**

- Bob Gardner,
  The Complete Private Pilot
  Aviation Supplies & Academics

If a given sample population had a consensus on a subject at a certain place and still believe and enforce the same consensus one hundred years later, how many degrees of Variation value have moved naturally since that idea, that perspective and construct was initially active, registered and mapped? *The change is now tangibly detected by date with measurements from past to present.* Since land masses are not basically changing anytime soon, therefore, should we conclude that values on land from past human times should stay the same? The Magnetic Variations which encompass the Earth are always in a flux around us, being dynamic, and the product of the Magnetic Field protecting our planet, protecting life as we know it. The Magnetic Field is as important as the other elements of sea and sky that we take for granted because we see them. So why would anyone rational and aware default to an old Variation, a Lie, from past times to steer the best course now? The allure of the past is much like a mirage losing its color as you really get closer. It all looks so much better, softer, gentler and noble from a long thirsty distance than only one common pitcher of water away yesterday.

Society needs to stop clinging to past myths, contextually warped perspectives and values as though they are not to be tampered- honored as sacrosanct - for present requirements. The perspectives of the past were in the context of their time even with their gross faults; but decidedly and finally, much like battleships are simply

too expensive to maintain, proved to be best retired. It is the normal and natural course of life for a daybreak to a sunset. The world is in a flux, always dynamic and yet we assuredly want to hold onto a static gone by past, which in essence is also dynamic moving on its on accord with new findings, by then allowing perceived distant values to weigh mightily on the present on sacrosanct subjects and thereby arriving at irrational, plainly wrong conclusions. We allow our minds with wrong values gleaned from previous generations to lead us in wayward directions. Being attired in the latest fashion of the day does not negate the cobwebs in the attics in our heads.

One of the dicta of information theory is that information resides in the unexpected. We gain knowledge when we encounter what we don't anticipate. A stream of data that we can predict with perfect accuracy contains no information; it can't tell us anything that we don't already know. The quest for knowledge is a quest for novelty, a search for a new set of data or a new idea that forces us to look at the world in slightly different way than we did before. Knowledge gathering is systemic demolition and reconstruction of our view of the world.

It can be an unsettling and uncomfortable process. It's never easy to destroy a cherished myth, to abandon a deeply held belief, or to inject shades of gray into a debate that once seemed black and white. **It's human nature to resist change, to cling to our old, familiar ideas instead of abandoning them in the face of new information.** We shrink from data that challenge our prejudices; we tend to seek out- and to believe- data that reinforce them.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the news media. A few decades ago, we had only a small handful of sources from which we could get our news. Over breakfast, we would read a newspaper and or two. On our drive to and from work, we could choose to listen to two or three radio stations. After dinner, we could watch the television news on three or four channels. In bed, we might relax and with a magazine. With the advent of cable television an then the Internet, the number of news outlets proliferated enormously.

The audience fragmented and then atomized. Gone were the days when Americans were forced to pick one or three nightly news broadcasts. **Now there are so many outlets that we suddenly have the ability to find the source of news that makes us the least not comfortable.**

More and more, people seem to be seeking out news outlets that reinforce their beliefs without challenging them. Conservatives can go their facts from Fox News; liberals can go to Huffington Post for theirs. **We no longer have to confront ideas that force us to reevaluate our positions. Instead, we can only listen to the ones we already agree with**. **We can wallow in our myths, undisturbed by the inconvenience of doubt.** Gaining knowledge need no longer be the uncomfortable by-product of listening to the news.

….In the United States, propaganda is a way of undermining democracy. It lets demagogues whip up a storm of irrational emotion, a thoughtless frenzy that leads people to vote against their interests and to support policies that they would otherwise reject. It is a subtle form of mind control, a mechanism for tricking people into agreeing with their leaders. **Just as proofiness undermines democracy in other way- diluting our votes, disenfranchising our citizens, prejudicing our justice system- through propaganda, it can rob our democratic right <u>to think for ourselves.</u>**

- Charles Seife
  Proofiness

Theology, a Western creation nurtured in Hellenistic Alexandria, was both a producer and a by-product of Christianity. Plato, and Artistotle after him, talked about God and the gods. But for Plato it was not a respectable subject, since he identified theology with myth, which could only mislead men from rational pursuits. So he expelled poets – those who made myths plausible and appealing – from his ideal Republic. Ironically the

weakness of this antiseptic rationalism would be revealed in the works of Plato himself, whose myths persuaded the generations who would not follow his reasons.

- Daniel Boorstin
The Creators

Three Western Myths about Japan
20 Aug. 2015, BBC

National and racial stereotypes are often hard to dispel, but in the case of Japan, argues Dr Chris Harding of Edinburgh University, **people in the West seem particularly determined to cling on to a set of long-established myths**.

Landing in Japan for the first time 10 years ago, I couldn't wait to get out of Narita airport's dull beige arrivals area and into the real Japan.

Pretty soon, I felt sure, I would be lost in the intense verdant greens of paddy fields and forests, the steaming waters of natural hot springs. A sip of green tea would set me up for an afternoon of meditation in some old Buddhist temple tucked in among fragrant cedars. And then as night fell, a bullet train would zoom me into central Tokyo for a joyously baffled embrace of its Blade Runner futurism and crazy entertainments….

….None of these fantasies survived a three-hour gridlocked bus ride into Tokyo, the motorway's faceless concrete sidings occasionally dipping to allow views out across faceless concrete high-rises.

All in all, this particular myth about Japan is simply worth too much to too many people - Western men mourning the passing of the patriarchy, Western feminists looking for sisters to save in Asia, corporate Japan chasing the under-deodorised male dollar (or Yen) - for it

to be revised any time soon. It's the perfect example of how diverse interests come together over time to create misrepresentations with a surprisingly long shelf life.

In order for the lies to breathe and stay viable with expansions and contractions of time, they must transform to hold their wobbling grasps to not allow themselves to be entirely dismissed. It's often pragmatic to be off-center and not just foul in left field. We need to be wary of liars modifying facts over time, over the same subjects to remain present, to stay relevant in the vision of the field. Liars will put a derivative of old poison in a new bottle with a fresh label for a new generation to consume. None of us would use old charts if we know better to navigate the complexities of life but too often we run right back to sticking to stereotypes and auto-assumptions at the same place, with conclusions drawn from less enlightened times drawn with big lies and reckless unaccounted deviations, then have the steadfast arrogance to believe we most certainly are on the sharpest course until we hit that monstrous cold iceberg of reality without warnings on current charts.

Japan War Atrocities 'Lies and Fabrication'
4 August 2015, BBC

Seventy years after the end of World War Two, the voices of revisionism in Japan are growing stronger and moving into the mainstream, particularly on the issue of comfort women, who were women forced to be sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during the war.

One of the most eloquent voices of revisionism is Toshio Tamogami.

Mr Tamogami is well-educated, knowledgeable and, when I meet him, exquisitely polite. The former chief of staff of Japan's air force believes in a version of Japanese history that is deeply at odds with much of the rest of the world.

But it is increasingly popular among young Japanese, tired of being told they must keep apologising to China and Korea.

Last year Mr Tamogami ran for governor of Tokyo. He came fourth, with 600,000 votes. Most strikingly, among young voters aged 20 to 30 he got nearly a quarter of the votes cast.

"As a defeated nation we only teach the history forced on us by the victors," he says. "To be an independent nation again we must move away from the history imposed on us. We should take back our true history that we can be proud of."

In this "true" history of the 20th Century that Mr Tamogami talks of, Japan was not the aggressor, but the liberator. Japanese soldiers fought valiantly to expel the hated white imperialists who had subjugated Asian peoples for 200 years.

It is a proud history, where Japan, alone in Asia, was capable of taking on and defeating the European oppressors. It is also a version of history that has no room for the Japanese committing atrocities against fellow Asians.

Mr Tamogami believes that Japan did not invade the Korean Peninsula, but rather "invested in Korea and also in Taiwan and Manchuria".

I ask him about the invasion of China in 1937 and the massacre of civilians in the capital Nanjing. Surely that was naked aggression?

"I can declare that there was no Nanjing Massacre," he says, claiming there were "no eyewitnesses" of Japanese soldiers slaughtering Chinese civilians.

It is when I ask him about the issue of Korean comfort women that Mr Tamogami's denials are most indignant.

He declares it "another fabrication", saying: "If this is true, how many soldiers had to be mobilised to forcibly drag those women away? And those Korean men were just watching their women taken away by force? Were Korean men all cowards?"

Although they may not say it as loudly and as bluntly as Mr Tamogami, this is a version of history that is widely believed by many Japan's nationalists.

Revisionists like Mr Tamogami say women like Lee Ok Seon have been coached to embellish their stories; that they are tools of a South Korean government that is intent on humiliating Japan and squeezing it for more money.

It is certainly true that the comfort women issue is used by the South Korean government for its own political ends. But there is plenty of other evidence that the Japanese military organised the comfort women system, not least from the men who served in the Japanese imperial army in China.

'Ridiculous to deny'

Masayoshi Matsumoto is now 93 and lives with his daughter on the edge of Tokyo. He has a warm open face and the piercing eyes of a much younger man.

As a 20-year-old he served as a medical orderly in northwest China. "There were six comfort women for our unit," he tells me. "Once a month I would check them for sexually transmitted diseases.

"The Korean women were mainly for the officers," he says. "So the ordinary soldiers attacked local villages screaming, 'Are there any good girls here?' Those soldiers robbed, raped, or killed those who did not listen to them."

Those who were captured were taken to Mr Matsumoto's unit to serve as comfort women.

After the war Mr Matsumoto became a priest to try and atone for his sins. For decades he said nothing of what he'd seen.

But then as the voices of denial grew stronger he was filled with righteous anger, and decided to speak out.
"It's ridiculous... Mr Abe speaks as if this is something he witnessed, but he didn't. I did," says Mr Matsumoto.

"Someone told me this, 'One who fails to look back and perceive the past will repeat their wrongdoing'. But Mr Abe thinks we should erase anything bad Japan had done in the past and pretend nothing happened. That is why I cannot forgive him," he adds.

The Myth of V1

V1 is the critical-engine failure speed, which is the speed at which, due to engine failure or other causes, the pilot may elect to stop or continue the take off. Vmcg is minimum control speed on the ground, which is the minimum speed on the ground at which control can be maintained using aerodynamic controls alone, when one engine suddenly become inoperative, and the remaining engine is operating at takeoff thrust.

High speed aborted takeoffs are one of the most dangerous maneuvers a jet pilot maight be called upon to perform. A look at accident statistics or the national media will serve to confirm this. Many accidents are the result of a decision to abort a takeoff at a speed at or approaching V1. Why should that be? A thoughtful look at takeoff performance will point out some areas where jet pilots are given a false sense of security….

The absolutely critical term here is the phrase “selected by the applicant.” As can be readily seen from this demonstration, the only relation V1 needs to have to actual aircraft performance is that it might not be less than Vmcg. Because runway length requirements for takeoff are all based upon V1- the higher V1, is the longer runway is required- you can bet the applicant (the manufacturer) has the test pilot out their in the flight-test airplane repeating this test over and over until the lowest number is obtained.

Second, remember that this important aircraft-number was obtained by a test pilot who does aborted takeoffs day after day. He or she is flying a brand new airplane with brand-

new brakes, and the engine failure- or other emergency- does not come as a surprise to him or her. That test pilot has rehearsed it more times than even the most thoroughly trained pilot could ever imagine! **The reaction time built into the equation is, consequently, somewhat false.** Most pilots take approximately 4 seconds more to react than is allowed in the testing. At 120 knots (speed in nautical miles per hour or 222 km/h), the aircraft will travel about 800 feet during those 4 seconds.

Third, and highly important, is that the manner in which the testing is conducted is not the manner in which jets are flown. Very rarely does a jet pilot sit on the end of the runway with the brakes held and run the engines to takeoff power and stabilize them prior to brake release. The jerky takeoff that results from this procedure his highly upsetting to passengers. This results in two factors that will cause the takeoff distances experienced in actual service to be far greater than the charted distances (performance charts). The runway that is traversed while the power is being set to the computed takeoff-power figure must be added to the charted figures to get a more accurate takeoff distance….

The temperature figures used to calculate the takeoff distance are rarely those experienced on the runway. Most airports locate their thermometers over grassy areas. The runway temperature can be as high as 40F warmer that that reported by the tower. This will have a significant detrimental effect on takeoff performance.

Any drag from control deflection introduced for crosswind correction will inhibit the acceleration to V_1. This is not taken into consideration when the charts are prepared. Only the headwind portion of any wind is allowed for. No correction factor is given for crosswind-correction drag.

All these factors will serve to lengthen the runway required to accelerate to V_1. Now what about the runway required to stop in the case of an abort? Again, a major factor that causes a lengthening of this distance is the reaction time allowed during certification. This time is based upon reactions of a test pilot who knows exactly what is going to happen

and when it will happen. An actual pilot experiencing an engine failure or other emergency at or near V1 will experience a period of shock and disbelief before reacting to the emergency.

…When emergencies happen at V1 the simulator, most pilots are already springloaded to the ready position. We expect to have the sim instructor failing engines, blowing tires, deploying thrust reversers, and all other manner of unpleasantness . We're ready. We expect the worst. A two engine nonemergency takeoff is the exception rather than the rule.

In the airplane on actual takeoff roll, however, the situation is vastly different. No matter how much training a pilot has, in the real world, almost all takeoffs are successful. Few pilots have been faced with the necessity of doing a high-speed aborted takeoff. An expectation us formed that all takeoffs will be successful, and when that proves to be not the case, disbelief will lessen the reaction time….**Many pilots are unpleasantly surprised to find that the airplane takes *almost twice the charted distance to stop* after an aborted takeoff. The accelerate-go figures provided by the manufacturer are reasonably close to what can be achieved by the average pilot, the accelerate-stop distances are woefully inadequate.**

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

Magnetic Variation, you damned liar! You are a character and I see you walking and talking escaping from your past. I am holding you to your true core values and thereby holding you accountable, for better and for worse to deal with you. You are really the same but you mock us and change your positions as you stroll along. We must track you otherwise you will El Chapo us with a vengeance and make Houdini look like a ball boy as you make another escape.

You were charming everyone in Napa back in the day with 'Gamay this, Gamay that,' 'Gamay makin' all the money like J.P. Getty,' 'Sure, me and Gamay go way back,' 'I saw Henry Ford put Gamay in a Model T drive off, turn around and come back for more,' 'Before any of you knew about Gamay, back '41, me an' FDR sat down under an old oak tree for a smoke when I was with the Cal Conservation Corps and saw a Japanese *Zero* scout plane up around Howell Mountain. Sure! Did too! Pilot was so low you could see him with a radio mic in one hand talkin' to Tokyo ' bout best vineyards for the admirals and Emperor, snacking from a red teriyaki bowl with rice crackers in the other! Crumbs with seaweed and sesame seeds flyin' out the airplane with five seagulls chasin' him fierce! Seagulls looked like they came from Marin County 'cause they had that gourmet Mills Valley look to 'em. Those SF wharf birds eat anything at the piers people drop but those birds chasin' after that *Zero* had that imported food look. These are the kind of gulls hangin' 'round now at Draeger's or Dean & DeLuca…with lobster bibs and tiny tins of Beluga caviar, Italian cheeses & such, you know the type…the kind that don't even peck at last night's pizza crust because its too low for 'em, they're too good for it…'

'So, Prez hit me with his hat in his fury and knocked the Chesterfield out my lip' and told me to git an' send a secret wire to PacCom in Pearl Harbor directly. I got a flat tire on the way to the navy base in San Francisco drivin' like a madman and had to walk the last four miles. Wikileaks got the message and sent it to Japan, so they sent their fleet early to hit Hawaii ' fore reinforcement ships could be sent from San Diego and San Francisco. Sure! Honest.'

You liar, we are so tired of you. Now you change your tunes with the times and runoff about excellent Zinfandels and Cabs now in '15! Don't lie to me! I know you and I know your wicked ways! We all do!

The Compass is only giving magnetic readings without any regard whatsoever for even knowing or comprehending the truth. It takes the Lie at face value of what it is told just like the majority of humans without questioning the errors of the source.

However, the Compass deviates and is prone to exaggerations which makes it a lie detector par excellence. It takes one to know one. Some places have really wide variations then other places are just a few degrees off which can be tricky since it seems so close to being so true.

We let the big round 360 degrees bouncy ball lie to us and we love it. Our Compass is an excellent endearing liar, sometimes a lot, sometimes little. It has a lot of idiosyncrasies but we are tolerant of its ways. It likes to tell stories and we like to admire and listen to his balderdash. If the Compass were at a London Mayfair cocktail party with a Copenhagen jazz trio, his dashing charisma fueled with martini in hand would go unchecked because he is affable, handsome and worldly. Yes, for those curious, intelligent well-attired women of post graduate degrees and immodest city properties bedazzling in heirloom jewels would melt about him like he is Roger Federer. We need to be smart, however, be mature and filter some of what it says. He has absolutely everything going for him but he is always prone to spinning the ball, a bit too much English at times, with his damn lies! It spins around on its axis winding its own tale and being smitten with his nonsense, we just can't get enough of it. If he is not at the party, it simply was not a success so hosts compromise and let him carry on in good cheer. Some guests may be admittedly indifferent about the hosts and smirk about the selection of hors d' oeuvres and pedestrian Chilean and Aussie wines (as if they would dare do better themselves) but attend primarily because our Compass is universally adored.

Most people don't know it so let me take the liberty to make you *hip*. You can stop pretending with a contrived smile as if you already knew. If anyone tells you his name is short for Compassion, they are flat wrong. That is a lie. His full name is Complimentary H. Ass. H is for Han because he was invented in China by a village doctor skilled in the arts of herbal remedies and acupuncture. Being of a clumsy sort alone when not mindful with patients, the needle's tip somehow became magnetized when he was fumbling around with iron knife filings and the needle later was dropped somehow into a small bowl of water in his humble hillside laboratory.

Being of a flat profile, not the round factory produced Xi'an acupuncture needles we now have, but thin snow deer bone with a coated metallic fine dust tip, it floated. At first it wasn't noticed, but later when he moved the aged *cracked* celadon bowl discarded from the royal kiln as being imperfect, thereby making it unacceptable for the Emperor's palace, the bone needle always turned back right before his eyes to the exact same place, pointing at Northern Gate Garden Restaurant with 10% off on Tuesdays! The restaurant was mostly famous not for its house signature dishes but for its hand-formed century's old secret dough fortune cookies with guaranteed winning lottery numbers of blossoming spring prosperity. Those same fortunes ("When you paddle 'cross Jordan, your wife in lonely bed will cry Yellow River tears of joy fo' no mo' sno'," "If one rose is for a love supreme, are thirteen roses for the baker's first daughter?," "She may be sweet, maybe even pretty, but can she fry chicken?") and numbers were recycled countless times over the restaurant's 330 years which is why patrons still went because they knew someone was bound to hit after so many generations. The jackpot had to be simply gargantuan! Anyway, that's how he knew it was always pointing North. It just languished as a novelty without any real purpose, a kid's game in the sitting chamber of the village doctor's office.

Years later Compass ended up being traded nearly for free in the Gobi desert on the Silk Road to Arabs. The Arabs learned they could navigate across the vast deserts with uncommon accuracy once they improved upon it. Their culture was ahead of most in the world with the sciences, astronomy and mathematics but with large trade carvans they were nomadic so navigating was preminent to find safe solutions. The ancient Babylonians measured 360 days to a year, which was fairly accurate (even if off by a few days each year) with each degree equating to one day on the annual calendar. Also 360 is fortuntately a number which is clean to divide into equal parts, 90 x 4 = 360 , 45 x 8 = 360. The Arabs were clever to mix the best of the new technology with wisdom from the ancients and Voila! The rest became history. Then, the trading Turks got a hold of it and when Venetians captured a Turkish vessel loaded with Indian spices off the Aegean, they studied it and so the rest of Europe eventually got wind of it. The Ass really implies camels but in Europe

they don't have camels, the closest thing being a jackass as beasts of burden. So for these reasons his name was modified and compounded into what we now know which is succinct and polite to our painfully delicate royal ears.

In 1570 Flemish mapmaker Abraham Ortelius published a book containing maps of the world and its regions the 'Theater of the World'. Ortelius used the Greek definition of theatre – theatron – as 'a place for viewing a spectacle'. As in a theater, the maps that unfold before our eyes present a creative version of a reality we think we know, but in the process transform it into something very different. For Ortelius, as for many other Renaissance mapmakers, geography is the 'eye of history', a theatre of memory, because, as he put it, 'the map being laid before our eyes, we may behold things done or places where they were done, as if they were at this time present'. The map acts like a mirror, or 'glass', because the charts being placed, as it were certain glasses before our eyes, will the longer be kept in memory, and make the deeper impression in us'…

Ortelius describes the position from which a viewer looks at a world map, which is closely related to orientation – the location from which we take our bearings. Strictly speaking, orientation usually refers to relative position or direction; in modern times it has become established as fixing location relative to points on a magnetic compass. **But long before the invention of the compass in China by the second century AD, world maps were oriented according to one of the four cardinal directions: north, south, east and west.** The decision to orientate maps according to one prime direction varies from one culture to another, but there is no purely geographical reason why one direction is better than any other, or why modern Western maps have naturalized the assumption that north should be at the top of all world maps.

Why north ultimately triumphed as the prime direction in the Western geographical tradition, especially considering its initially negative connotations for Christianity, has never been fully explained. Later Greek maps and early medieval sailing charts, or portolans, were drawn using magnetic compasses, which probably established the navigational superiority of the north-south

axis over and east-west one; but even so there is little reason why south could not have been adopted as the simplest point of cardinal orientation instead, and indeed Muslim mapmakers continued to draw with south at the top long after the adoption of the compass. Whatever the reasons for the ultimate establishment of the north as the prime direction on world maps, it is quite clear…, there are no compelling grounds for choosing one direction over another.

- Jerry Brotton A History of the World in Twelve Maps

The last soirée in March to start the spring season, or maybe it was the first weekend in April- forgive as I am not entirely sure now as its been a somewhat eventful year and I'm a bit fatigued- but it was the same evening when Mrs. Clemens threw her thick-sliced Turkish almond & walnut marzipan cake without sparing even the plate at Mr. Clemens' turned back in utter disgust, hitting him directly on his thinning gray pate. In a blind red eye rage pounding him with the side of her fists, she vehemently denounced she had a problem with drinking over-oaked Chardonnay in public – or un-oaked in private if that mattered- and more importantly sick of his drop-of-a-hat urgent trips to Stockholm, Barcelona, New York and then Venice twice for two weeks at a time with that vivacious scheming Anne Boleyn tramp of an assistant he hired nine months before. It was whispered she was fired from her previously rewarding occupation of being a summer Mediterranean & winter Caribbean swimsuit flaunting yacht hostess specializing in manicures, pedicures, tannings and ordering Thai & Swedish massages carte blanche for herself payable from a catastrophically broke and pending divorce Greek shipping magnate. His wife blamed the reversal of fortunes in family finances and their tolerable creaky wooden marriage that gifted them generously with charm-free spoiled marginally attractive yet foul-mouthed rebellious private tutored daughters. These debutantes would learn the grave importance perhaps to be singular in discriminating when picking Kalamata olives, not just shove them into their faces with fresh salads topped with falafel balls and crumbled feta.

The wife, in her firm conviction, put squarely the penetrating reason for the family's fantastic drop to misgivings on the engrossing allurements of the composite of this siren's shoulder length hair, conniving serpent's beckoning voice, gift for wit and languages, and most grudgingly, her prime perfection in legs- so long as approaching surreal- ending in a trajectory of heavenly well-rounded ascension tapered by a slim waist to accentuate politely, the positive bottom line. Yes, she was the embodiment of all that is required for the splendor in a masterpiece to be adored when she is long gone by breathlessly living on canvas, praised by future generations yet despised in her own time in the flesh; exasperating raging society wives and resigning their men to a significant stop-clock moment to meditate momentarily on being breathless when she first comes into their view lounging upon the yacht's sun deck rolling over and requesting more lotion.

As I was dutifully sporting a brass buttoned golden-mustard jacket and appropriately white-gloved, assuredly modestly handsome with my distinguished heavily brushed wavy hair glistening brilliantly from Georgetown Guiana pomade, serving cocktails and canapés on argent trays to refined guests, Compass was rambling on about the incident in his seasoned honey-toned lightly toasted French-oaked smooth voice about the time he was smack dab in the Bermuda Triangle on an ominous day of a pending total eclipse with a sugar and rum heiress from Barbados. You know everybody already heard it all before but they always wanted to hear it again. It was simply a crowd favorite told for many years and he was the favorite of the crowd especially with the women. Inevitably, somebody always asked for it and he would most often acquiesce adding Himalayan salt and Liverpool malt vinegar to taste which was dutifully licked to the last grain and drop from his attentive salivating audience.

I personally preferred his previous tangle, sometimes with lemon twists or lime squeezes, with Tanqueray Ten or Beefeaters but mostly with Hendrick's Gin, about his holiday in Tangiers when he was locked up on royal orders and stretched as boardwalk taffy on a stevedore's cargo net then beaten mercilessly with a Tunisian

trawler's confiscated fishing poles on an abhorrently false conviction for Tanzanian elephant ivory, harmless American .38 Snub Jones handguns & Maltese hashish smuggling- all which he vehemently denied but later resolved to confess meekly with salty tears and a newly scored back. It was really just the plaything American handguns and the other stuff was just piled on for more sensational press. Briefly, the local sultan's daughter lost her wits and left her irascible husband for a week. She was dismayed at his complete care and concern over his Medjool date stuffed mistress when her family more than provided all the joys and comforts of a sturdy home. Compass told her that he had to move on as he was a traveling man, that he had obligations elsewhere, presently in Montreal, thawing after another hard St. Lawrence winter. He concluded that although she was not the brightest, she was certainly one of the best out of his many conquests.

Shamefully with head down she returned to her glowering calvados sipping husband pleading for forgiveness who then had her duly displayed weeping and begging on a battered oxcart wearing a torn potato sack to his drunk vociferous acidic curses to her father's palace. Slowly they went directly through unbearably teeming markets full of dust and stench that miraculously parted in muted awe like the Red Sea, less to shame the offending wife and her family, but as a stratagem to honorably cancel his pernicious gambling debts. It was not soon afterwards upon his settling accounts from coins extracted from the old man, he was afforded more credit to fall back into further debts and debauchery. Anyhow, the daughter wove a tale to her disappointed father of how she was severely taken advantage of, why she had to leave her negligent husband and, being in a weak state of mind, fell – no collapsed- into the waiting strong arms of compassionate Compass. Somebody had to pay for this expensive outrage and as the needle turned for whom to blame, it was ultimately coming out of his foreign hide. The sultan, being shrewd, had the airstrip closed immediately with no flights permitted in or out, and had him arrested, charged and convicted on all charges in less time than it takes to wolf down on a Sinai falafel with pickled beets and humus on the side. He learned a lesson that a woman's scorn knows no latitudes, pardon, as they say.

Compass, as he instinctively refreshed himself for another glass brimming from my tray with his deft hand emboldened with a singular jade Eton class ring that effortlessly exchanged the used for the new, grasped the glass in one swoop while completely looking the other way exposing a proper onyx cufflink to answer a trifling inquiry from Colonel Foxtrot, all the whilst Cuthbert was lagging behind my lead with festive tapas prepared by a tamarind complexioned Miami Guatemalan perversely pretending to be a Roma Madrileno, said he and the heiress were spinning around like it was Disneyland's Alice-in-Wonderland's teacup ride with her relentlessly screaming and wailing yet somehow immodestly keeping her plump sesame & cracked pepper chèvre water cracker & Sancerre sipping Valois inherited vase firmly at the seat of attention on the deck of his varnished cedar of Lebanon home patio as he failingly tried desperately to push her off for their mutual good to take control, with her hands flinging frantically high in the air. He, daresay, said he just couldn't see a blasted thing in front but only the exquisite Colombian emeralds ringed with blue and white diamonds twinkling divinely around the nape of her comely irresistible Chanel No. 5 scented neck!

As customary and on cue, the Mayfair set just roared with laughter because this entire bin of recycled rubbish was delivered with so much offensive confidence, that like of a South African shark attack, the bite hurt more after the initial assault and not during the tail's reporting flagellation roiling the increasingly sanguine waters of the kill. One had to grin and bear it as they all relished it, even though it was an affront shot as a salvo in a flawlessly cut Savile Row dinner jacket to all chaste taste in sharp contrast to a qualified gathering who supposedly knew a few things about the sublimities of decency; perhaps not, after all, one could take the liberty to muse with a call for more, sure cocktails, please.

As to add a period as heavy as a lead ingot to his unchallenged presentation of such bosh full of self-satisfaction that he delivered so successfully, he plucked the large olive off the rounded toothpick of his dry martini between his faultless teeth

and tasted the Greek produced prize with momentary relish. Even Miyamoto pearl necklaced Mrs. Fitzsimmons, wearing the same low-cut light gray and pink trimmed dress with a demure frayed collar that paired with the same now noticeably cracked tarnished silver buckled vinyl orange shoes as she does every spring event, managed to allow herself a smidgen of a smile although she well made it clear she detested the instrument and others categorically of his kind with her freckles, ample peach fuzz cheeks and tobacco tainted teeth holding sway over the undiminished pride of her bosom. She determined in her formative years of youth, that this asset beyond her faulty adventures at clumsy charm with the wiles of adolescent conformity to gain popularity, made her opposites interested in her as their eyes would soon steadily slip south below her neck and not remain level face to face before apparently needing a hoist after Bessemer bellows molten slag appetites became inflamed in the desire of the fleshy chasm and would grudgingly raise their boyish heads again in chagrin to her candid amusement. The madam's beef with Compass wasn't at all rare, largely due in part to the time he took her daughter away to Montserrat and left her later to fend for herself with the volcano spewing ash & rocks, wrapped alone on a beach with just a flag about her waist. He was notorious for that kind of reckless behavior and yet forgiven at large because, as they say in India, a tiger simply cannot change its stripes.

Of course, he said he thought simply they weren't going to make it in the Triangle, but like a tomcat true to form, he always lands on his feet, someway somehow, most times Mallorca roasted peanuts & cashews dry, a few times Gibraltar gimlet wet. Everybody adores him because he always walks away! It's hard to tell with his windings if a crisis is really a crisis or just a pretense for more comical pleasures. Why fly a dry straight odorless unhappy puritan Calvin line when one can tease a bit of drama and get their crooked faithfully with perfumed Tetzel indulgences?

When tea was served at a later sobering hour, women tightly crowded both his east and west on the sofa, so he finally pardoned himself and stood tall, realigned his silk Bangkok black bow tie and walked straight, headed south for the veranda. He

promised himself to remain on his best. It wasn't his fault that women just found him so magnetic and that his influence over them was nearly embarrassing before their own husbands and beaus. There he met the slim and lonely temperature gauge smoking a Balkan Sobranie cigarette with her mercury slowly rising. She said with soft moonlit kissed shoulders and winsome eyes, she has a preference for men that like Fahrenheit in a Celsius world, men who know how to go to exotic places; men who can find their way on their own in this wild crazy world.

0° Celsius – Freezing Point of Water

Temperature is a measure of the molecular energy of a substance. Air with a higher temperature has a higher molecular energy, and its molecules are moving at a relatively high rate of speed. The speed of movement causes far more collisions between molecules and allows any pressure disturbances in the atmosphere to be more easily transmitted. As the temperature drops, the rate of collision between the molecules drops.

…As an aircraft moves through the airmass, velocity and pressure changes occur that create disturbances in the surrounding airflow. These pressure disturbances are propagated through the air at the speed of sound. If the aircraft is moving at a speed slower than the speed of sound, the pressure disturbances move ahead of the aircraft, and the airflow immediately in front of the aircraft is influenced. This pressure "warning" can be seen in the typical subsonic flow patterns about an airfoil. A change in airflow direction and an upwash occurs well ahead of the aircraft.

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

To the former town-dwellers, adjusting to life in the countryside was even more traumatic than Phnom Penh was for the intellectuals. For both it was a double blow. Physically they were deprived of the creature comforts they had taken for granted throughout their lives. Psychologically they were enslaved, confined within a political and

ideological straight-jacket that grew steadily tighter. The deportees were at one end of the Party's scale of concerns, the intellectuals at the other. But its approach to both was the same.

The physical change was so overwhelming for the 'new people' that it first drowned out every other consideration. Many were terrified. 'We had the impression,' one wrote, 'of having been abandoned in the middle of a hostile land.' The arrived in villages **'that seemed frozen in time,**' where people still suffered from yaws, dropsy and other diseases which were supposed to have been eradicated from Cambodia decades before. Like the intellectuals, the deportees had to learn everything from the bottom up – to build primitive wooden huts; to plough; to plant vegetables and rice – usually in conditions far harsher than the returned students endured. Like the peasants, they used potash extracted from the cinders of wood fires as a substitute for soap. In the flooded rice paddies, they wrapped cloths between their legs as protection against minuscule leeches which could enter the penis, the anus or the vagina, causing excruciating pain until, days later, they detached themselves and were flushed out….Women stopped menstruating, as they did even in Phnom Penh where food was more plentiful; some suffered prolapsed uteruses, and nursing mothers had no milk. Malaria was rife. By the following spring, local cadres were reporting 40% of the population incapacitated by fever. None the less, the deportees foraged for snails and lizards, crabs and spiders, and wild vegetables in the jungle, and bartered for good with the 'base people' what remained of the gold and jewellery they had managed to bring with them from the towns. Like the French, who survived the Second World War as well as they did in part because they were close to the soil, urban Khmers were at heart less removed from peasant life than they sometimes tried to pretend, at in stood them in good stead.

In retrospect, one of the most astonishing aspects of the Khmer Rouge period is that so many academics and professional people were able to 'use the hoe as a long pen and the rice-field as their paper', as the cadres liked to say, keeping themselves and their families precariously alive. The exceptions were the 'Chinese', the Sino-Cambodian businessmen who had no rural roots. They died in larger numbers.

In a revolutionary context, where violence was the norm, the politeness of the Khmers Rogues was all the more telling. Often it had a sinister coloration: a woman overheard a soldier telling a group of prisoners who had just been savagely beaten: ' "So you don't feel too well? Just wait, you'll feel better in a little while…." Those sugary words, that irony, I recognized all that, it was the way the soldiers talked.' Yet there were also cadres who were genuinely 'not oppressive or threatening but quiet and polite'. The two were not necessarily in conflict…noted that the soldiers went about their work, 'preparing death with unfailing courtesy'.

At the highest level, everything was available…recalled how at headquarters 'there was always a basket of fresh fruit on the table. **I never ate better in my life.**' …the Central Committee commissariat providing 'Japanese biscuits, Australian butter, French-style baquettes, duck's eggs...and succulent Khmer crabs', together with locally-grown tropical fruits, 'oranges from Pursat, durians from Kampot, rambutans and pineapples'. When (he) returned from a trip to the UN, he brought with him a hamper of foie gras and Swiss cheeses. All the leaders grew fat. **Contemporary photographs show Pol and Nuon Chea looking bloated.**

In the countryside, meanwhile (back at the ranch some may casually say), the ideological thumbscrews were being tightened still further.

Foraging, which had helped many villagers avoid starvation in the first year of Khmer Rouge rule, was now denounced as a manifestation of individualism and banned on the grounds that it would result in some having more than others. For the same reason, local officials refused to allow villagers to fish, or to kill monkeys and wild boar that raided their plantations.

Picking a coconut without authorization was an anti-revolutionary act. …a Foreign Ministry official was dismissed for doing so. **Fruit that fell to the ground should be allowed to rot, rather than be gathered for individual use.** 'That belongs to Angkar,' the soldiers would say as they forbade anyone to touch it.

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Returning to El Rancho del Cielo, on clear sunny days you can be somewhat indifferent at times with a long view jolly bouncing along turbulently o'er hill and dale; however, when its cloudy and damp over howling winter mountain passes with the westerly sun dropping quick, as you alone joyfully transport a young Everglades' Burmese python that somehow broke out the cage, with his heat testing tongue and slithering head dangling, then flipping and subsequently squirming over to lock the opposite seat's rudder pedals, all to your sure and poignant dismay. This is because a friendly professor kindly asked you to deliver a gift to a zoological colleague and it is not your nature to disappoint especially with the hormonal demands of Mother Nature's testosterone ringing her dinner bell. The basic premise was you foolishly wished you could one day make headway to her mind and heart. This angle, she most certainly used to her advantage, to discuss the many merits of biology in the approaching future with an emphasis of examining a breathtaking example of a stunning Eutherian mammal. A sailor of lore would immodestly conclude of this prized exemplar as being built much like a pier-side gray cruiser of long elegant lines and full of charge festively bannered as a patriotic spectacle for Independence Day's waterfront admiration, capable of heaving and rocking like a bootlegger's bayou motor boat under a hot midnight Jolly Roger.

One can get a glimmer under this peculiar circumstance that fades then finally disappears into brooding gray skies then reappears of a tattered tall and featureless dark apparition holding a glinting scythe sitting, more like barely floating above, the left wing that is patiently waiting but never looks directly at you, only stoically and unabashedly ahead. You simply cannot discern its solemn non-reflective face but you inherently know that the supernatural void is real beyond imagination; it transpires from an alternate dimension to cut down a ripe life in the glory of its summer. Your precious blood & bone body of opaque pearl that you so cherish above all else, is in peril of being smashed. It's nothing personal: he's there to do

what he has to do, and you likewise, need to do what you must in the present. It's all rudimentary and to believe otherwise is foolish. Both past and future are mere abstractions: this is living in the now. You will not worry about your missing library card nor if you put the ribs in the freezer the evening before last. You will not think about if your avocados are too unripe for guacamole. You will not carry on of why you prefer Anderson Valley Pinot Noir but your neighbor goes with undulating praises for Russian River without ever a modicum of a fair blind tasting. Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignons will not cross your mind at the moment and you won't instinctively lick your protruding moistened lips in anticipation of sampling sublime St. Helena and Chiles Valley appellations Zinfandels now with your grim parched mouth. Your credit card payment due date can go to quick hell with today's Dow Jones Index. Your fair weather friend that moved to Taos, New Mexico who permanently borrowed your collection of Eckart Tolle autographed books in which he wrote in one twenty years ago when relatively unknown, "The very desire to seek the truth often causes people, who do not know how it should be sought correctly, to make judgments about things that they do not perceive and in that way they make mistakes, René Descartes," can now keep them in good stead with your compassionate blessings.

The damned serpent wrapping itself and coiling tighter 'round your trembling right leg with its unwelcomed flaring nostrils hailing from the hissing head with unholy beady eyes, captures your attention second only to the beckoning oil temperature and oil pressure gauge lights. They are beginning to flicker then go to sustaining their resoundingly affectionate joyous bright red holiday hellos when a shuddering abrasive claxon alarm and whistling stream of noxious smoke with loud crackling electrical sparks jolts you recklessly from the pretense of poised into redline anxiety's strangling submission for begging for sweet Mother Mercy with white billiard balls popping eyes!

The anguished scream seeded and birthed first from caged childhood compressed taunted traumas now fully endowed with unbolted wellspring sap and sprung into

being promiscuously reproductive and fruitful on adulthood's burdensome cracking boughs of grave responsibilities, weeping cavernous moaning disappointments, sizzling marinated searing regrets, platters of missed opportunities and forsaken barren ambitions, that you heard echoing above the engine's revolutions a minute before, truly only three seconds before, is dredged not from you; the howling is the hell unleashed scampering manifestation of deep rooted pain and pus-filled horror fracked from the polluted brimstone oil sands found within the mantle of your pockmarked sin-soaked Dorian Gray soul. The flight is now about the two of you, your body and Mr. Gray, and you resign yourself for reaching the terminal conclusion that disquieting the company the other keeps, as graying skies turn a distinct uncaring mauve with the Sun's impersonal departure below the distant horizon.

As all instruments before you begin to fade in the smoke, tears and twilight, you immediately glance left and do notice the apparition's cold faceless profile has indeed now shifted a few degrees right to peer at your present predicament, perhaps in anticipation of the pending ripe Santa Rosa plum harvest. Duly you recognize the scythe has taken a distinct en garde tenor. And you thought it didn't care! As your heart sinks fathoms with the python's head bouncing from each explosive terrified heartbeat, as Hoover Dam gates open to flood the interior without further challenge to no longer resist the bladder's bursting pressure whilst the python's thin tongue rapidly laps up your hot breath and the neck rotates then locks in plain preparation for the coup de grace, just before its scaled primordial head lunges northwest to your exposed apple of a throat, you ponder at this point of approaching sheer consignment of undiluted doom: What inflected wild mountainside mushroom, rosemary herbs & hearty Petite Sirah red wine sauce best becomes with the finest federal government approved and certified AAA-cut seasoned and air-dried burnt offerings?

Ace. This is when you come to grips that the Compass is your card to ameliorate this dreadful scenario, disappoint fatal fate and thread the needle with smooth

Shaanxi silk. You are in control of your destiny which is why you are in command! Now it is time to act like it! The Compass is above the instrument panel and fully independent projecting from the windshield, living on the edge, on its own above it all, in touch with Mother Earth. "Yes Mother!," you shout. "I'm coming home, blessed home! Cradle and comfort me in your tolerant hands as I return to you! Don't let this wayward child of yours die as a long lost lamb!," with all the conviction from the heart to be mustered. Keep your cool, straighten up and fly right to the first alternate distress destination that you planned before your flight! Hah! The key to the Compass is we can recognize its ways, its flaws (ANDS: Accelerate North, Declerate South), be tolerant and thankful it lies so consistently so we can thereby consistently follow it as though it were always telling us the truth.

If you start a turn from a heading of North, the compass will initially register a turn in the opposite direction but will soon race back, and be approximately correct as an East or West heading is passed. It will lead by about 30 deg. as the airplanes nose points to Magnetic South. The initial errors in the turn are not too important…,Just remember that North lags 30 deg and South leads 30 deg., and this covers the problem…

- William Kershner
  Instrument Flight Manual

Our fragile cocoon- those sheets of aluminum and plexiglass that give us the false sense of security as we cruise in shirtsleeves at FL 430- can fail us. It is not a thought that most pilots choose to dwell on, but the possibility is certainly there…Explosive decompression and emergency-descent drills are practiced at least once a year by all jet pilots during recurrent training, and I am often amazed at the casual attitude shown toward these emergency situations. The actuality will not bear any resemblance to the neat and orderly drill accomplished in training.

An actual decompression will first of all be accompanied by a good deal of noise as the higher pressure air in the cabin rushes out until the cabin pressure, and consequently the cabin altitude, equals the ambient pressure outside the aircraft. This might be preceded

by a loud popping sound- the sound of a champagne cork amplified 100 times. Dust and debris will be picked up and rush toward the opening where the pressurized air is rushing out of the cabin. Smaller items might be sucked outside the aircraft. A fog will form in the cabin since the warmer air in the cabin is capable of carrying more moisture thatn the cold air outside the aircraft. As the cabin temperature and pressure drop, the moisture will condense, forming a wet, cold fog. A significant temperature change will occur- the ambient temperature at FL 430 is -55C/-67F. **Confusion will reign**. And these are only the effects on the atmosphere inside the aircraft- what of the effects on the humans?

First of all, there is a distinction between rapid and explosive decompressions. Any decompression that takes place in less than one-half second is considered to be an explosive decompression. This type of decompression occurs primarily in smaller-bodied aircraft and, thankfully, is not common since it can be rapidly fatal. Human lungs usually require about two-tenths of a second to release their air. Any decompression happening in less than this short amount of time can result in rapid lung decompression and rupture or severe damage. **The only emergency procedure available for dealing with this type of decompression is to immediately get on oxygen and get the aircraft to a lower altitude as quickly as possible.**

…Teeth that have been improperly filled cause problems at altitude or rapid decompressions. The higher pressure under the filling will cause excruciating pain, and in rare instances can cause the tooth to explode. An exploding tooth would be distracting, not to mention the pain associated with the failure.

…Intestinal problems associated with rapid decompression range from merely embarrassing to totally incapacitating. There is normally about one quart of free air in the intestinal tract. This is the air that is swallowed and gases are produced by digestive processes and fermentation. Diet variations can increase or decrease this average volume. This air, too, will obey Boyle's law and increase in volume with the decreasing ambient air pressure. That quart of air at sea level, will expand to more than nine quarts at 43,000 feet…**The expanding gases will attempt to escape through both end of the**

gastrointestinal tract…Carbonated beverages and gum chewing should be avoided during flight…

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

How hard is it to land a plane?
9 October 2013, BBC

A passenger managed to land a plane after its pilot fell ill. How difficult is it to bring an aircraft safely down without training?

It's the stuff of disaster films - to be left on board a plane mid-flight, without anyone to fly it. A passenger who found himself in this predicament after the pilot collapsed has been praised for taking over in the cockpit of a light plane flying over Lincolnshire.
The passenger was able to land at Humberside Airport on the fourth attempt, with the help of two instructors who talked through the process. The pilot later died.
"I felt for the instructors because I could put myself in their position," says Graham Stables, an instructor from North London Flying School.

Usually having some sort of rudimentary flying experience is key, suggests Stables. Landing an aeroplane would be very hard for a complete novice, he says. Normally, a learner pilot would spend at least 20 hours before attempting to fly solo, and even then, the first time a student goes out alone is nerve-racking for the teacher.

Stables says that if he were on the ground, he wouldn't get the pilot to land immediately. "I'd want them to get familiar with the controls. Then it's a case of briefing them about what's going to happen."

A longer runway would give the pilot a better chance of a successful landing, he says. "Humberside has quite a long runway, which is important. Anything shorter than a kilometre would be difficult for a novice."

The airport would have cleared the area, and alerted the emergency services.
Stables says that as a final precaution he would instruct the pilot to use the mixture lever to shut off the plane's engine just before landing. This is to lessen the risk of fire. If a fuel line is broken on impact with the ground, the plane is less likely to ignite if the engine is empty.

Stables says that situations such as the one at Humberside Airport are so rare that they are not something for which flight instructors receive special training. However, several schools - including his own - run co-pilot courses for people who are likely to be frequent passengers in light planes. These generally consist of several hours in a dual-control aircraft being taught about the controls and executing a landing under supervision.

Aside from this, **the key to a safe landing is the attitude of the person in the cockpit, and their ability to remain calm, according to former pilot Eric Moody. "I don't want to make it sound easy because it isn't. Lots of people I know would go silly, but it depends on how strong your sense of self-preservation is."**

Moody knows what it's like to be up in the air and facing the unknown. In 1982 he was at the controls of a British Airways Boeing 747 above Indonesia, when volcanic ash caused all four of its engines to fail at once. At best, he and his passengers faced a crash-landing in the sea. **He believes that his ability to stay calm got him through. "If something big happens, I slow down and think at half speed and I see beyond the immediate problem."**

Moody and his pilots made a careful descent and their patience was rewarded after the engines eventually re-started. They brought the plane in to land safely in Jakarta.
Moody sees parallels with yesterday's incident. **"The chap was brave to do it but he had to live. He was together enough in his mind to cope - not everyone would have done that."**

He says that although modern planes are to a great extent flown by computer, he doubts whether air flight can completely eliminate the element of skill and judgment which a good pilot brings to bear. It's a test that he thinks yesterday's passenger-turned-pilot passed: "It doesn't matter how you land it as long as you walk away from it.

Prince protege Judith Hill recalls emergency landing

By Mark Savage, BBC Music reporter
22 June 2016

Singer Judith Hill has described the moment Prince lost consciousness on his private jet, six days before his death. The 31-year-old was one of only two other passengers, including the star's longtime friend Kirk Johnson.

After speaking to Prince over dinner, "his eyes fixed," she said. If she had not been looking directly at him, she would have assumed he'd fallen asleep.

"I thought he was gone," she told the New York Times. "We didn't have anything on the plane to help him."

He was quick on his feet. Never said anything, that this is hurting, never a sign of struggle. That's why it's all very shocking Judith Hill

Hill and Johnson immediately alerted the pilot, who called air traffic controllers in Chicago for help, reporting an unresponsive man on board.

"We knew it was only a matter of time; we had to get down," Hill said. The plane made an emergency landing in Illinois, where they were met by an ambulance. **Prince was given a shot of Narcan a treatment often used for opioid overdoses, while on the tarmac.**

- Hill said that by the time they arrived at Trinity Moline Hospital, Prince was awake and speaking.
- She remained by his side throughout the night and said Prince was "very cooperative" and "serious about getting help".
- In the hospital, he had told her: "I had to fight for my life. I remember hearing your voices from afar and saying to myself, Follow the voices, follow the voices, get back in your body, you gotta to do this."
- Hill added: "And he said it was the hardest thing he'd ever done, to get back into his body like that."
- The singer, who featured in the Oscar-winning documentary 20 Feet From Stardom, had worked with Prince since 2014. He produced her debut album, Back In Time, last year.
- Speaking to the BBC last year, she described the star as "fantastic" and "very involved" with her music, and paid tribute to his "wicked" sense of humour.
- Despite spending so much time in his company, Hill said she was "unaware" that he was in chronic pain, caused by years of performing in high heels.
- She said, "He was quick on his feet. Never said anything, that this is hurting, never a sign of struggle. That's why it's all very shocking."
- Nonetheless, she realised the star was suffering, and alerted others to the situation. Prince himself took steps to get help, calling in an addiction expert and submitting to several tests with a local doctor.
- "And that's the part that breaks my heart," Hill said, "because he was trying."

In all spheres, there are always those who are the cream that rise to the top in their careers. Of all the millions of pilots, so few merit mention and those that do, most often have their names lost to the lofty winds. One pilot is lesser known because he did not fly in the military to earn acclaim but he tested military grade aircraft before their designs were cleared to go into full production. Those in the know knew him or of him. Consider he was the first to fly the B-52 bomber prototype even though he did not once fly missions in WWII where thousands of men did. Why this man was the first put at the controls of such a mammoth beast of a jet is worth a serious

pause. Jets were relatively a new technology where plenty could go wrong. This was the chief test pilot of Boeing, Tex Johnston, a call-it-like-is character who would be shown the door in today's corporate workplace of political correctness, group consensus and sensitivity. He was crude and callous wearing cowboy boots, filling them with confidence all the way to his Stetson hat loaded with swagger and sharp retorts. He demanded a lot from himself and others he worked with to improve overall aircraft performance. His time shined with the rise of jet technology.

By the mid-1950's, Boeing was a three-time failure with commercial aircraft and was relegated to being primarily a military aircraft contractor: bombs away! The founder of Boeing was Wilhelm Böing who was a lumber magnate in the northwest from a wealthy German-American mining engineering family. He anglicized his name to William Boeing around the turn of the century well before WWI when many German immigrants did (Schumacher, now Shoemaker; Schmidt, now Smith, Drumpf –who also arrived in Seattle- now Trump). Probably you have never met anyone with the surname of Boeing but, since I'm gambling, I bet you may have met a Smith.

The dominant commercial aircraft builders were Douglas Aircraft and Lockheed who eyed each other as southern California rivals. **Boeing had 1% of the market share for commercial aircraft which is now hard for us to digest**. Douglas- the unquestioned commercial leader- and McDonnell merged and were swallowed by Boeing which would have been unfathomable in the 1950's and '60s. Lockheed was a hybrid commercial/military leader with the elegant three-tailed Constellation that customers respectfully wore a suit and tie on, has been long retired from the commercial scene, building stealth fighters and rockets for satellite systems. Boeing aircraft were at military bases and not at public airports where Lockheed aircraft could be seen in numbers at both. Now, we won't see one Lockheed aircraft at civilian airports. My, how times have changed!

Essentially, Boeing feasted at wars, less in cold and more in hot, with their lines of bombers and was not taken as a serious contender in the commercial arena up in sleepy Seattle. A steely cold-blooded B-29 Superfortress over Hiroshima and Nagasaki was one aircraft not needed for cozy civil Sunday best-dressed cigarettes & cocktails infused flights from Los Angeles to St. Louis with perky trim flight attendants. A victim of its success of sorts, dropping the atomic bombs on the islands was soon was putting a dent in Boeing's order book with the sudden halt of hostilities and a subsequent roll back on military purchasing budgets. Boeing was not a fighter builder as its niche was heavy bombers, big planes. Ironically, being from a Pacific maritime city, Boeing was not in the Navy's pocket. Boeing, as an enterprise, did better with bombing enemies for profit than with a flower-sniffing peace dividend. However, since Boeing was into big, and not beholden to small Navy jets such as Grumman, it had an engineering and manufacturing advantage that finally came to fruition with a clever yet bold stroke.

The original 707, of course the precursor to the line of jets we know so well, was conceived as first an air tanker for supplying US Air Force jets as the aging propeller tankers were too slow to keep up with new supersonic fighters. Jet power was perceived as more essential for military needs than for civilian needs. Changing the basic tanker design was an after thought as a crazy stab again at the commercial market to leapfrog rivals was Boeing's big gamble that came up rotating 7-7-7 on the giant slot machine of success with whistles and confetti unloading from the ceiling to this very day. It was a surprise invested to outsmart the competition!

Tex Johnston's actual engineering instruction in the principles of aerodynamics was limited, he was nonetheless recognized as a genius of flying, a sort of Michael Jordan among pilots, a man with a sixth – and seventh, and eighth- sense of what his airplane could do.

Johnston was cruising on this Sunday afternoon at about 450 miles per hour in the Dash-80; he cut it back and came down over Lake Washington at only 300 feet. The audience

oohed and aahed and pointed at the brightly colored jet. He pulled the big jet up at a 35-degree climb. And then the screaming plane dipped its wing and started to turn over, rotating slowly, at one point completely upside down, the yellow-and-silver trail section pointing straight down toward the water and the jet's huge underbelly facing upward toward the heavens.

On board his boat, Allen, the company president, briefly felt sick to his stomach. The 707 was his baby, and it looked to be soaring out of control. If it crashed near the crowd, it could cause hundreds of deaths. If it crashed anywhere, the 707 project would be clearly dead- and so would the company.

But then, as Allen and the rest of the crowd watched, the plane continued its roll until it had completed a full 360-degree rotation. The plane soared several hundred feet higher, then reversed course and came in again toward the lake- toward all the boats in the water, toward the huge crowds on shore.

Again, the Boeing 707 prototype tilted and went into a slow, full-circle rotation overhead. No one could hear Tex Johnston, of course, but up in the pilot's seat, he was letting out whoops of joy.

This time, Bill Allen did not feel sick. He managed to stammer out a joke to Larry Bell of Bell Aircraft, one of his guests on the boat. "Larry, give me about ten those heart pills you've been taking," he said. "I need 'em worse than you do."

…Whether it was a reckless stunt or brilliant salesmanship, Johnston's barrel roll certainly got people in the industry talking. On the very night of his dressing-down, having lived to fly another day, Johnston showed up at Allen's house in Seattle's Highlands neighborhood for a cocktail party and dinner with aviation luminaries. Allen planned to turn and give Johnston the cold shoulder.

But before Allen could say or do anything, Eastern Air's garrulous head, Eddie Rickenbacher, the onetime Flying Ace and Medal of Honor winner, went up to Tex Johnston, grabbed his Stetson, and pulled it down over his ears.

"You slow-rolling son of a bitch!" Rickenbacker shouted joyfully at Johnston. "Why didn't you let me know you were gonna pull that? I would have been riding the jump seat!"

Rickenbaker turned to Allen. "Damn, Bill!" he said. "That's the way to get attention with a new airplane!"

…"It wasn't a risk. It was something I gave a hell of a lot of thought to," Johnston told Watson in a profile of him that appeared in the Sunday Pacific magazine. Or, as he explained in a later interview of his rationale: "I wouldn't jeopardize the equipment. I've perfected it all my life. These people will never forget it. They'll think it's the strongest airplane in the world.

- Sam Howe Verhovek
Jet Age

The only way Tex Johnston could do what he did was by developing skills during his career by honing his uncanny feel and expertise, his present profile and position, knowing categorically the limits of the aircraft and, just as importantly, aware of his own limitations intimately. A lot of gifted people can play the piano but then there are the likes of Lang-Lang, Yuja Wang and Oscar Peterson. A lot people can play guitar, but then there was Jimi Hendrix with electric and Andres Segovia with classical. Tex found his calling early and was simply born to fly. No test pilot now would ever roll a new Boeing or Airbus jet over a crowd of people or, for that matter, even over the oceans if no one was there to tell the boss. I don't believe, in case you are wondering, if Tex ate quiche at Sunday brunch. He seemed like a medium-rare T-bone steak, sour cream-and-chives baked potato and Napa Cabernet Sauvignon kind of guy after a successful twirl in the blue.

Compare the aftermath this year (2015) from Tex Johnston's demonstration with a commercial jet to feel the gravity of what he accomplished and recognize the credible worst fears of Boeing's Bill Allen when Tex rolled around over the lake in Seattle:

Eyewitnesses have described the scene as a vintage jet crashed while performing at an air show in West Sussex (Aug. 23rd, BBC):

The pilot of the Hawker Hunter failed to complete a loop-the-loop at the Shoreham Air Show and descended into the A27 (highway), causing a huge fireball and killing seven people.

Those who were nearby have been recalling seeing the plane fall, the explosion and the aftermath.

Dave Hampton was at the air show with his family.

"We were behind the marquee at the time, having a picnic and we had literally turned up 10 minutes before," he said.

"We saw the Hawker Hunter fly over the marquee, we saw it fly up, then we saw it almost turn around to come back.

"Our two boys who are very passionate about planes asked where the plane was and we said it would be along in a minute when we heard what sounded like a sonic boom - it sounded like the plane had broken the sound barrier.
"People around us then started standing up and saying 'Oh my God, it's come down' and at that time we looked over and we saw the big plume of smoke coming over the marquee."

Archie Tipple was a spectator at the event.

"We were stood on a footbridge by the Red Lion Inn, about 300 metres from the A27.

"I was photographing the aircraft as it started its display and as it climbed and climbed and climbed I thought, this is pretty good.
"But he was coming in a little bit low and I was still photographing it as it came down and then all of a sudden you just knew what was coming.

"It just immediately changed the atmosphere, from a festive one to something quite sombre," he said.

Jane Groves, from Shoreham, witnessed the plane crashing after her car had broken down on the A27.

"My husband and I had stopped between the slip roads going to and from Shoreham. We got out, put on the hazards and phoned Green Flag.

"We were 400 yards from where the plane crashed. The passing cars were going so slow in the traffic and people were asking us if we needed water, feeling sorry for us - they had no idea what they were driving into.
"I saw a wedding car and thought to myself he is having a bad day, I hope he gets to the bride on time. Then five minutes later, I watched the plane crash into the traffic.

"We stood in the road diverting the traffic down the slip road until the emergency services came. If it wasn't for that, the ambulances wouldn't have been able to get through.

"This will stay with me forever."

Ailish Southall was driving along the A27 with her two children when the plane crashed close to them.

"There were huge amounts of fire and we ran from the car to kind of avoid the debris."

Lee Allwright, who was also close, said: "It was extremely hot. You could hear the plane as it took out the traffic lights on the road. You could hear the scraping.

"People didn't know what to do."
Ian Whitney was standing on the grass verge opposite to where the plane crashed.

"We saw the whole thing. We were watching it as the plane looped and I said 'he isn't going to make that!' It just plunged straight into the cars.
"There was the most awful thud followed by a ball of flame coming down the road at us. We had to run to avoid the debris and the intense heat.
"Everyone ran in different directions. Then there was an eerie silence of disbelief, before lots of people started crying."

Nicholas Hair described the aftermath at the airfield.

"Strangely enough the first thing that happened was silence.

"I've never seen so many grown men cry in my life. But people of all ages and genders were crying, screaming and then again just silence that just stayed over the field for 10, 15, 20 minutes."

As we delude ourselves cruising through life, most of us are cruising as pilots say "dirty," meaning not clean with best aerodynamic efficiencies: wing spoilers up, wings flaps fully deployed and landing gear down in mid-flight: a landing profile after touchdown. Then open the pantry and add some drama: get the rub spices for the grilling and be generous with the usual suspects of no weather forecast, being low on fuel, high on temperatures and manifold pressures, limited visions, mentally fatigued, increasing icy conditions, being overloaded thereby compromising our centers of gravity, hence our balance and overall performance. We purchase lower

grade fuel for ourselves. Our air filters are filthy and oil filters grungy; we don't ever make time for going into a hangar for inspections and overdue oil changes. We are literally dragging along sputtering in unending rollercoaster turbulence from drama to drama praying we won't hit a mountain to take us out of the game or crash land with in-fighting flare-ups onboard. Too many of us are dragging along in fatal stall configurations at limited speeds just above warning horns with engines maxed out and seriously underperforming, ice rising thicker on the wings. Yet, we have a Herculean capacity to confuse our perceptions of barely flying in life with fast and safe cruising. We go fast going nowhere. We are gluttons for creating more parasitic drag as opposed to finding methods to reduce the burdens we naturally carry to optimize our performance.

It is common for jet aircraft to augment aileron control with flight spoilers. Deflection of the ailerons activates the flight-spoiler system, which will use the spoilers(s) on the wing and with the up aileron to rise proportional with aileron deflection. The spoilers on the wing and with the down aileron will remain faired to the wing. The flight spoilers are normally hydraulically controlled.

Flight spoilers are also sometimes known as speed brakes when they are symmetrically deployed on both wings. Speed brakes are simply high-drag devices extended into the airstream. Technically and aerodynamically there is a difference between speed brakes and spoilers. Speed brakes are drag devices that allow high rates of descent to be used without consequent buildup in speed. Speed brakes are a secondary flight control and do not rotate the aircraft around any of its three axis. Speed brakes produce drag without affecting lift or without causing the aircraft to pitch.

Spoilers disturb the smooth flow of air over an airfoil and destroy part of the lift of the airfoil. Spoilers cause a pitch change with extension and retraction. …

- Linda Pendleton, Flying Jets

We continue flight paths with an obsolete plan full of wishful thinking with a cacophony of casino bells ringing yet wonder why we can't go higher above the clouds, above it all. The hitting the lottery retirement program personifies this kind of financial approach whilst sinking in debt. It doesn't have a strong win percentage with most people but they still default to plan on it. This kind of drag is a form of parasitic drag and we *do* have a say to control it. We can go higher only to smoother altitudes first if we recognize our present profile as actually dragging, not cruising as we wish to believe we are, and make the necessary methodical positive profile changes. All aircraft must deal with the reality of two kinds of drag: Parasite Drag and Induced Drag.

Total Drag for an aircraft is the sum of Parasite Drag and Induced Drag. Parasite drag of this purpose is considered to be all drag that is not induced. Parasite drag increases dramatically with an increase of speed. Induced drag, contrary to common sense, decreases as velocity increases. The airplane can be slowed to reduce Parasite Drag, but the Induced Drag increases.

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

Parasite Drag is comprised of all the forces at work to slow an aircraft's movement. As the term parasite implies, it is the drag that is not associated with the production of lift.

-FAA Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

Parasite Drag increases with the square of the airspeed; double the airspeed, and parasite drag increases four times. Triple the airspeed, and parasite drag increases nine times. Naturally, parasite drag is greater for (landing) gear down configurations, and a lot of antennas sticking out can cost a few knots at cruise.

- William Kershner,
  The Instrument Flight Manual

Parasite Drag increases as the square of the speed: double the airspeed and the drag quadruples. That is what limits top speed- when all of the available horsepower is being used to overcome drag, you can't go any faster.

- Bob Gardner, The Complete Private Pilot

Induced Drag is inherent whenever an airfoil is producing lift and, in fact, this type of drag is inseparable from the production of lift.

-FAA Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

Induced Drag is caused by the fact that the wing is creating lift. In creating lift, the relative air is deflected downward, and wing-tip vortices are formed that result in drag force.

- William Kershner,
  The Instrument Flight Manual

Induced drag is the inevitable result of lift development. Remember how Bernoulli and Newton's effects (Third Law- Equal and Opposite Reactions) in combination provide high pressure on the bottom of the wing and low pressure on the top? These forces are resolved at the wing tip as the high pressure air corkscrews up and around the wing tip toward the low pressure area. This meeting of high and low pressure air, with the rotational velocity imparted to the air, creates induced drag…**You will see many modern airplanes with winglets, devices which reduce induced drag by controlling the mixing of high and low pressure air at the tip of a lifting surface**. ***Anything that reduces total drag adds to efficiency*. Most recent design advances have been accomplished through drag reduction programs, because increasing performance through the addition of sheer horsepower has reached a practical limit**….Some airplanes can be equipped with spoilers, pilot-

controlled flat plates that extend perpendicular to the top of the wing and destroy a large portion of the wing's lift. These after market modifications allow the pilot to lose altitude rapidly without changing airspeed or thrust.

- Bob Gardner
  The Complete Private Pilot

An airfoil creates a pressure differential between the upper and lower surfaces. Air will attempt to flow from an area of higher pressure to an area of lower pressure. Along the span of the wing, this tendency results in a net force being exerted on the wing. At the wingtips, however, the pressure differential still exists, but there is no more wing against which to exert pressure (block the flow). The result is a flow around the wingtip from the higher pressure area below the wing to the area of lower pressure above the wing. This flow is known as a wingtip vortex.

The lift produced by an airfoil is dependent upon the distribution of air pressure around that airfoil (wing). The pressure distribution is in turn, dependent upon airfoil shape. **At a zero angle of attack, the airflow over that top and bottom surfaces of the airfoil will be the same, and consequently no lift will be produced.** The same is true for a symmetrically curved airfoil. At a zero angle of attack, this airfoil produces no lift…The significance of the pressures along the surface of an airfoil is the difference between these pressures and the pressure of the free airstream or ambient pressure. Creating a pressure lower or higher than ambient pressure creates an aerodynamic force by virtue of the pressure difference.

Usually simply described as the "drag due to lift," it is a concept misunderstood by many aviators. Because induced drag is a direct result of wingtip vortices, it will be around as long as aircraft have wingtips, although its effects can be altered somewhat. **Only a wing with infinite span would not suffer from inducted drag caused by wingtip vortices**….Induced drag will vary proportionally with any term in the numerator of this equation; therefore, we can see that wing planform and aircraft weight

have a direct effect on induced drag. **In fact, induced drag will vary with the square of the weight; doubling the weight of the aircraft will quadruple the induced drag…A longer wingspan reduces the angle of attack required for a given amount of lift and consequently reduces the drag associated with higher angles of attack and makes the wing more efficient.** One development in this area has been the addition of winglets on the wingtips of newer transport and executive aircraft. **The winglets act to effectively increase the wingspan of the aircraft and reduce the drag associated with lift production.**

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

Parasite Drag is the naturally occurring impediment of the function of aircraft. There are three forms of drag that comprise Parasite Drag. The very nature of the aircraft's shape moving in the atmosphere has drag because it basically exists. This is Pressure Drag. A fighter jet generates an excess of power to compensate for short stubby delta wings with limited drag profiles to create lift but require a lot of fuel for all the needed thrust. Take all the power away from any aircraft with delta wings and they tend to drop like bricks from a bridge. Contrast this to the solar powered airplane Solar Impulse 2 with elongated wings as a glider for easier lift at slower speeds with greater airfoil surface area, hence more drag yet more glide capability: flying soft and gentle requiring so much less beyond sunshine. Wow.

Let's modify this parasitic aspect as to who we are to function: sleep, food, water, social needs, clothes, home, etc. The natural cost, the basic needs for healthy living. Produce stores, let's think of them as a form of parasitic drag being healthy with fresh organic fruit and vegetable choices. When you debit, your money is well spent to eat right for maximum nutrition. You had an open choice between fascinating deep fried foods and tubs of ice cream with artificial colors vs. boring nature grown organic summer fruits. Both choices will require a debit, but one choice will serve

you better. The produce did cost you, but it's a cost you can live with- and you look and feel healthier better with air and exercise.

As with most hazards associated with aviation, the best policy to adopt for dealing with hypoxia can be summed up in two words: awareness and avoidance.

Avoidance of hypoxia starts with maintenance of the body in the best possible condition. A healthy pilot, not overweight, who does not smoke, drinks no more than occasionally and never the day before a flight, and who is in good condition from regular exercise will be less affected by hypoxic symptoms and will experience those symptoms at higher altitude. This is just good preventative maintenance on the most crucial part of the flight equation, the pilot.

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Air flowing over the surface area of any body creates friction due to the viscosity, or stickiness, of the air. All fluids have viscosity and although air is not a viscous as oil or molasses, it does have a frictional effect on a surface over which it flows. This is called skin-friction drag and it is but one component of parasite drag…**Because of the viscosity of the air, the air sticks to any surface over which it flows, causing the velocity of the air *directly on the surface to be zero*, regardless of velocity of the air stream**. As we progress away from the surface or the airfoil, the velocity of the airstream gradually increases until it reaches the free airstream velocity. The distance is not large for most flight conditions- usually less than 1/20 inch at the leading edge and less than .5 inch at the trailing edge. This area between the surface and the point where the velocity reaches free airstream velocity is the known as the boundary layer…The smoother the air can be made to flow over the wing, the less friction drag will be created. A smooth, layered, streamlined airflow is termed laminar flow and is the ideal.

- Linda Pendleton
  Flying Jets

However, think of some forms of parasitic drag as insidious to reaching our top speed potential, since as we know, parasitic drag is indeed exponentially loaded with speed increases; adding to our drag profile is absolutely what we most often excel at, unfortunately, with flying colors. Consider toxic people around us suppressing our positive progress, drug and alcohol abuse to empower the delusion that we are not cruising but climbing when actually crashing, high risk behavior, gluttony and poor nutrition, lack of exercise, reams of self-doubt and lack of conviction, lack of critical thinking, poor work environments, apathy, holding onto unhealthy habits and attitudes, clinging to negative stereotypes internally and externally, focusing on what is bad as opposed to what is good. Those things that we allow ourselves to weigh us down and often defend in not changing because it could be scary losing all the bulk weight amassed, centering ourselves to be balanced and cleaning up our profiles. Talking washed and waxed business jet is one thing and remaining a rusty heavy-lift freighter is another.

Parasitic drag can be either mitigated for higher efficiencies or flatly exposed to maximum effect to destroy lift just as wing spoilers. Some parasitic drag we just have to live with but we confuse other types of parasitic drag that can be manipulated, we can control. There is Skin Friction Drag which is a form of Parasite Drag – so skin does count! The smoother the skin penetrating the fluid (air), less drag; however, rougher skin, expect an impeded ride. If you have the best skin in the atmosphere, you still have drag, but it is less of an issue. The bonus is the aircraft can be any color on the wheel, just keep it clean for best performance in the atmosphere. Both Boeing and Airbus jets we know are painted in different colors and operate with a plethora of liveries worldwide. It's a relative tight selection of big commercial jets. Who in the public domain gets bent out of shape or cares what colors honestly the jets fly? The make and model of jets and crew competencies are important and not superficial carrier colors. The carriers choose colors to distinguish themselves from each other, not for some special ensconced performance advantage, i.e., a Hot Tamales summer cinnamon candy red 737

doesn't fly faster than a cool spring green spearmint 737. **Parasitic Skin Friction Drag for aircraft is incomparable to the heavy value impediment of make, model and colors we place on people.** We can look at aircraft casually without a bit of concern yet steadfastly find drama all around us by clinging to the trappings of ignorance by getting excited about other humans unnecessarily. This is much like making a holiday dinner out of stale bread; it does, however, add salt and pepper to life because we are always looking and judging about who is in our view.

For example, who could say this nonsense and still be credible if we heard it in passing at baggage claim:

"I am a proud American so I only fly American Airlines but I was shocked to find my flight was on an Airbus A340 built in France – and it had the audacity to fly just like a Boeing as on my outbound flight with the same color scheme. They tricked us! There were American service personnel on the flight too so that dishonors them to be on a foreign built aircraft going home. It looked like one of the pilots was Mexican so we were in some kind of danger because they always low ride and maybe he takes drugs- you know how *they* are!"

Then again, people with authority on certain topics can somehow find themselves in positions in which they simply should not be, impeding progress by terminally dragging by being callously ignorant and brazen in contempt of confirmed facts:

Ignore Pope on climate, says Republican Marsha Blackburn
24 September 2015, BBC

One of the most influential US energy politicians says she will reject the Pope's plea to tackle climate change.

Republican Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn, the second-highest ranking member on the House energy committee, says the jury is out on global warming.

Pope Francis told a White House audience on Wednesday further action was needed as the problem could "no longer be left to a future generation". He is due to speak more on the subject in an address to Congress on Thursday.

Speaking as part of a forthcoming Radio 4 documentary series "Climate Change - Are we Feeling Lucky?", **she asserted that the Earth had cooled in the last 13 years by 1F. And she said no evidence would persuade her of man-made warming.**

She also rejected the theory of evolution. Scientists say her views are "complete nonsense".

"The jury is still out saying man is the cause for global warming, after the earth started to cool 13 years ago," she says.

When challenged that the earth's surface temperature had not risen substantially in 13 years - but had definitely not cooled, she said - "I think we've cooled almost 1 degree (F)."

The Earth's scientific authorities - including the US space agency NASA - say the earth is still warming, with ice melting, sea level rising and oceans warming.

Ms Blackburn declined to name the sources of her scepticism about mainstream science.

"We have met with different researchers," she says. "We had had numerous committee meetings in which we've had individuals come to present and from all of that and what we have been able to read you come to an opinion.

"There are some that feel like human activity is the cause for carbon emissions and because of that we need to revert to where we were in the 1870s for carbon emissions. I just choose to disagree with that."

Asked what scientific evidence would persuade her that climate change was a threat, she replied - "I don't think you will see me being persuaded."

Asked whether she accepted the theory of evolution she said: "No I do not."

Ms Blackburn's views matter because Republicans in Congress are trying to roll back President Obama's attempts to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Professor Brian Hoskins, a leading climate scientist at the Royal Society said her remarks were "absolutely staggering".

"It is nonsense to say the world has cooled," Hoskins said. "If no evidence will persuade Ms Blackburn of climate change, that shows how well-founded her views are.

Discoverer of the greenhouse effect: Burgundy's Joseph Fourier

In the 1820s Fourier calculated that an object the size of the Earth, and at its distance from the Sun, should be considerably colder than the planet actually is if warmed by only the effects of incoming solar radiation. He examined various possible sources of the additional observed heat in articles published in 1824 and 1827. While he ultimately suggested that interstellar radiation might be responsible for a large portion of the additional warmth, Fourier's consideration of the possibility that the Earth's atmosphere might act as an insulator of some kind is widely recognized as the first proposal of what is now known as the greenhouse effect, although Fourier never called it that.

In his articles, Fourier referred to an experiment by de Saussure, who lined a vase with blackened cork. Into the cork, he inserted several panes of transparent glass, separated by intervals of air. Midday sunlight was allowed to enter at the top of the vase through the glass panes. The temperature became more elevated in the more interior compartments of this device. Fourier concluded that gases in the atmosphere could form a stable barrier like the glass panes. This conclusion may have contributed to the later use of the metaphor of the 'greenhouse effect' to refer to the processes that determine atmospheric temperatures. Fourier noted that the actual mechanisms that determine the temperatures of the atmosphere included convection, which was not present in de Saussure's experimental device.

- Wikipedia

New Leadership Quickly Reverses Canada's Position on Climate Change

New York Times by Ian Austen

27 November 2015

In less than a month, Canada has executed a complete about face on global change.

With the defeat of the Conservatives in the October general election, out went nearly a decade of Canada making itself something of a global outcast on the issue. The record of the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, on climate change was marked by retreat, foot-dragging, and hand-wringing over the economic consequences of moving too quickly…

Mr. Harper skipped last year's United Nations climate summer meeting in New York (terribly long flight burning fossil fuel from Ottawa in 56 minutes so we compassionately understand). But Mr. Trudeau will attend this year's meeting in Paris week, and not only that: He has invited his political opponents and all 10 of the country's provincial premiers to join the delegation. He gathered the premiers in Ottawa on the Monday for a meeting largely devoted to developing a national strategy.

"We'll demonstrate that we are serious about climate change," Mr. Trudeau said after a four-hour dinner with the premiers. **"This means making decisions based on science**; it means reducing carbon emissions, including through carbon pricing toward a climate-resilient economy." Several of the provincial leaders voiced similar sentiments.

Mr. Harper would never have said that. Though he acknowledged a need for some action during his decade in power, he withdrew Canada from the Kyoto accord on climate change and warned about the economic consequences of moving faster than the United States.

Certainly this important news – fresh only days before- Blackburn categorically would have dismissed as mere hogwash since not approved from Fox News commentators, that came to light:

New human-like species discovered in South Africa
10 September 2015, BBC

Scientists have discovered a new human-like species in a burial chamber deep in a cave system in South Africa.

The discovery of 15 partial skeletons is the largest single discovery of its type in Africa.

The researchers claim that the discovery will change ideas about our human ancestors.

The studies which have been published in the journal Elife also indicate that these individuals were capable of ritual behaviour.

The species, which has been named *naledi*, has been classified in the grouping, or genus, *Homo,* to which modern humans belong. The researchers who made the find have not been able to find out how long ago these creatures lived - but the scientist who led the team, Prof Lee Berger, told BBC News that he believed they could be among the first of our kind (*genus Homo*) and could have lived in Africa up to three million years ago.

Like all those working in the field, he is at pains to avoid the term "missing link". Prof Berger says *naledi* could be thought of as a "bridge" between more primitive bipedal primates and humans.

"We'd gone in with the idea of recovering one fossil. That turned into multiple fossils. That turned into the discovery of multiple skeletons and multiple individuals.

"And so by the end of that remarkable 21-day experience, we had discovered the largest assemblage of fossil human relatives ever discovered in the history of the continent of Africa. That was an extraordinary experience." Prof Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum said *naledi* was "a very important discovery".

"What we are seeing is more and more species of creatures that suggests that nature was experimenting with how to evolve humans, thus giving rise to several different types of human-like creatures originating in parallel in different parts of Africa. Only one line eventually survived to give rise to us," he told BBC News.

I went to see the bones which are kept in a secure room at Witwatersrand University. The door to the room looks like one that would seal a bank vault. As Prof Berger turned the large lever on the door, he told me that our knowledge of very early humans is based on partial skeletons and the occasional skull.

The haul of 15 partial skeletons includes both males and females of varying ages - from infants to elderly. The discovery is unprecedented in Africa and will shed more light on how the first humans evolved."We are going to know everything about this species," Prof Berger told me as we walked over to the remains of *H. naledi*.

"We are going to know when its children were weaned, when they were born, how they developed, the speed at which they developed, the difference between males and females

at every developmental stage from infancy, to childhood to teens to how they aged and how they died."

I was astonished to see how well preserved the bones were. The skull, teeth and feet looked as if they belonged to a human child - even though the skeleton was that of an elderly female. Its hand looked human-like too, up to its fingers which curl around a bit like those of an ape.

Homo naledi is unlike any primitive human found in Africa. It has a tiny brain - about the size of a gorilla's and a primitive pelvis and shoulders. But it is put into the same genus as humans because of the more progressive shape of its skull, relatively small teeth, characteristic long legs and modern-looking feet.

"I saw something I thought I would never see in my career," Prof Berger told me.

"It was a moment that 25 years as a paleoanthropologist had not prepared me for."

One of the most intriguing questions raised by the find is how the remains got there.

Prof Berger believes that the discovery of a creature that has such a mix of modern and primitive features should make scientists rethink the definition of what it is to be human - so much so that he himself is reluctant to describe *naledi* as human.

Other researchers working in the field, such as Prof Stringer, believe that *naledi* should be described as a primitive human. But he agrees that current theories need to be re-evaluated and that we have only just scratched the surface of the rich and complex story of human evolution.

A Chronology of Human Evolution

Ardipithecus ramidus (4.4 million years ago) : Fossils were discovered in Ethiopia in the 1990s. Pelvis shows adaptations to both tree climbing and upright walking.

Australopithecus afarensis (3.9 - 2.9 million years ago) : The famous "Lucy" skeleton belongs to this species of human relative. So far, fossils of this species have only been found in East Africa. Several traits in the skeleton suggest *afarensis* walked upright, but they may have spent some time in the trees.

Homo habilis (2.8 - 1.5 million years ago) : This human relative had a slightly larger braincase and smaller teeth than the australopithecines or older species, but retains many more primitive features such as long arms.

Homo naledi (Of unknown age, but researchers say it could be as old as three million years) : The new discovery has small, modern-looking teeth, human-like feet but more primitive fingers and a small braincase.

Homo erectus (1.9 million years - unknown) : *Homo erectus* had a modern body plan that was almost indistinguishable from ours. But it had a smaller brain than a modern person's combined with a more primitive face.

Homo neanderthalensis (200,000 years - 40,000 years) The Neanderthals were a side-group to modern humans, inhabiting western Eurasia before our species left Africa. They were shorter and more muscular than modern people but had slightly larger brains.

Homo sapiens (200,000 years - present) Modern humans evolved in Africa from a predecessor species known as *Homo heidelbergensis*. **A small group of *Homo sapiens* left Africa 60,000 years ago and settled the rest of the world, replacing the**

other human species they encountered (with a small amount of interbreeding).

DNA hints at earlier human exodus from Africa

By Paul Rincon Science editor, BBC News website
22 September 2016

www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-37408014

Hints of an early exodus of modern humans from Africa may have been detected in living humans. People outside Africa overwhelmingly trace their descent to a group that left the continent 60,000 years ago.

Now, analysis of nearly 500 human genomes appears to have turned up the weak signal of an earlier migration. But the results suggest this early wave of *Homo sapiens* all but vanished, so it does not drastically alter prevailing theories of our origins.
And two separate studies in the academic journal Nature failed to find the signature of this migration.

But Luca Pagani, Mait Metspalu and colleagues describe hints of this pioneer group in their analysis of DNA in people from the Oceanian nation of Papua New Guinea.
After evolving in Africa 200,000 years ago, modern humans are thought to have crossed through Egypt into the Arabian Peninsula some 60,000 years ago. Until now, genetic evidence has shown that today's non-Africans could trace their origins to this fateful dispersal.

Yet we had known for some time that groups of modern humans made forays outside their "homeland" before 60,000 years ago.

- Fossilised remains found at the Qafzeh and Es Skhul caves in Israel had been dated to between 120,000 and 90,000 years ago.

- Then in 2015, scientists working in Daoxian, south China, reported the discovery of modern human teeth dating to at least 80,000 years ago.

- An additional piece of evidence recently came from traces of Homo sapiens DNA in a female Neanderthal from Siberia's Altai mountains. The analysis suggested that modern humans and Neanderthals had begun mixing around 100,000 years ago - presumably outside Africa.

In order to reconcile this evidence with the genetic data from living populations, the prevailing view advanced by scientists was of a wave of pioneer settlement that ended in extinction.

But the latest results suggest some descendents of these trailblazers survived long enough to get swept up in the later, ultimately more successful migration that led to the settling of Oceania.

"The first instance when we thought we were seeing something was when we used a technique called MSMC, which allows you to look at split times of populations," said co-author Dr Mait Metspalu, director of the Estonian Biocentre in Tartu, told BBC News.
His colleague and first author Dr Luca Pagani, also from the Estonian Biocentre, added: **"All the other Eurasians we had were very homogenous in their split times from Africans. "This suggests most Eurasians diverged from Africans in a single event... about 75,000 years ago, while the [Papua New Guinea] split was more ancient - about 90,000 years ago.** So we thought there must be something going on."
It was already known that Papua New Guineans, along with other populations from Oceania and Asia, derive a few per cent of their ancestry from Denisovans, an enigmatic sister group to the Neanderthals. The researchers tried to remove this component, but were left with a third chunk of the genome which was different from the Denisovan segment and the overwhelming majority which represents the main out of Africa migration 60,000 years ago.

"This third component had intermediate properties which we concluded must have originated as an independent expansion out of Africa about 120,000 years ago," Dr Pagani told BBC News.

"We believe this makes up at least 2% of the genome of modern [Papua New Guineans]." In a separate paper in the same edition of Nature, Prof David Reich and Swapan Mallick, both from Harvard Medical School, along with colleagues analysed 300 genomes from 142 different populations around the world.

They found evidence of early splits between populations within Africa, along with a single dispersal that gave rise to non-African populations. But they found no signs of substantial ancestry from an early African exodus in Papua New Guineans and other related populations such as indigenous Australians. They conclude that, if the genetic legacy of such a migration survives in these populations, it can't comprise more than a few per cent of their genomes.

A similar conclusion is reached in a third study on the genomes of indigenous Australian by the University of Copenhagen's Eske Willerslev and Anna-Sapfo Malaspinas, along with colleagues.

David Reich told BBC News: "In our paper, we exclude more than about 2% ancestry in Australians, Papuans, and New Guineans from an early dispersal population, and our best estimate is 0%.

"I am a bit concerned that poorly modelled features of the methods used by Pagani and colleagues may have contributed to a false-positive signal of early dispersal ancestry in them. However, an alternative possibility is that the truth is around 2%, and this might just be consistent with all three studies."

Commenting on the Reich Lab study, Dr Metspalu told BBC News: "They do not detect an early Out of Africa, but they also do not reject it as long as it is just a few per cent in modern humans."

Dr Pagani added: **"All three papers all reach the same conclusions. That in Eurasians and also [Papua New Guineans] - the majority of their genomes come from the same major migration."**

Prof Chris Stringer, from London's Natural History Museum, who was not involved with the genomic studies, commented: **"The papers led by Mallick and by Malaspinas favour a single exit from Africa less than 80,000 years ago giving rise to all extant non-Africans, while that led by Pagani favours an additional and earlier exit more than 100,000 years ago, traces of which they claim can still be found in Australasians.**

"Unfortunately, the signs of past interbreeding with a Denisovan-like archaic population which are found at a level of about 4% in extant Australasians, according to the Malaspinas paper, complicate interpretations, as well as the possibility that there may have been yet other ancient interbreedings which are so far poorly understood."

The man stuffed and displayed like a wild animal

16 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37344210

In the early 19th Century, it was fashionable for Europeans to collect wild animals from around the globe, bring them home and put them on display. One French dealer went further, bringing back the body of an African warrior. Dutch writer Frank Westerman came across the exhibit in a Spanish museum 30 years ago, and was determined to trace the man's history.

WARNING: This story contains an image some readers may find disturbing

A decorative chain-link fence in the national colours - blue, white and black - marks the grave of one of the most famous, but least enviable sons of Botswana: "El Negro". His resting place in a public park in the city of Gaborone, under a tree trunk and some rocks, is reminiscent of the tomb of an unknown soldier.
A metal plaque reads:
El Negro
Died c. 1830
Son of Africa
Carried to Europe in Death
Returned Home to African Soil
October 2000

His fame comes from his posthumous travels - lasting 170 years - as a museum exhibit in France and Spain. Generations of Europeans gaped at his half-naked body, which had been stuffed and mounted by a taxidermist. There he stood, nameless, exhibited like a trophy.

Back in 1983, as a university student from The Netherlands, I accidentally came across him on a hitchhiking trip to Spain. I had spent a night in the town of Banyoles, an hour north of Barcelona. The entrance of the Darder Museum of Natural History, behind a trio of leafless plane trees, happened to be next door.

"He's real, you know," a schoolgirl shouted at me.
"Who's real?"
"El Negro!" Her voice blared out over the square - accompanied by the snorts and laughter of her friends. History dictated that the taxidermist was a white European and his object a black African - the reverse was unimaginable.

The next instant an elderly woman stepped out of the hairdressing salon with a cardigan draped over her shoulders. A fragile lady with a pointy chin graced by a few single hairs, she turned a key ring around in her fingers like a rosary. Senora Lola opened up the museum, sold me a ticket and pointed in the direction of the reptile room."That way," she ordered. "Then go through the rooms clockwise."

As I was on my way to the Human Room, an annex of the Mammal Room, past a climbing wall with apes and the skeleton of a gorilla, my merriment gave way to a shudder. There he was, the stuffed Negro of Banyoles. A spear in his right hand, a shield in his left. Bending slightly, shoulders raised. Half-naked, with just a raffia decoration and a coarse orange loincloth.

El Negro turned out to be an adult male, skin and bones, who hardly came up to one's elbow. He was standing in a glass case in the middle of the carpet.

This was not Madame Tussaud's. I was not staring at an illusion of authenticity - this black man was neither a cast nor some kind of mummy. He was a human being, displayed like yet another wildlife specimen. History dictated that the taxidermist was a white European and his object a black African. The reverse was unimaginable. I flushed and felt the roots of my hair prickling - simply from a diffuse sense of shame.
Senora Lola didn't have an explanation. She didn't even have a catalogue or a brochure. She tapped a carousel postcard stand and stared at me through her glasses. I took a card of El Negro and read on the back: Museo Darder - Banyoles. Bechuana.

"Bechuana?"

Senora Lola kept staring at me. Head back, chin jutting forward. "The cards are 40 pesetas each," she said. I bought two.

Twenty years later I decided to write a book about El Negro's extraordinary journey from Botswana (Bechuana) to Banyoles and back again.

The story begins with Jules Verreaux, a French dealer in "naturalia", who in 1831 witnessed the burial of a Tswana warrior in the African interior, a few days' travel north of Capetown, and then returned at night - "not without danger to my own life" - to dig up the body and steal the skin, the skull and a few bones. With the help of metal wire acting as a spine, wooden boards as shoulder blades, and stuffed with newspapers, Verreaux prepared and preserved the stolen body parts. Then he shipped him to Paris, along with a batch of stuffed animals in crates. In 1831 the African's body appeared in a showroom at No 3, Rue Saint Fiacre.

In a review, the newspaper Le Constitutionnel praised the fearlessness of Jules Verreaux, who must have faced dangers "amid natives who are as wild as they are black". This article set the tone, and the "individual of the Bechuana people" attracted more attention than the giraffes, hyenas or ostriches. "He is small in posture, black-skinned, and his head is covered in woolly frizzy hair," the newspaper said. More than half a century later, the "Bechuana" popped up in Spain. On the fringes of the world exhibition in Barcelona in 1888, the Spanish vet Francisco Darder presented him in a catalogue as "El Betchuanas", complete with a drawing in which he is seen wearing raffia finery and holding a spear and a shield.

By the 20th Century, having been brought over to Banyoles, a small city at the foot of the Pyrenees, his origins had been largely forgotten - on his pedestal was mistakenly written "Bushman of the Kalahari". In the decades that followed, the link to his Tswana origins faded even further and he became known simply as "El Negro". At some point, the revealing loincloth that Jules Verreaux had decked him out in was replaced by the Roman-Catholic curators of the Banyoles museum with a more demure orange skirt. His skin was given a layer of shoe polish to make him seem blacker than he was.

Standing in his display case, slightly bowed and with a piercing gaze, El Negro embodied in a poignant and harrowing way, the darkest aspects of Europe's colonial past. He

confronted visitors head-on with theories of "scientific racism" - the classification of people according to their supposed inferiority or superiority on the basis of skull measurements and other false assumptions.

El Negro was dismantled as if the film of the preparations that Jules Verreaux carried out 170 years earlier was simply rewound.

As the 20th Century progressed, El Negro became more and more of an anachronism. Not only was there increasing guilt and awareness of the fact that his body and grave had been violated, but as a European artefact from the 19th Century he reflected ideas that had become universally untenable. Everything began to shift in 1992 when a Spanish doctor of Haitian origin suggested, in a letter to El Pais, that El Negro should be removed from the museum. The Olympic Games were coming to Barcelona that year and the lake of Banyoles was the venue for the rowing competitions. Surely, wrote Dr Alphonse Arcelin, any athletes and spectators who visited the local museum would take offence at the sight of a stuffed black man.

Arcelin's call was supported by prominent names such as the US pastor Jesse Jackson and basketball player "Magic" Johnson. The Ghanaian Kofi Annan, then still Assistant Secretary-General of the UN, condemned the exhibit as "repulsive" and "barbarically insensitive". But due to heavy resistance among the Catalan people, who embraced El Negro as a "national" treasure, it was not until March 1997 that El Negro disappeared from public view and "Object 1004" was put into storage. Three years later, in the autumn of 2000, he began his final journey home.

Following long consultations with the Organisation for African Unity, Spain had agreed to repatriate the human remains to Botswana for a ceremonial reburial in African soil. The first stage of his repatriation was a night ride in a truck to Madrid.

Once in the capital, his stuffed body was divested of its non-human additions, such as his glass eyes. El Negro was dismantled - as if the film of the preparations that Jules Verreaux carried out 170 years earlier was simply rewound.

His skin, however, turned out to be hard and crusty - it crumbled. Because of this, and because of the treatment with shoe polish, it was decided to keep it in Spain. According to one newspaper report it was left behind at the Museum of Anthropology in Madrid. So the coffin, destined for Botswana, contained only the skull and certain arm and leg bones.

The remains of the Tswana warrior lay in state for a day in the capital Gaborone, where an estimated 10,000 people walked past to pay their last respects. The following day, 5 October 2000, he was committed to earth in a fenced-off area in the Tsholofelo park.

In 2016 it is still not known who this "son of Africa" was. It was a Christian burial. "In the spirit of Jesus Christ," the priest said with his hand on the Bible, "who also suffered." An awning, supported by two rows of tent poles, protected the guests of honour from the sun.

"We are prepared to forgive," said the then-Foreign Minister Mompati Merafhe to the assembled mourners. "But we must not forget the crimes of the past, so that we don't repeat them." Blessings were pronounced, there was singing and dancing. Buglers wearing white gloves sounded a last salute.

Subsequently, the grave was neglected for many years, the field around it being used as a football pitch. Lately however, the Botswanan government has restored and enhanced the site with a visitor's centre and explanatory signs. But in 2016 it is still not known who this "son of Africa" was, what his name was, or exactly where he came from.

An autopsy, carried out in a Catalan hospital in 1995, nevertheless brought some things to light. The man who became world-renowned as El Negro lived to be about 27 years old.

When alive, he stood between 1.35m and 1.4m tall (between 4ft 5in and 4ft 7in). He probably died of pneumonia.

Europeans drawn from three ancient 'tribes'

Paul Rincon, BBC News
17 September 2014

The modern European gene pool was formed when three ancient populations mixed within the last 7,000 years, Nature journal reports.

Blue-eyed, swarthy hunters mingled with brown-eyed, pale skinned farmers as the latter swept into Europe from the Near East. But another, mysterious population with Siberian affinities also contributed to the genetic landscape of the continent.

The findings are based on analysis of genomes from nine ancient Europeans. Agriculture originated in the Near East - in modern Syria, Iraq and Israel - before expanding into Europe around 7,500 years ago.

Multiple lines of evidence suggested this new way of life was spread by a wave of migrants, who interbred with the indigenous European hunter-gatherers they encountered on the way.

But assumptions about European origins were based largely on the genetic patterns of living people. The science of analysing genomic DNA from ancient bones has put some of the prevailing theories to the test, throwing up a few surprises.

Genomic DNA contains the biochemical instructions for building a human, and resides within the nuclei of our cells. In the new paper, Prof David Reich from the Harvard Medical School and colleagues studied the genomes of seven hunter-gatherers from Scandinavia, one hunter whose remains were found in a cave in Luxembourg and an early farmer from Stuttgart, Germany.

The hunters arrived in Europe thousands of years before the advent of agriculture, hunkered down in southern refuges during the Ice Age and then expanded during a period called the Mesolithic, after the ice sheets had retreated from central and northern Europe. Their genetic profile is not a good match for any modern group of people, suggesting they were caught up in the farming wave of advance.

If you look at all the reconstructions of Mesolithic people on the internet, they are always depicted as fair skinned... This shows the oppositeProf Carles Lalueza-Fox, Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC - UPF) however, their genes live on in modern Europeans, to a greater extent in the north-east than in the south.

The early farmer genome showed a completely different pattern, however. Her genetic profile was a good match for modern people in Sardinia, and was rather different from the indigenous hunters. But, puzzlingly, while the early farmers share genetic similarities with Near Eastern people at a global level, they are significantly different in other ways. Prof Reich suggests that more recent migrations in the farmers' "homeland" may have diluted their genetic signal in that region today.

Prof Reich explained: "The only way we'll be able to prove this is by getting ancient DNA samples along the potential trail from the Near East to Europe... and seeing if they genetically match these predictions or if they're different. "Maybe they're different - that would be extremely interesting."

Pigmentation genes carried by the hunters and farmers showed that, while the dark hair, brown eyes and pale skin of the early farmer would look familiar to us, the hunter-gatherers would stand out if we saw them on a street today.

"It really does look like the indigenous West European hunter gatherers had this striking combination of dark skin and blue eyes that doesn't exist any more," Prof Reich told BBC News.

Dr Carles Lalueza-Fox, from the Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC - UPF) in Barcelona, Spain, who was not involved with the research, told BBC News: **"If you look at all the reconstructions of Mesolithic people on the internet, they are always depicted as fair skinned. And the farmers are sometimes depicted as dark-skinned newcomers to Europe. This shows the opposite."**

So where did fair pigmentation in present-day Europeans come from? The farmer seems to be on her way there, carrying a gene variant for light skin that's still around today. "There's an evolutionary argument about this - that light skin in Europe is biologically advantageous for people who farm, because you need to make vitamin D," said David Reich.

"Hunters and gatherers get Vitamin D through their food - because animals have a lot of it. But once you're farming, you don't get a lot of it, and once you switch to agriculture, there's strong natural selection to lighten your skin so that when it's hit by sunlight you can synthesise vitamin D."

When the researchers looked at DNA from 2,345 present day people, they found that a third population was needed to capture the genetic complexity of modern Europeans. This additional "tribe" is the most enigmatic and, surprisingly, is related to Native Americans.

Hints of this group surfaced in an analysis of European genomes two years ago. Dubbed Ancient North Eurasians, this group remained a "ghost population" until 2013, when scientists published the genome of a 24,000-year-old boy buried near Lake Baikal in Siberia. This individual had genetic similarities to both Europeans and indigenous Americans, suggesting he was part of a population that contributed to movements into the New World 15,000 years ago and Europe at a later date.

The ancient hunter from Luxembourg and the farmer from Germany show no signs of mixture from this population, implying this third ancestor was added to the continental mix after farming was already established in Europe.

The study also revealed that the early farmers and their European descendents can trace a large part of their ancestry to a previously unknown, even older lineage called Basal Eurasians. **This group represents the earliest known population divergence among the humans who left Africa 60,000 years ago.**

Genetic Roots of Europe

Helen Briggs, BBC News

17 May 2001

Northern Europeans could be descended from as few as 50 individuals who survived the last ice age. New DNA evidence suggests that a few hundred Stone Age hunter-gatherers were the ancestors of many modern day northern Europeans.

One theory is that the population expanded from a small enclave of foragers who retreated south to an area of the Balkans or Spain to escape the spread of the glaciers.

If true, northern Europeans share essentially the same genetic makeup as their bison-hunting forefathers. According to Oxford University's Ryk Ward, the genetic data fits in surprisingly well with archaeological clues.

"Around 20,000 years ago, the population of Europe was forced to retreat into an area where there were no glaciers," says Professor Ward of the Institute of Biological Anthropology. "From that population base, a very small number of individuals then became the ancestors of the current [northern] European population."

Out-of-Africa

He says it is impossible to specify exact numbers, but he believes that about 1,000 individuals gave rise to the modern northern European gene pool, and possibly as few as 50.

According to the joint US and UK team, northern Europeans diverged from their African roots as recently as 27,000 to 53,000 years ago.
"From a genetic standpoint, this is the first evidence that such a bottleneck occurred in Europeans," he told BBC News Online. The evidence comes from a study of stretches of human DNA that contain individual variations of just a single letter in the genetic code.

Individual variation

Scientists are interested in studying these tiny molecular differences (single nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs) because they could explain why some people are more susceptible to common diseases than others.

But they also provide a tool for studying our genetic history, by measuring the amount of shuffling of human DNA that has occurred over time.

Many scientists believe that humans arose in Africa, and then spread and conquered the rest of the world. But during this long journey, the genetic history of the human race underwent a series of twists and turns.

Northern Europeans share SNPs with the Nigerian population, says Eric Lander of the MIT/Whitehead Center for Genomic Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But he says the European samples show large clumps of unshuffled genetic material, suggesting a recent breeding bottleneck.

The study is reported in the 10 May issue of the journal Nature.

DNA study finds London was ethnically diverse from start

By Pallab Ghosh , Science correspondent, BBC News
23 November 2015

A DNA study has confirmed that London was an ethnically diverse city from its very beginnings, BBC News has learned. The analysis reveals what some of the very first Londoners looked like and where they came from.

These initial results come from four people: two had origins from outside Europe, another was from continental Europe and one was a native Briton. The researchers plan to analyse more of the 20,000 human remains stored at the Museum of London. According to Caroline McDonald, who is a senior curator at the museum, London was a cosmopolitan city from the moment it was created following the Roman invasion 2,000 years ago.

"The thing to remember with the original Londoners is that they were not born here. Every first-generation Londoner was from somewhere else - whether it was somewhere else in Britain, somewhere else on the continent, somewhere else in the Mediterranean, somewhere else from Africa," she said.

"So the stories we can tell about our ancient population are absolutely relevant to modern contemporary London because these are our stories - these are people just like us." Working with scientists at Durham University and an ancient DNA lab at McMaster University in Canada, museum researchers were able to reconstruct the DNA of four individuals. They come from a collection of 20,000 human remains from London stretching back 5,500 years.

Each of these individuals are stored in their own cardboard box in a storehouse at the museum. The development of DNA analysis techniques now means that "flesh can be put on the bones" of the history of these Londoners: telling us where they came from, how they lived and how they died.

Further analyses will greatly add to our knowledge of the history of the city and enable researchers to view events through the eyes of people that lived in it at the time, according to Ms McDonald. "Their stories are written in their bones and these were stories we did not realise until we did this scientific analysis," she told BBC News.

The Lant Street teenager

The most complete skeleton studied was that of a 14-year-old girl, who the museum curators have named "The Lant Street teenager". Analysis of her DNA and chemicals in her teeth show that she grew up in North Africa. Her mitochondrial DNA lineage (passed down on the maternal line only) is common in southern and Eastern Europe.
The teenager had blue eyes and yet there were things about her skeleton that suggested some she had Sub-Saharan African ancestry. Like many people living in the capital today, she had travelled a long distance to be in London.

The Mansell Street man

Archaeologists build up a picture of individuals from the belongings they are buried with. But "The Mansell Street man" was found with nothing. According to Dr Rebecca Redfern, another Museum of London curator, until the emergence of new ancient DNA and chemical analysis techniques, these were the people who had slipped through the cracks of history. "Most of the human remains in our collection don't have any coffin plates or any sort of biographical information, so by doing these types of studies we are able to show where people came from and learn more about them as a person, about aspects of their physical appearance, and so we can really give people back their voices," she said. The analysis showed that Mansell Street man was over 45 years old with very dark brown hair and brown eyes. **His mitochondrial DNA line was from North Africa and his remains show African traits as well.**

However, the chemical make-up of his teeth shows he grew up in London. His skeleton indicates that he had a form of bone disease that today is associated with diabetes caused by a protein-rich diet. That has come as a huge surprise to researchers because in modern populations this is a disease that mostly afflicts white males from the West. So the discovery will be of great interest to medical researchers.

The Gladiator

This man was possibly a gladiator. His skull was found in a pit along with the heads of 38 other men aged between 18 and 45 - all of whom had met a violent end. This particular individual was 36-45 when he died. He had suffered serious injuries to his skull that had healed, so he had led a violent life up to his death. **His mother's ancestral line is common in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.** The Gladiator was not born in London, but he met a tragic end in the city. His head was removed from his body and probably left exposed in these pits for passers-by to see.

The Harper Road woman

"The Harper Road" woman was a first-generation Londoner. She had brown hair and brown eyes and died a handful of years after the city had been settled - shortly after Britain had been invaded by the Roman Empire in AD 43. She is buried with Roman pottery and belongings. When researchers checked the chemicals in her teeth, they confirmed she had been born in Britain. **Ms McDonald was intrigued by the fact that a native Briton adopted a Roman lifestyle within a few years of the conquest.** "What this is telling us is that people's identities were very, very fluid... her family wanted to portray a certain Roman style of identity. The Harper Road woman would have adapted her identity depending on who she was meeting - the way that we all do," she said. An added twist to the Harper Road woman's tale is that her chromosomes show that she was genetically a male - even though physically she was a woman - another feature that will intrigue modern-day researchers.

Waiting in the wings are thousands more people in the Museum of London's store house that the researchers are eager to learn more about. Next on their list are more Roman Londoners, then a group of Napoleonic soldiers and marines that were buried in Greenwich, followed by a group of medieval monks. "We would like to do an awful lot more because everyone has their own story to tell - so the more people we are able to analyse the more stories we can tell about London," says Dr Redfern. The research, and skeletons used for analysis will form a new display at the Museum of London opening on 27 November 2015.

Genomes document ancient mass migration to Europe

2 March 2015, BBC

DNA analysis has revealed evidence for a massive migration into the heartland of Europe 4,500 years ago.

Data from the genomes of 69 ancient individuals suggest that herders moved en masse from the continent's eastern periphery into Central Europe.

These migrants may be responsible for the expansion of Indo-European languages, which make up the majority of spoken tongues in Europe today.

An international team has published the research in the journal Nature. Prof David Reich and colleagues extracted DNA from remains found at archaeological sites around the continent. They used a new DNA-enrichment technique that greatly reduces the amount of sequencing needed to obtain genome-wide data.

Their analyses show that 7,000-8,000 years ago, a closely related group of early farmers moved into Europe from the Near East, confirming the findings of previous studies.
The farmers were distinct from the indigenous hunter-gatherers they encountered as they spread around the continent. Eventually, the two groups mixed, so that by 5,000-6,000 years ago, the farmers' genetic signature had become melded with that of the indigenous

Europeans. But previous studies show that a two-way amalgam of farmers and hunters is not sufficient to capture the genetic complexity of modern Europeans. A third ancestral group must have been added to the melting pot more recently.

Prof Reich and colleagues have now identified a likely source area for this later diaspora. The Bronze Age Yamnaya pastoralists of southern Russia are a good fit for the missing third genetic component in Europeans. The team analysed nine genomes from individuals belonging to this nomadic group, which buried their dead in mounds known as kurgans. The scientists contend that a group similar to the Yamnaya moved into the European heartland after the invention of wheeled vehicles, contributing up to 50% of ancestry in some modern north Europeans. Southern Europeans on the whole appear to have been less affected by the expansion.

Even more intriguing is the possible link between this steppe expansion and the origins of Indo-European languages. Most indigenous European tongues, from English to Russian and Spanish to Greek, belong to the Indo-European group. The classification is based on shared features of vocabulary and grammar.

Basque, spoken in south-west France and northern Spain, does not fit in this group, and may be the only surviving relic of earlier languages once spoken more widely.
Two principal hypotheses have been put forward to explain the preponderance of Indo-European tongues in Europe today.

According to the "Anatolian hypothesis", Indo-European languages were spread by the first farmers from the Near East 7,000-8,000 years ago. But the latest paper supports the "Steppe hypothesis", which proposes that early Indo-European speakers were farmers on the grasslands north of the Black and Caspian Seas. "An open question for us is whether the languages spoken by these steppe migrants were just ancestral to a sub-set of Indo-European languages in Europe today - for example, Balti-Slavic and maybe Germanic - or the great majority of Indo-European languages spoken in Europe today," Prof Reich told BBC News.

But he added that Indo-European languages spoken in Iran and India had probably already diverged from those spoken by the Yamnaya before the nomads blazed a trail into Europe.

Europe's fourth ancestral 'tribe' uncovered

16 November 2015, BBC

Geneticists have detected a fourth ancestral "tribe" which contributed to the modern European gene pool. Research shows Europeans are a mixture of three major ancestral populations - indigenous hunters, Middle Eastern farmers and a population that arrived from the east in the Bronze Age. **DNA from ancient remains in the Caucasus has now revealed a fourth population that fed into the mix**. Details are published in Nature Communications.

Scientific advances in recent years have allowed researchers to retrieve and analyse genomes from ancient burials. The genome is the genetic blueprint for a human, contained within the nucleus of every cell. This deluge of data has transformed our understanding of the modern human genetic landscape. **It has also shown that present-day genetic patterns are poor guides to ancient ones.**

The first layer of European ancestry, the indigenous hunter-gatherers, entered Europe before the Ice Age 40,000 years ago. But 7,000 years ago, they were swept up in a migration of people from the Middle East, who introduced farming to Europe.

Language shift

About 5,000 years ago, herders called the Yamnaya entered Europe from the eastern Steppe region - in present day Ukraine and Russia.

These horse riding metal workers may have brought Indo-European languages with them; today this language family comprises most of the tongues spoken in Europe. The discovery of plague DNA in Yamnaya burials and a population decline in Europe around

the same time has led some researchers to wonder if their passage west was facilitated by the spread of disease.

The Yamnaya transformed the gene pools of northern and central Europe, such that some populations, like Norwegians, owe around 50% of their ancestry to these Steppe pastoralists. **But the Yamnaya were themselves a mixed population**. Around half of their ancestry came from a sister group to the hunter-gatherers who inhabited Europe before farming, while the other half appears to be from a population related to - but noticeably different from - the Middle Eastern migrants who introduced farming. Researchers have now analysed genomes from two hunter-gatherers from Georgia that are 13,300 and 9,700 years old. The results show that these Caucasus hunters were probably the source of the farmer-like DNA in the Yamnaya.

Isolation by ice

The Caucasus hunter-gatherer genomes show a continued mixture with their Middle Eastern cousins to the south, who would go on to invent farming 10,000 years ago. However, this mixing ended about 25,000 years ago - just before the time of the last glacial maximum, or peak of the Ice Age. At this point, populations shrank - as shown by their genes homogenising, a sign of breeding between those with increasingly similar DNA. **Once the ice retreated, the Caucasus groups came into contact with a different group of hunter-gatherers living on the Steppe and mixed with them, laying the genetic foundations of the Yamnaya people.**

"The question of where the Yamnaya come from has been something of a mystery up to now," said co-author Dr Andrea Manica, from the University of Cambridge.
"We can now answer that as we've found that their genetic make-up is a mix of Eastern European hunter-gatherers and a population from this pocket of Caucasus hunter-gatherers who weathered much of the last Ice Age in apparent isolation."

The researchers also suggest that the Caucasus hunter-gatherers influenced populations further east, particularly in South Asia. They suggest that this

strand of ancestry may also have been associated with the spread of Indo-European languages to the region.

DNA uncovers mystery migration to the Americas

By Pallab Ghosh, Science correspondent
22 July 2015, BBC News

Two separate genetic analyses have found evidence for a surprising genetic link between the native populations of the Americas and Oceania. The DNA of some native Amazonians shows significant similarity to indigenous inhabitants of Australia and Melanesia.

The two research groups, however, offer contrasting interpretations of how the Americas were first peopled. The studies have been published in the journals Science and Nature. There is agreement that the first people to populate the Americas came though Siberia - along a land bridge connecting it with Europe and Asia. But just where these people came from and when they arrived has been a matter of some debate.

By analysing the DNA of modern native Americans and ancient human remains, the group writing in Science concluded that all present-day Native Americans arrived in a single migration no earlier than 23,000 years ago. Then, they argue, Native Americans split into two branches around 13,000 years ago: one that is now dispersed across North and South America while the other is restricted to North America."Our paper shows that the simplest possible model seems by and large to be true, with [that] one notable exception," Prof Rasmus Nielsen from the University of California, Berkley, told BBC News.

"[So] the fanciful ideas that somehow the Americas were populated by people coming from Europe and all kinds of other places are wrong."

The analysis also rules out a theory, favoured by some, of a staggered migration from Siberia: the first more than 30,000 years ago which was stemmed for 15,000 years because of ice blocking the route, and then a second wave when the route was clear. But, in agreement with the study in Nature, Prof Nielsen's team does report traces of "Australo-Melanesian" ancestry in certain populations, including those of the Aleutian islands (off Alaska) and the Surui people of the Brazilian Amazon.

Prof David Reich, from Harvard Medical School, led the separate study in Nature. **He told the BBC that "both studies show that there have been multiple pulses of migration into the Americas".**

According to Prof Reich, the discovery of Oceanian ancestry among certain Native American groups indicates that the Americas were peopled by a more diverse set of populations than previously accepted. "The simplest possible model never predicted an affinity between Amazonians today and Australasians," he said.
"This suggests that there is an ancestral population that crossed into the Americas that is different from the population that gave rise to the great majority of Americans. And that was a great surprise," he said.

Prof Reich believes that the most plausible explanation is that there was a separate migration from Australasia, possibly around 15,000 years ago. This group, he speculates, was probably more widely dispersed across North America but was eventually pushed out by other native American groups.

Prof Nielsen, however, has a different interpretation. He believes that the traces of Australasian DNA stem from a later migration, around 8,000 years ago, which progressed around the Pacific coast.

Perhaps for a person of such crystalline brilliance and piety as Blackburn, we can take immodest comfort that as a ranking member in the House of Representatives on Energy, she knows more about science and the environment with a neutral

disposition to measure and gather facts to reach sage conclusions, not vice versa, as she pours herself another cup of tea. Republicans have an affinity for tea which proves to be more than patriotic but corrosive. She does find answers in facts and not in conjecture. It just depends, however, upon what facts she is willing to accept and from where! Certainly Big Oil doesn't have her in their pocket as she is beholden to a higher principle of serving her constituency and country.

…**Cherry-picking is the careful selection of data, choosing those that support the argument you wish to make while underplaying or ignoring data that undermine it.**

Since real-world numbers are fuzzy, answers to numerical questions aren't always clear-cut. Measuring the same thing in different ways can give different answers; some of the numbers will be too high, some will be too low, and, with luck, others will be reasonably close to the right answer. **The best way to figure out where the truth lies is to look at all the data together, figuring out the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of measurement so that you get as close to the truth as possible.** A cherry picker, on the other hand, selects the data that support his argument and presents only them, willfully excluding numbers that are less supportive, even if those numbers may be closer to the truth. **Cherry-picking is lying by exclusion to make an argument seem more compelling. And it's extremely common, especially in the political world.**

- Charles Seife
Proofiness

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In hindsight this was perhaps the most important effect of Sihanouk's departure. After a lifetime spent in the shadows, hiding from the limelight, Pol was forced to take center stage.

It was not a role which came to him easily. At first, Cambodian officials were told to say the new Premier was 'a rubber plantation worker' from the Eastern Zone, and a fictious

biography was circulated, claiming that he had fought with the Issarak during the Japanese occupation. In Paris there was speculation that 'Pol Pot' might be an alias for Rath Samouen. When the first photographs of him appeared, old friends from his student days..to say nothing of his own brothers, working as peasants in Kompong Thom, were amazed to discover that their new leader was the self-effacing Saloth Sar. It was the old instinct, born of years of clandestinity, that information must be jealously guarded and the less that got out the better.

Throughout the years of revolutionary struggle, the demands of secrecy had meant that this mysterious and omnipotent leadership had remained anonymous. Now for the first time, the 'Comrade Secretary', like the god-kings of old, had to reveal himself with a human face.

It was a face that was very hard to fathom.

'Pol Pot,' Ieng Sary recalled, 'even when he was very angry, you could never tell. His face…his face was always smooth. He never used bad language. You could not tell from his face what he was feeling. Many people misunderstood that – he would smile his unruffled smile, and they would be taken away and executed. ' Sihanouk admired Pol's eloquence and charisma. 'He seduced you,' he wrote, 'speaking softly and always with courtesy.' Kong Duoung, who worked with him in the 1980s, remembered his warmth and his obliquity:

He was very likeable, a really nice person. He was friendly, and everything he said seemed very sensible. He would never blame you or scold you to your face. He would imply things so that we would have to think about them ourselves…(Because of this indirectness), it was sometimes very difficult to figure out what he was getting at. So we were very cautious, because we used to worry about misinterpreting his meaning.

Elizabeth Becker of the Washington Post, who saw him two years later, also found him 'not what I expected…His gestures and manner were polished….Not once, during a

violent (diatribe), did he raise his voice or slam his fist on the arm of the chair. At most he nodded his head slightly, or flicked his dainty wrist for emphasis. When he spoke to Khmer audiences, he usually carried a fan, emblematic of the monkhood.

In theory, meetings of the Standing Committee were conducted on the principle of democratic centralism or, as it was rendered in Khmer, 'the collectivity decides; the individual is responsible for the implementation'. In practice…from 1976 on, Pol decided alone:

He would listen impassively and with immense patience to detailed reports from lower-level officials…**He liked to hear views of many different people…The more information the better**. He would retain whatever was relevant to the problem at hand, and work out an initial hypothesis, which he would keep to himself. When he had refined it and reached a conclusion that satisfied him, he would make his decision, which then became irrevocable. Afterwards he would call a meeting of the Standing Committee, explaining the problem before them in such a way that, without anyone realizing it, the discussion was orientated towards the result he desired…**After everyone had spoken, he would make the summing up- selecting points from their speeches with buttressed *his* position.** He would relate these to a number of fundamental principles, including the Party's political line and the dialectical rule that all things are linked and exist in relation one to another. **Then we would announce the decision, making it appear that everyone had contributed to its formulation. There was no vote. It was stated: 'The collectivity has decided.'**

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Rep. Blackburn could be persuaded in a theory of evolution with a caveat. Scientists need to conveniently confirm humans evolved from the Highlands of Scotland and those early pagan klans that did bad by stealing Speyside whisky, raping and fighting were cursed by God so they became dark and were banished,

lost in the wilderness in Africa as one big continental mega prison without walls. That's why so many blacks are in prison now in America because that is their natural habitat. I bet she is a National Rifle Association member that believes armed guards patrolling at elementary schools and teachers with handguns in classrooms is a safe idea that would prevent massacres and crimes. Perhaps the Holocaust could have been prevented in Germany if citizens had handguns versus flame-throwers and Panzers according to Uncle Ben too. Sure.

Blackburn proves ignorance is a wonderful thing because one has the freedom to believe what one wants and can have an expansive latitude to draw ludicrous conclusions without requiring solid points of reference to be pragmatic. Never let facts challenge what you need to believe – much like being intoxicated. 2 + 2 can equal 7 if you believe it, and she does. Evidently, ignorance has served her well in her career in Congress, yet grossly damaging the ideals of democracy. When she returns to private life, no longer as a public servant, we know she will be well rewarded by the crude powers that be. She's white, blond and a Southerner which most certainly – especially in her native South – gives her less Skin Friction Drag in her environment which she uses successfully to her political and social advantage.

This is another classic case of looks and political support achieving more than brains, all sizzle and no steak, philandering Warren Harding, pushed by wife and sly mentor onto the windy summit of American politics:

Warren Gamaliel Harding (November 2, 1865 – August 2, 1923) was the 29th President of the United States, serving from March 4, 1921 until his death. Although Harding died one of the most popular presidents in history, the subsequent exposure of scandals that took place under him, such as Teapot Dome, eroded his popular regard, as did revelations of an affair by Nan Britton, one of his mistresses. **In historical rankings of the U.S. presidents, Harding has been rated among the worst.**

Most of the scandals that have marred the reputation of Harding's administration did not emerge until after his death.

The Veterans' Bureau scandal was known to Harding in January 1923, but according to Trani and Wilson, "the President's handling of it did him little credit". Harding allowed the corrupt director of the bureau, Charles R. Forbes, to flee to Europe, though he later returned and served prison time. Harding had learned that Daugherty's factotum at the Justice Department, Jess Smith, was involved in corruption. The president ordered Daugherty to get Smith out of Washington and removed Smith's name from the upcoming presidential trip to Alaska. Smith committed suicide on May 30, 1923. It is uncertain how much Harding knew about Smith's illicit activities. Murray noted that Harding was not involved in the corruption, and did not condone it.[198]

Hoover, who accompanied Harding on the Western trip, later wrote that Harding asked then what Hoover would do if he knew of some great scandal, whether to publicize it or bury it. Hoover replied that Harding should publish and get credit for integrity, and asked for details. Harding stated that it had to do with Smith, but when Hoover enquired as to Daugherty's possible involvement, Harding refused to answer

The **Teapot Dome scandal** was a bribery incident that took place in the United States from 1921 to 1922, during the administration of President Warren G. Harding. Secretary of the Interior Albert Bacon Fall had leased Navy petroleum reserves at Teapot Dome in Wyoming and two other locations in California to private oil companies at low rates without competitive bidding. In 1922 and 1923, the leases became the subject of a sensational investigation by Senator Thomas J. Walsh. Fall was later convicted of accepting bribes from the oil companies and became the first Cabinet member to go to prison. No person was ever convicted of paying a bribe, however.

Before the Watergate scandal**, Teapot Dome was regarded as the "greatest and most sensational scandal in the history of American politics".** The scandal damaged the public reputation of the Harding administration, which was already severely

diminished by its poor handling of the Great Railroad Strike of 1922 and the President's veto of the Bonus Bill in 1922.

Harding's appointment of **Harry M. Daugherty as Attorney General** received more criticism than any other. Daugherty's Ohio lobbying and back room maneuvers were not considered to qualify him for his office. When the scandals broke in 1923 and 1924, Daugherty's many enemies were delighted at the prospect of connecting him with the dishonesty, and assumed he had taken part in Teapot Dome, though Fall and Daugherty were not friends. In February 1924, the Senate voted to investigate the Justice Department, where Daugherty remained Attorney General.

– Wikipedia

Warren Harding was not a particularly intelligent man. He like to play poker and golf and to do drink and, most of all, to chase women; in fact, his sexual appetites were the stuff of legend. As he rose from one political office to another, he never once distinguished himself. He was vague and ambivalent on matters of policy. His speeches were once described as "an army of pompous phrases over the landscape in search of an idea." After being elected to the US Senate in 1914, he was absent for the debates on women's suffrage and Prohibition – two of the political issues of his time. He advanced steadily from local Ohio politics only because he was pushed by his wife, Florence, and stage-managed by the scheming Harry Daugherty and because, as he grew older, he grew more and more distinguished looking. Once at a banquet, a supporter cried out, "Why, the son of a bitch looks like a senator," and so he did. By early middle age, Harding biographer Francis Russell writes, his "lusty black eyebrows contrasted with his steel-gray hair to give the effect of force, his massive shoulders and bronzed complexion gave the effect of health." Harding, according to Russell, could have put on a toga and stepped onstage for a production of Julius Caesar. Daugherty arranged for Harding to address the 1916 Republican presidential convention because he knew that people only had to see Harding and hear the magnificent rumbling voice to be convinced of his worthiness for higher office. In 1920, Daugherty convinced Harding, against Harding's better judgment, to run for the White House. Daugherty wasn't being facetious. He was serious.

"Daugherty, ever since the two had met, had carried in the back of his mind the idea that Harding would make a 'great President." Sullivan writes. "Sometimes, unconsciously, Daugherty expressed it, with more fidelity to exactness, 'a great-looking President.'

How the two men, Harding and Daugherty met is fateful:

Early one morning in 1899, in the back garden of the Globe Hotel in Richwood, Ohio, two men met while having their shoes shined. One was a lawyer and a lobbyist from the state capital of Columbus. His name was Harry Daugherty. He was thick-set, red-faced with a straight black hair, and he was brilliant. He was the Machiavelli of Ohio politics, the classic behinds-the-scenes fixer, a shrewd and insightful judge of character or, at least, political opportunity. The second man was a newspaper editor from the small town of Marion, Ohio, who was at that moment a week away from winning election to the Ohio state senate. His name was Warren Harding. Daugherty looked over at Harding and was instantly overwhelmed by what he saw. As the journalist Mark Sullivan wrote, of that moment in the garden:

Harding was worth looking at. He was at the time about 35 years old. His head, features, shoulders and torso had a size that attracted attention; their proportions to each other made an effect which in any male at any place would justify more than the term handsome- in later years, when be came to be known beyond his local world, the word "Roman" was occasionally used in descriptions of him. As he stepped down from the stand, his legs bore out the striking and agreeable proportions of his body; and his lightness on his feet, his erectness, his easy bearing, added to the impression of physical grace and virility. His suppleness, combined with his bigness of frame, and his large, wide-set rather glowing eyes, heavy black hair, and markedly bronze complexion gave him some of the handsomeness of an Indian. His courtesy as he surrendered his seat to the other customer suggested genuine friendliness toward all mankind. His voice was noticeably resonant, masculine, warm. His pleasure in the attentions of the bootblack's whisk reflected a consciousness about clothes unusual in a small-town man. His manner

as be bestowed a tip suggested a generous good-nature, a wish to give pleasure, based on physical well-being and sincere kindliness of hear.

In that instant, as Daugherty sized up Harding, an idea came to him that would alter American history: Wouldn't that man make a great president?...Harding became President Harding. Harding **served two years** before dying unexpectedly of a stroke.

He was, most historians agree, one of the worst presidents in American history.

- Malcolm Gladwell
Blink

A Republican Party Split in Two

Nick Bryant , New York correspondent, BBC
27 October 2015, BBC

For the chieftains of the Republican Party, Campaign 2016 has hardly gone to script.

A loud-mouthed billionaire encouraged by his poll numbers to believe he can insult his way to the White House has up until this week dominated the battle for its presidential nomination. As for Donald Trump's most recent rival, the retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, who this week topped his first national poll, he has a tendency to speak like doctors commonly write, which is to say his words are often mumbling and almost unintelligible.

Despite a soothing bedside manner, he also has a tendency to make jolting statements, such as that Obamacare was worse than the attacks of 9/11 and abortion is like slavery. It must be a huge concern for the GOP high command that Trump and Carson, supposed fringe candidates, are attracting the support of roughly 50% of the Republican base, and that no other contender comes even close. Establishment favourites, like Jeb Bush, have struggled to make much of an impression, precisely because they are seen as establishment favourites in a party that is increasingly and defiantly anti-establishment.

The nerdy secretary of the high school stamp collecting club to Trump's football captain, Bush is struggling to find his voice and even to explain his candidacy. It heightens the sense that he is running out of a sense of dynastic entitlement.

Away from the campaign trail, on what should be the sunny uplands of Capitol Hill, the Republicans have been in chaos. For party elders, filling the House speakership, a job commonly regarded as Washington's second most powerful, has been just as tortuous as selecting a presidential nominee.

The Freedom Caucus, a rump of 40 or so ultra-conservatives, not only forced John Boehner from the job, but barred his obvious successor, Kevin McCarthy, from being promoted. Instead, the apparent winner is Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney's running mate from 2012, who has promised to show what a "common sense conservative agenda looks like". But common sense is in short supply in the modern Republican Party, where ideologues have displaced pragmatists. In a measure of how far the party has lurched to the right, Ryan is regarded by many Tea Party figures as dangerously moderate. To them, common sense equates to ideological betrayal. Little wonder Ryan was so reluctant to put himself forward for the post.

With majorities in both houses of Congress, the Republican Party should be in the ascendant. Not only did it sweep last year's congressional mid-term elections, its domination of the House of Representatives, where it has 247 seats compared to the Democrat's 188, should continue after next year's races. Republicans also occupy 31 of America's 50 governorships. After eight years of the Obama administration, the party should be well placed to regain the White House, if only because of the cyclic nature of politics and the natural appetite among electorates for change.

But the Republican's traditional nickname, the Grand Old Party, now sounds oxymoronic. Its nominating contest and congressional caucus could hardly be described as grand. At times both have been farcical. Nor does it look like a properly functioning

party. So intense and visceral has become the Republican Party's mistrust and hatred of government, it has almost itself reached the point of ungovernability.

As David Brooks, a conservative columnist with the New York Times, astutely observed, modern-day Republicans are marked more by right-wing radicalism than traditional conservatism. "Republicans came to see themselves as insurgents and revolutionaries, and every revolution tends toward anarchy and ends up devouring its own," he writes.

With the schism between pragmatists and ideologues ever harder to breach, the Republicans are in danger of becoming what the Democrats were in the 1970s and 1980s - a party that could win majorities on Capitol Hill, but which suffered a virtual lock-out at the White House.

Between the late-Sixties and early-Nineties, the Democrats won just one presidential election, in 1976 with Jimmy Carter - and that was with the winds of Watergate at their back. During that unsuccessful era, the Democrats were cast by their opponents as the party of the hippy left, the home of angry African-Americans, radical feminists and anti-war demonstrators. In other words, a protest movement.

Large factions of the party operated outside of the mainstream, what Richard Nixon called the "silent majority". As Senator George McGovern discovered in 1972, winning the party's presidential nomination, which meant reaching out to leftist constituencies, and winning the White House, which meant moving back towards the middle, required too great a political leap. He lost 49 out of 50 states (Massachusetts bucked the trend), but Democrats maintained their majorities in both the House and Senate.
In many ways, the radical right is to the GOP in 2015 what the hippy left was to the Democrats in 1972. It hasn't stopped them dominating Congress, but it has made it difficult for them to get the keys to the White House. The GOP looks more and more like two antagonistic cabals - an establishment party represented by figures like Bush, Marco Rubio, John Kasich and Chris Christie, and an insurgent movement headed by the likes of Ted Cruz and Carson. Again, there are parallels with the Democrats of old, a party

that for much of the last century was an unhappy amalgam of northern progressives and southern segregationists.

The Democrats came up with a solution to this problem that kept them viable in presidential politics - they soft-pedalled civil rights, the defining issue that divided them.

But when Lyndon Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act into law, he knew he had written off what was then called the solid Democratic south, and also that white southerners would flock to the Republicans, even though it was the party of Abraham Lincoln.

The modern-day GOP is finding it harder to square the circle between its radical and more traditional wings, even though the issues that divide them, such as immigration, are nowhere near as stark, or historically charged, as segregation.

Since the civil rights era of the 1960s, the Republicans' success in presidential politics has been built on the "southern strategy", an appeal to whites disgruntled with the speed of racial change.

Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Walker Bush all pursued variations on this theme. But the southern strategy has become obsolete, because of the demographic changes that have overtaken a country where the majority of children under five are now non-white.

Back in 1968, when Richard Nixon coined the phrase "the silent majority" whites without a college degree represented 80% of voters. By 2012, that figure was down to 44%.

While the support of blue collar whites has buoyed Donald Trump in the polls and given him a shot at winning the Republican nomination, it cannot, on its own, lift him to the presidency. Moreover, his appeal has waned. Many of the viewers who turned up the

volume in the early days of his candidacy when Trump appeared on screen are now turning it down.

Party chieftains this year hoped to broaden the demographic appeal of the party. It explains why Spanish-speaking Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio are establishment favourites. But this year's race has so far been dominated by outsiders - Trump and Carson. The problem for the GOP is that they, like much of the party, may also be outside the new American mainstream.

Since Blackburn was brazenly unwilling to recognize recent data on climate change and where, or more importantly, how humans evolved as many motivated Tea Party Republicans who gleefully sip from the swill from their own cracked *domed teapot* of misinformation and outright lies, lets take a peek where she hails from (and those in theory she should be serving beyond herself and Big Oil):

A member of the Republican Party, she represents Tennessee's 7th congressional district in the United States House of Representatives… Born Marsha Wedgeworth in Laurel, Mississippi she attended Mississippi State University, earning a B.S. in Home Economics in 1973.

In 2002, Republican Ed Bryant gave up his seat as Representative from Tennessee's 7th District so that he could run for the Senate. Blackburn ran against Democrat Tim Barron for the seat and was overwhelmingly elected, thus becoming the first woman in Tennessee history to be elected to Congress without following her husband. In 2004 she ran unopposed and was re-elected. In 2006, she successfully ran for a third term in the House of Representatives.

-Wikipedia

Now we can surmise why Al Gore didn't win his own home state of Tennessee to be president. We can also now better understand **Blackburn's strong scientific acumen forged in home economics forty years ago** that prepared her properly for a ranking seat on the ***House Energy & Commerce*** **Committee** presently. Conveniently for her, the only facts worth measuring are the costs of cornmeal, salt and white flour in a Pyrex cup and punching in oven baking temperatures, not curious about the changing climates outdoors. That gives us all a measure of comfort, Southern Comfort with a shake of the head and a shot glass, I may add. Leave the bottle on the damned table!

Those with a distinct Anglo-Saxon inclination as opposed to just American, more than likely our learned ranking Energy Committee member as I suspect, this is a convenient biographical short that gives her comfort in the history of America's aviation programs because it looks, feels and reads right to be proud of, as it reassures her:

Before the Moon: the early exploits of Neil Armstrong
22 September 2015, BBC

Neil Armstrong will be forever known as the first person to walk on the Moon. But less well known are his early exploits as a test pilot. Armstrong risked life and limb in a variety of experimental vehicles before he became an astronaut - a career that very nearly didn't happen.

In the centre of a large, bright hangar at California's Edwards Air Force Base was a large cross made of two iron girders balanced on a universal truck joint.

Six thrusters on the ends of the cross's limbs shot spurts of compressed nitrogen every time Neil Armstrong, sitting in a makeshift cockpit on the cross's forward end, moved the control stick in his left hand. It might not have looked it in 1956, but this barebones simulator was the future Moonwalker's first step into space.

Armstrong's love affair with aviation began when he was six years old and skipped Sunday school to take an airplane ride with his father.

Inspired, Armstrong devoured books and magazines about flying, built model airplanes, and eventually earned his private pilot's licence at 16 before he even learned to drive.

In 1947, he began his formal training, enrolling at Purdue University, Indiana, in a four year engineering programme in exchange for three years of service with the US Navy.

It was an interesting time for aviation. Just a month after Armstrong started college, US Air Force pilot Chuck Yeager broke the **sound barrier** in the rocket-powered Bell X-1.

It seemed to Armstrong that he was entering aviation too late; the aircraft he'd fallen in love with growing up were being replaced by rocket-powered designs, and there were no new records to break. But it was exactly the opposite.

The advent of rocket-powered flight opened a new era of flying where aviators had to be both pilots and engineers testing experimental aircraft in real-time in the sky. And the best place for this new breed of pilot-engineer was the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), America's leading body for aviation research.

Degree in hand and three years flying in the Korean war under his belt, Armstrong arrived at the NACA's High Speed Flight Station at Edwards Air Force Base in 1955. He joined four other pilots flying anything from bombers to experimental rocket planes to futuristic simulators. The simulators included the Iron Cross.

Traditional airplanes have flight control surfaces; ailerons, rudders, and elevators move a plane by pushing against the air as it flies. But a rocket plane flying above the atmosphere has no air for these surfaces to push against.

Instead, they used reaction controls, small jets of compressed gas that nudge the airplane in a near-void to maintain its orientation. It was a kind of flying Armstrong needed to learn. He was training to reach the fringes of space in the X-15.

Just 15m (50ft) long with a 7m (23ft) wingspan, the X-15 was launched from underneath the wing of a B-52 bomber so it could conserve all its fuel for either a high altitude or a high speed run. Armstrong only flew seven missions in the X-15, reaching a top speed of Mach 5.74 and a peak altitude of 63km (39.2 miles). He didn't reach space — the cutoff of space was set at 80km (50 miles) — but he was already on his way there.

In the early 1960s, the Air Force's next step after the X-15 was to fly in space in a vehicle eventually called Dyna-Soar. Another joint program with the NACA that was transferred to Nasa when it was established in 1958, Dyna-Soar was a flat-bottomed, roughly triangular-shaped glider designed to launch vertically atop a Titan missile.

It would circle the Earth before firing its engines against its direction of travel to start its fall back through the Earth's atmosphere. From there, the pilot would land it like a regular airplane on a runway. And Armstrong was one pilot selected to fly it into space, but first he had to figure out how to save himself and his fellow astronauts from an exploding launch vehicle.

In launch configuration, the Dyna-Soar glider was oriented with its nose up, meaning that if the pilot ejected he would be expelled laterally and his parachute wouldn't have time to open before he hit the ground.

The better option, Armstrong saw, was to use Dyna-Soar's aerodynamics. He reasoned that if the glider's engines could launch it away from an exploding rocket, any skilled pilot would be able to land it safely. Theory in hand, Armstrong put it to the test. In a Douglas 5FD Skylancer fighter jet modified so that its aerodynamics mimicked the Dyna-Soar's, he flew it low over the desert terrain until he reached a square painted on the ground to represent a launch pad.

At that moment, he pulled the aircraft's nose up to begin a steep climb to about 2,130m (7,000ft), which was roughly the altitude that the Dyna-Soar's engines would carry it to.

From there, he did what any pilot would naturally do: he pulled the plane over in a loop and rolled it upright before making a smooth unpowered landing on a strip drawn on the desert floor to represent a runway. It was a manoeuvre Armstrong later said he was happy he never had to fly in a real Dyna-Soar.

Both the X-15 and the Dyna-Soar dealt with technologies ahead of their times, but neither was the most experimental programme Armstrong was involved in while at Edwards.

In the early 1960s, Nasa was keen to move away from ending orbital spaceflights with splashdowns in the ocean; astronauts were accomplished pilots who didn't need an armada of Navy ships to pull them out of the water.

The space agency was researching using a paraglider wing to land the second-generation Gemini spacecraft on a runway at the end of its missions.

This novel landing system caught the attention of Milt Thompson, another test pilot at Edwards who eventually convinced Armstrong to help him build a homemade test vehicle.

Neil Armstrong: 'Diffident' emissary of humankind

The pilots' self-guided project was eventually approved as an official programme to spare either man dying in their own creation. With input from others at Edwards, the pair eventually built a barebones paraglider research vehicle called the Parasev.

It took to the skies in 1961 with Thompson in the cockpit towed behind Armstrong in a small airplane, and though the Paresev proved paraglider landings were feasible the system was never implemented.

Though Edwards had been Armstrong's ideal workplace when he arrived in 1955, things changed in April 1962 when NASA announced it would be selecting a second group of astronauts.

The agency received 253 applications by the 1 June deadline, and a week later Armstrong's was quietly added to the list; a simulation expert from Edwards was so convinced of Armstrong's potential as an astronaut that he added the late application to the pile before the Nasa selection committee's first meeting. After a series of gruelling medical and psychological tests, Armstrong was selected on 17 September.

It was fortuitous timing. Dyna-Soar, Armstrong's previous ticket to space, was fast falling behind schedule and any Air Force space program was looking increasingly unlikely to leave the ground. As one of NASA's "New Nine" astronauts, Armstrong was firmly on the path to space.

Speed of Sound

It is hard to imagine anyone alive in the modern world who has not heard about the speed of sound and the “sound barrier,” yet these terms, like aviation itself, are less than a century old. It has been observed in WWII that as airplanes reached speeds of 300 to 400 miles per hour, significant density changes occurred in the airstream surrounding the aircraft and drag dramatically increased.

Many leading aeronautical scientists theorized that as airplanes approached the speed of sound, the drag would increase infinitely, thus preventing further acceleration regardless of thrust available; therefore, the term “**sound barrier**” came into being. Chuck Yeager (later promoted to General) was the first aviator to fly faster than the speed

of sound and so was the first to break this **mythical barrier**…on October 14, 1947, over Muroc Air Force Base in California's Mojave Desert. He achieved a speed of 697 mph (550 knots) in the Bell X-1 research aircraft names Glamorous Glennis, after his wife.*

- Linda Pendleton
Flying Jets

* Yeager and wife later settled comfortably in Sonoma County's wine country. Event was not publicized initially because of Cold War concerns.

Blackburn and plenty of other Americans of her milky-ilk could cast a blind eye to disparage and refuse to reckon with these other high achievers in American aviation, as they do not fit the comfortable character profile as Armstrong. Americans, in her sphere, she is sure are more American than others; she can have the pleasure and privilege to remain obstinate to cherry-pick what she wants to know as opposed to knowing the inconvenient aggregate which challenge her ingrained values:

Everett Alvarez Jr. is a former U.S. Navy Commander who endured one of the longest periods as a prisoner of war (POW) in American military history. Alvarez was the first U.S. pilot to be downed and detained during the Vietnam War and spent over eight years in captivity; making him the second longest-held American POW….**Alvarez was born in 1937 in Salinas, California. He is the grandson of immigrants from Mexico. He went to Santa Clara University on an academic scholarship**. He joined the United States Navy in 1960 and was selected for pilot training.

Najeeb E. Halaby (Arabic: بيجن سايلإ يبلحأ, born in Dallas, Texas in 1915, received a B.A. from Stanford in 1937 and a law degree from Yale in 1940. His aviation career began in 1933 when, at the age of 17, he received his student pilot certificate. Early in World War II, he served as a test pilot for the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. After becoming a naval aviator in 1943, he served at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent,

Maryland. After the war, he served in a number of federal government positions, including: foreign affairs adviser to the Secretary of Defense; special assistant to the Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; and vice chairman of the Aviation Facilities Study Group. In 1953, Halaby was selected by the Junior Chamber of Commerce for an award as the "outstanding young man in Federal Service."

His private business activities included the practice of law with a Los Angeles firm in 1940-1942 and, after World War II, service as: an associate of Laurence Rockefeller; executive vice president and director of Servomechanisms, Inc.; president of American Technological Corporation, a technical ventures corporation; secretary-treasurer of Aerospace Corporation, a firm that was principal adviser to the Air Force missile and space program; and director of his own law firm in Los Angeles.

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Halaby was born in Dallas, Texas. His father was Najeeb Elias Halaby, Sr., a Syrian Christian, who immigrated to the United States from Syria in 1891. Halaby's paternal grandfather was Elias Halaby, provincial treasurer or magistrate in Ottoman Syria, who also came to the U.S. in 1891. Halaby's father worked as an importer and, later, as an oil broker….He was a graduate of The Leelanau School, a boarding school in Glen Arbor Township Leelanau County, Michigan, and is enshrined in that school's Hall of Fame. An alumnus of Stanford University (1937) and Yale Law School (1940), he served as a U.S. Navy test pilot in World War II. **On May 1, 1945 Halaby made history by making the first transcontinental jet flight in US history.** Halaby took off from Muroc AFB, California and landed in Patuxent, Maryland in 5 hours and 40 minutes.

After the war he served as the U.S. State Department's civil aviation advisor to King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, helping the king develop Saudi Arabian Airlines. Next he worked as an aide to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal in the late 1940s, then helped Paul Nitze write NSC 68…father of Queen Noor of Jordan.

- Wikipedia

Elwood R. "Pete" Quesada, born in 1904 in Washington, DC, attended Maryland and Georgetown universities (Spanish father, Irish-American mother). He joined the Army in 1924, received his pilot's wings, and returned to civilian life before reentering active duty in 1927. Quesada was a member of the flight crew of the Army C-2 Question Mark, which, under the command of Major Carl Spaatz, broke world endurance marks in January 1929 by remaining in the air for more than 150 hours. During World War II, Quesada flew many combat missions and held a series of important commands, including the 12thFighter Command, the 9th Fighter Command, and the 9th Tactical Air Command. Units under his leadership made important contributions to the success of the Normandy invasion and other campaigns by achieving air superiority, flying interdiction missions, and providing close air support to ground troops. His assignments after the war included: Commanding General, Tactical Air Command; chairman of the Joint Technical Planning Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Commanding General of Joint Task Force Three. He held, with various other awards, the Distinguished Service Medal with one cluster and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

-FAA Biographies

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…Aircraft were not only increasing in numbers, but were now streaking across the skies at much higher speeds. The Federal Aviation Act of 1958 established a new independent body that assumed the roles of CAA and transferred the rule making authority of the CAB to the newly created Federal Aviation Agency (FAA). In addition, the FAA was given complete control of the common civil-military system of air navigation and Air Traffic Control (ATC). The man who was given the honor of being **the first administrator of the FAA was former Air Force General Elwood Richard "Pete" Quesada**. He served as the administrator from 1959- 1961.

-FAA Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

Jesse LeRoy Brown (13 October 1926 – 4 December 1950) was a United States Navy officer. **He was the first African-American aviator in the U.S. Navy, a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the first African-American naval officer killed in the Korean War.**

Born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to an impoverished family, Brown was avidly interested in aircraft from a young age. He graduated as salutatorian of his high school, notwithstanding its racial segregation, and was later awarded a degree from Ohio State University. Brown enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1946, becoming a midshipman. Brown earned his pilot wings on 21 October 1948 amid a flurry of press coverage; in January 1949 he was assigned to Fighter Squadron 32 aboard the USS *Leyte*.

At the outset of the Korean War, the *Leyte* was ordered to the Korean Peninsula, arriving in October 1950. Brown, an ensign, flew 20 combat missions before his F4U Corsair aircraft came under fire and crashed on a remote mountaintop on 4 December 1950 while supporting ground troops at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. Brown died of his wounds despite the efforts of wingman Thomas J. Hudner, Jr., who intentionally crashed his own aircraft in a rescue attempt, for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Brown's successes in the segregated and desegregated U.S. military were memorialized in several books. The frigate USS *Jesse L. Brown* (FF-1089) was named in his honor.

For his actions in Korea leading up to his death, Brown was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart Medal, and the Air Medal. For the failed rescue attempt, Hudner received the Medal of Honor, the highest valor award presented by the U.S. military.

Brown's shipmates memorialized him in a shipwide newspaper as "a Christian soldier, a gentleman, a shipmate, and friend ... His courage and faith ... shone like a beacon for all

to see." As word of his death spread, Brown inspired numerous other African Americans to become pilots, notably Seaman Apprentice Frank E. Petersen. Petersen would become the first African-American Marine Corps aviator and the first African-American Marine Corps general, being graduated from the Naval Aviation Training Program in 1952 and retiring from the military after 38 years in 1988 with the rank of lieutenant general.

On 17 February 1973, the Navy commissioned the *Knox*-class frigate USS *Jesse L. Brown* (FF-1089), the third U.S. ship named in honor of an African American.[59] Present at the commissioning ceremony in Boston, Massachusetts, were Daisy Brown Thorne (who had remarried), Pamela Brown, and Hudner, who gave a dedication.[23] The ship was decommissioned on 27 July 1994 and renamed the *Damiyat* after being commissioned with the Egyptian navy.

An extensive biography of Brown later was compiled by author Theodore Taylor, who had served in Korea and had been deeply moved by the news of Brown's death at the time. Taylor interviewed many of Brown's closest friends and family and consulted Daisy Brown's personal diary and records from the *Leyte*'s ship log while preparing his 300-page book, published in 2007.

- Wikipedia

It's hard to fathom just how risky the moon missions really were. In the early days of the Apollo program, NASA asked General Electric to calculate the chances of successfully landing men on the moon and bringing them back to Earth in one piece. The answer they got was shocking: less than 5%. According to the (admittedly crude) numbers, a moon landing was so risky that it would be foolhardy to attempt. If NASA had paid attention to the calculations, the Apollo missions would have had to be scrapped- a horrible political disaster for NASA and a humiliation for the nation. So NASA did what NASA tends to do under such circumstances: it crumpled up the calculations, tossed them in the garbage can, and went ahead with the program anyway. In this particular case, it happened to be the right decision….

In 1983, the Air Force commissioned a study to calculate the risk that the brand-new space shuttle launch system would explode during launch. The study found that there was a dangerously high probability of disaster. As two of the study's author wrote, "The probability of a solid rocket booster (SRB) failure destroying the shuttle was roughly 1 in 35 based on prior experience with this technology." One in thirty-five was an enormous and unacceptable level of risk. After all, the shuttles were supposed to make hundreds of flights, returning their crews safely every single time. If the shuttle would, on average, lose a crew of seven astronauts once every 35 flights, the shuttle program was as good as dead. So NASA disregarded the study, instead deciding to "rely upon its engineering judgment and to use in 1 in 100,000 as the SRD failure probability estimate." In other words, NASA simply tossed out the 1-in-35 number and substituted a much more acceptable one- in which you could launch a shuttle every day for decades, totaling thousand upon thousands of launches, and expect not to have a single failure….

NASA management had deliberately understated the risks of a shuttle flight. Instead of facing the unpleasant reality that the shuttle boosters were risky, the agency decided to engineer a lie that was more acceptable. As physicist Richard Feynman, a member of the Challenger investigation panel, put it "As far as I can tell, 'engineering judgment' means that they're going to make up numbers!" Instead of performing a genuine assessment of the probability that the shuttle would fail, the management would start with a level of risk that was acceptable and work backward. "It was cleat that the numbers…were chosen that when you add everything together, you get 1 in 100,000," Feynman wrote. NASA's risk estimates were complete fictions, and nobody noticed until disaster struck…

…**We are terrified of dying in a plane crash but think nothing of speeding down the highway while talking on a cell phone. We don't have an internal gauge of what behaviors are truly dangerous and what aren't….**

NASA isn't the only game in town when it comes to getting people into space on the back of risk mismanagement. Airline magnate Richard Branson is hard at work trying to snooker private investors just as NASA snookered Congress. Branson is currently running

a private spaceflight enterprise, "Virgin Galactic," which within its first five years of operation is supposedly going to launch an estimated three thousand passengers into space. Safely. "Virgin has a detailed understanding of what it takes to manage and operate complex transportation organizations…such as Virgin Atlantic Airlines and Virgin Trains which carry millions of passengers each year and have enjoyed safety records," brags the Virgin Galactic website. If you believe Virgin, spaceflight will be no riskier than a little jaunt on a private jet.

Hogwash. By comparing spaceflight to plane and train travel, Virgin is effectively underestimating the huge risks you take when you strap yourself to a rocket. It's a very dangerous task to pack enough energy into a cylinder to get you into space- and it's equally dangerous when, falling through the atmosphere, you get that energy back and have to dissipate it away in the form of heat. Throughout the history of spaceflight, about one in a hundred human-carrying rockets has killed its passengers, and that risk seems unlikely to change in the near future.

One chance in a hundred might not seem like so much, especially for the rare privilege of becoming an astronaut. But as far as risks go, it's extraordinarily high. For comparison, if today's US passenger aircraft had a similar failure rate, there would be roughly 275 US plane crashes and 20,000 fatalities every day. A one in a hundred chance of dying every time you set foot on a plane would doom the airline industry; a 1% chance of death is simply too risky for any form of transportation to be commercially viable. If the historical rate holds, at Virgins Galactic's projected launch rate of one flight per week there would be only a one in three chance that Virgin Galactic goes for two years without a Challenger-type disaster. All in all, their chance of getting all 3,000 people into space and back home again safely in this (hypothetical) scenario would be about half of 1%. People would almost certainly die, sooner rather than later. Even if the company survived the inevitable investigation and embarrassment, it would be just a matter of months before another explosion….As a smart businessman like Branson probably knows, downplaying risks can be very lucrative. In fact, there are two main way to mismanage risk for fun and

profit. Like NASA or Richard Branson, you can underestimate risks, making something look safer than it actually is….

- Charles Seife
Proofiness

Another form of Parasite Drag is Interference Drag: stuff you have dangling off the aircraft. Some of that stuff you may have to live with like radio antennas because at least you can communicate with traffic control but, however, it does come at a performance cost and in this case, necessary. Anything that can be smoothly incorporated into the aircraft and not abruptly exposed outside the aircraft's body would be optimum. Compromises are made with an eye on results.

The choices we often have are ours if we assume the responsibility of truly being pilot-in-command. What parasitic drag will we accept and what parasitic drag is not necessary and potential to our detriment? The latter choice is basically opting for a fool's paradise such as old school Rat Pack Fremont St. casinos with smoking low-tar True king size cigarettes to thwart emphysema royally, cheap well liquor, caring loan sharks, stingy payout slot machines, neighborhood pimps and tarts, magic trick card conmen and casinos chock full of modern Moll Flanders' and Sweeney Todds' disingenuously reminding you that you are a special trusted friend in a safe place and to make yourself comfortable under ceiling cameras. It's difficult to get up from the Lazy Boy lounge chair and go outside for fresh air because it requires responsibility and work. The fun is inside where the action is! Imagine the courage of opening up to a cleaner healthier perspective under noon's blue skies- away from the noise and lights- losing as much of the dark induced drag we shoulder. Here is a glaring example of a fatal death spiral from parasitic drag complete with a line of hypocrisy:

Police investigating Lord Sewel drug claims

27 July 2015, BBC

Lord Sewel is facing a police inquiry after quitting as House of Lords deputy speaker over a video allegedly showing him taking drugs with prostitutes.

Lords Speaker Baroness D'Souza said he had also quit as chairman of the Lords privileges and conduct committee in the wake of the Sun on Sunday's story.

The footage showed him snorting powder from a woman's breasts with a £5 note. Baroness D' Souza said his behaviour was "shocking and unacceptable" and that she was referring him to the police.

"Lord Sewel has this morning resigned as chairman of committees. The House of Lords will continue to uphold standards in public life and will not tolerate departure from these standards," she said.

"These serious allegations will be referred to the House of Lords commissioner for standards and the Metropolitan Police for investigation as a matter of urgency." In the footage, Lord Sewel, who is married, also discusses the Lords' allowances system.

In a recent blog for the Huffington Post, he said the Lords had taken "major steps" to "protect its reputation and punish misconduct by its members". He highlighted the new power of peers to suspend for any length of time or expel a member who had misbehaved.

A £5 note! Should have been at least a £100 if he had any class worthy of his lofty aristocratic title! What a cheap slacker! He pours wretched jug wine too and acts like its estate bottled in Bordeaux. I knew that trash would catch up to him one day. That's East End action…

No police action over Lord Sewel drug claims

22 September 2015, BBC

The police are to take no action against Lord Sewel over allegations of drug use which led to him quitting the House of Lords.

The peer resigned in July after being filmed by the Sun allegedly taking drugs in the company of prostitutes.

Scotland Yard said in a statement that there was "insufficient evidence" to proceed with the investigation and the matter was now closed.

Sure. Certainly. Yeah. Okay. Being a Lord is like having an American Express Card: it does have its privileges like Monopoly board game's Get Out of Jail card.

Consider how we allow past experiences to taint fresh experiences with new encounters and places. Consider how societal conditioning leading us, advertising cajoles us, news reports warn us, media and images warp us and our own ingrained isogonic perceptions are constant variables we do not adequately factor which invariably distort the sweeping panorama and truths before us. So much of our world preys upon making us feel inadequate in pursuit of power, acceptance and status when in reality, plenty of us have everything we already need. Advertising often preys on this weakness. We take on flight profiles counter to our own inherent designs. Butterflies and eagles both fly but are very different. It is a sad affair to see butterflies being programmed to hate themselves because they do not fly high but flitting around low in lush gardens. It's shameful to see eagles poison themselves in the bush being called cuckoo birds with clipped wings no longer aware of who they are and not capable of flying high once more. We default to past programming that deftly manipulate the puppet strings in the labyrinths between our ears. Fear and refuge for safety too often steer our course by plucking at these unseen Variation strings tuned by a lifetime of false assumptions and stereotypes of who we actually are, what we perceive ourselves to be and, of course, just who *they* are:

Murder charge for Ohio policeman after driver killed

29 July 2015, BBC

A white US police officer has been charged with murder after shooting dead a black driver during a traffic stop over a missing car licence plate.
University of Cincinnati police officer Ray Tensing killed 43-year-old Samuel Dubose after pulling him over near the campus on 19 July.

"He purposely killed him," prosecutor Joe Deters said. "He should have never been a police officer."

The issue of excessive police force has sparked national debate and protests.
Video released on Wednesday appears to contradict Officer Tensing's police report, which said he was "dragged" by DuBose's car as he drove away and fired a shot, hitting him in the head.

Mr Deters called it the "most asinine act" by a police officer he had ever seen.

…DuBose's death follows a series of cases in which black people have died in police custody or during arrest.

In recent week protests have focused on Sandra Bland, a black woman who was arrested after a traffic stop but later found dead in her Texas jail cell.

Killing Continued: 30 July, BBC

Mr Tensing's defence lawyer said he was "shocked" his client was charged with murder and that he did not mean to kill DuBose.

The officer claims he was being dragged by DuBose's car and feared for his life, but prosecutors said the body camera footage contradicts that story.

DuBose was 43. His family members said he would not have fought a police officer.

They are urging the community to stay calm and protest peacefully.
"Sam was peaceful," the victim's brother Audrey DuBose said. "He lived peaceful. And in his death, we want to remain peaceful."

Marshals who demonstrated fatally poor judgment which demonstrates law enforcements 'shoot first, ask questions later' type of mentality to be heroes which gives us all a level of comfort:

Louisiana marshals face murder charge over boy's gun death

7 November 2015, BBC

Two marshals in the US state of Louisiana (both black) are to be charged with murder after the fatal shooting of a six-year-old boy.Jeremy Mardis and his father, Chris Few, were in a car when they were shot in Marksville on Tuesday night.

Officers Norris Greenhouse and Derrick Stafford were arrested after a vehicle chase that left Mr Few, who was driving, critically injured. Jeremy died at the scene and Mr Few remains in hospital. The two officers were arrested on Friday after body-camera footage taken from them was assessed. It is still unclear what led them to pursue Mr Few and what triggered the shooting.

Both were working secondary jobs in Marksville as marshals when the shooting happened, Col Michael Edmonson of Louisiana state police told a news conference.

"He [Jeremy Mardis] didn't deserve to die like that and that's what's important," Col Edmonson said. Referring to the body-camera footage of the incident, Col Edmondson added: "I can tell you, it is the most disturbing thing I've seen, and I'll leave it like that."

The two officers have been charged with murder and attempted murder over the shooting. Mr Few's stepfather, Morris German, said that Jeremy was a delightful child who "loved everything, everybody", the AP news agency reported. Mr German said the boy, who had been diagnosed with autism, had no siblings.

Another episode of unnecessary police force with inept judgment due to racist underpinnings. As soon as hearing student assault from police, everyone black was aware it was not a white child under attack:

US police officer fired for student assault in South Carolina
28 October 2015, BBC

A US police officer has been fired after video showing him throwing a female student across a classroom was shared widely on the internet. Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said that Senior Deputy Ben Fields "did not follow proper procedure".

He was a school resource officer at the school in South Carolina. He "should not have thrown a student - he could have done a lot of things he was trained to do, he was not trained to throw a student", Sheriff Lott said. The incident occurred at the Spring Valley High School in Columbia, witnesses said, when the unnamed African-American student refused to put away her mobile phone and then refused to leave the classroom.
The officer was then summoned and asked her to leave again. She refused, and he told her she was under arrest. Video then shows the officer violently knocking the student down and pulling her across the floor.

The incident was filmed by a fellow student and was published on the internet, prompting the hashtag #AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh to circulate on Twitter and an outcry from various civil rights and parents' groups.

Mr Lott said he had received expressions of support for the officer, who had been at the school seven years, from some parents and school officials. Officer Fields had received a "Culture of Excellence" award last year by an elementary school where he was also assigned. But Sheriff Lott said the officer had "lost control" and had not dealt with this incident correctly.

"That is not a proper technique and should not be used in law enforcement. And based on that, that is a violation of our policy and approximately 20 minutes ago Officer Ben Fields was terminated from the Richland County Sheriff's Department."He said complaints had been made about Officer Fields during his time at the school - some had been upheld and some had not. Legal action has been taken three times against the officer, according to Associated Press news agency:

- In January, Mr Fields will stand trial in the case of an expelled student who claims he targeted blacks and falsely accused him of being a gang member in 2013
- In 2005, a federal jury found in Officer Fields' favour after a black couple accused him of excessive force and battery during a noise complaint arrest
- Another lawsuit, dismissed in 2009, involved a woman who accused him of battery and violating her rights during a 2006 arrest

The deputy has not been criminally charged but the Federal Bureau of Investigation and justice department have opened a civil rights investigation into the arrest.
Fellow students at the school have tweeted claims that they have seen him behaving in a similar manner in the past, but this was the first time such an incident was caught on camera.

Sheriff Lott has said the girl was unhurt in the incident aside from a carpet burn.

However, the girl's attorney, Todd Rutherford, told ABC's Good Morning America' that she "has a cast on her arm, she has neck and back injuries" as well as a plaster on her forehead because of the carpet burn.

Sheriff Lott said he would "not describe the officer as remorseful, but he was sorry that the whole thing occurred".

South Dakota to allow armed teachers in schools

8 March 2013, BBC

The US state of South Dakota has enacted a law allowing school districts to arm teachers and other school staff. The law's backers say it will prevent mass school shootings like a December massacre in Connecticut that killed 26.

Amid a push by the White House to strengthen gun laws, the bill reflects a growing divide in the US over whether more or fewer guns keep people safe. The measure does not force school districts to arm teachers and will not require teachers to carry guns. But it allows each school district to choose if staff could be armed. It takes effect in July.

Under the Republican-sponsored bill, school staff given permission to carry firearms on campus will be known as "school sentinels". The state has given a law enforcement commission the task of establishing a training programme for the sentinels.

Several representatives of school boards, teachers and other staff spoke against the bill in legislative hearings, arguing guns would make schools more dangerous.

But sponsor Representative Scott Craig said this week had heard from a number of school officials who back it. Mr Craig said rural districts do not have the money to hire full-time police officers.

Mississippi: Call for investigation over 'noose put on black student'

25 Oct. 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37760340

A rights group in the US state of Mississippi has demanded a federal hate crime investigation after the family of a black high school student said white students put a noose around his neck.

The alleged incident took place during a break in football practice, according to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
As many as four students are believed to have been involved in the case.
The parents say they have not been told if the school is taking action.

The alleged victim, a second-year student football player at Stone High School in Wiggins, has not been identified. He has since returned to school and football practice. Names and ages of the students accused have also not been released, but reports say they are all under 17.

In the 13 October incident, the noose was "yanked backward" while on the student's neck as the group was in the locker room, Derrick Johnson, president of the Mississippi NAACP, said. "No child should be walking down the hall or in a locker room and be accosted with a noose around their neck," he told reporters.

"This is 2016, not 1916. This is America. This is a place where children should go to school and feel safe in their environment."

The incident has echoes of Mississippi's past when the lynching of black people by whites was still a frequent occurrence.

The state has struggled with racial division and is the only one in the US that still incorporates the Confederate battle emblem on its state flag.

He added, in an interview with ESPN, that the student was not physically harmed but was "terrified" by the incident.

Mr Johnson also said the parents were advised against filing a police report, because the father of one of the alleged assailants was a former law enforcement officer, the Associated Press reported.

But Capt Ray Boggs of Stone County Sheriff's Department disputed this, saying his advice was that pursuing criminal charges could result in hard feelings among students that could make the teenager's life harder at school, AP added.

The school has not reacted.

Would I today be justified to have a grave concern, in lieu of shootings such as in Colorado and Louisiana, to worry about white men in theaters? Men of color have yet to exhibit such behavior and I pray they don't. They may talk too much which annoys me too but no pops beyond ignorant banter and popcorn. You walk out the theater and get on with life. I would expect most everybody would say it is a gross overreaction if we were concerned now about white men in these venues.

Are other whites now worried about white men in theaters? No. Are whites worried about white boys with guns committing massacres in predominately white schools or campuses? No. Are white men concerned about getting shot by police unarmed? No. Are whites worried about black men categorically? Yes. Do whites consume exponentially more narcotics in suburbs? Yes. Do blacks and Latinos get convicted of narcotic possessions wildly out of proportion to the general population? Yes. White officers have a tendency to always be under threat of having

to use fatal force against black men and lying about the incidents. It's easier for us black men to be shot and shootings justified by ingrained prejudices in law enforcement than any other ethnic group with the complicity of white society desperately clinging to the presumption that certainly officers make prudent snap judgment calls and have to do their duty. The stereotype of wild and dangerous, predatory physically strong black men lingers in the minds of whites: great tamed on a football field when team colors matter, anathema lurking on the public streets when race matters. Is it odd that black, Asian and Latino officers do not shoot white men and white officers don't shoot unarmed white men? It has never been a level playing field, or should I say, public gun range in America. This year has proven no different, again, yet unsurprisingly.

I am truly sorry about the unnecessary death as a waste of royal life but it begs the question: Is there more empathy for a king of the jungle being shot by a white American dentist in Africa from whites at home than an African-American man shot in his car or in the back in daylight by the police in their own country? Species evidently trumps race and geography. The same group choosing between exerting energies to demonstrate about the lion killing likely shrug when another African- sorry, I mean African-American, not African lion- gets killed at home. Chalk up another black killing on the blackboard. Crazy as it is but Uncle Josef, the friendly easy credit butcher whose steel hand spanned nine time zones where the Sun never ceased to be above his domain, categorically touched the pulse and it clearly resonates true: "One death is a tragedy, one million is a statistic." Multitudes of blacks have and will continue to unjustly die unabated, so his piercing perception of human nature was true to course.

If I had a son I would name him Lion perhaps so people may hopefully give a damn about his possible untimely death and not mention he was American but only African. If you don't find that amusing, trust that millions of other blacks don't either, so we all found some common ground which is refreshing. Again, by a wide margin, most felonious crimes against whites are done by other whites, a higher

percentage of narcotics are mostly consumed by whites, but the needle of who to conspicuously watch and presume harm will inevitably swing back to ranges of color.

I gather that assumptions can be made by relying on unreliable past programming. I learned this lesson this year in Asia when a three year old left her mother's table after lunch with my wife. She walked over to me as her mother and my wife were talking in their native language and raised her arms indicating she wanted me to lift her up unprovoked. It was so heart warming! Her world was untainted by experience and programming. I was not be feared because I was a man, I was black, or I was American. Perhaps because I seemed tall, she wanted a higher perspective of the world around her. The child was operating True without the Variations impediment, which will most certainly come with maturity, the isogonic lines formed within influenced by the world outside. The internal faulty calculations of our minds are so often at odds with the external world in which we must function which impede our growth constantly as adults. If only we could learn from babes!

A United Express turboprop aircraft was in distress on June 5th with flight deck filling with smoke. The crew were commended for their professional capability to land the plane safety so the incident came and went quickly from the news cycle as a feel good end of broadcast story:

State police Sgt. Shane Hassett says the pilot put out the fire with an extinguisher…There were 36 passengers and three crew members aboard CommutAir Flight 4776, which was operating as United Express. Raymond said they were all safely evacuated from the plane and bused to the terminal.

"We are very thankful for the quick response of our flight crew to ensure the safety of our passengers — the aircraft has been removed from service and will undergo a thorough maintenance evaluation," the airline said in a statement.

The pilots were at the top of their game when the chips were down. The first officer was a white woman and the captain a black male, both defying the stereotypes of gender and race managing under adverse pressure. Certainly I bring this fact to the fore because it serves commercially to be politically correct and pretend race and gender does not matter. What should count is just the flight crew's performance and I really wish it were just that simple. If you are a white male you can have the luxury to default to that perspective. If the flight crashed from gross incompetency, would we have a conspicuous O.J. Simpson-ish darkened photo of the captain being used less for pilot identification purposes, as few would truly care, as a pertinent quasi-subtle excuse of now we know why the airplane crashed? When it goes right, race matters less; when wrong, race matters plenty. This is an enduring double-standard geared for a white majority population that gobbles information without provoking thought during digestion. I believe nearly everybody would assume, if asked, that the heroes of the day would have been most likely white men on the controls. The majority of pilots fit that description but to assume they were is the arsenic in the water. The combination of their race and gender reassures us of their competency and professionalism. That makes the general public sleep better at night.

However, I can assure you that in predominately white milieus, those of color have been tested and re-tested by whites that may feel those of color are not as capable. You are an anomaly which is discomforting which certainly also applies in commerce. Not all, but many are quick to identify faults for possible rejection as you are an imposition if not perceived as a potential threat as well. You are outside of the parameters dictated from programming of who you should be and your acumen in field. You often are challenged to prove yourself constantly to peers. Those that are excellent, probably approach near flawless. That's likely why the Tuskegee Airmen based in Europe in WWII were so devastating, forced to fly to higher standards with abnormally high success rates escorting bombers against the Luftwaffe than all white outfits. Yes, Cab Calloway's Hi-De-Hi zoot suit scatting and big band showmanship was knocking down the myth of Richard Wagner's operatic indestructible Teutonic Ride of the Valkries heroes. It has been mentioned that some

black candidates who did not make the cut in Tuskegee's flight school would have been eligible to fly in all-white outfits if there was not segregation during the War. Those who made the cut were like those who always hover around the Saturday and Sunday leader boards for the trophies and big checks. Now it all makes sense in hindsight.

There was a black pilot, I believe a graduate of Howard University who was flying the cold war beast SR-71 spy plane, the known fastest jet in the world. The dropout rate of selected Air Force candidates to fly the jet was very steep. You did not apply, you were chosen from superiors for the privilege. There was also a black Space Shuttle commander which says everything of his competency, Frederick Gregory:

Gregory became the first American with an African lineage to pilot a space craft, the orbiter Challenger on mission STS-51B. This flight was the second flight for the laboratory developed by the European Space Agency for scientific experiments on the space shuttle. The crew also deployed the Northern Utah Satellite before landing at Edwards Air Force Base. **He was then the first person ever of African lineage to command any space mission with the launch of STS-33 in 1989 on the orbiter Discovery, which carried a classified payload**. He then commanded STS-44 on Atlantis which in addition to deploying a Department of Defense satellite, DPS 15, also conducted extensive studies to evaluate medical countermeasures to long duration space flight.

His mother was Nora Drew Gregory, a lifelong educator as well as public library advocate. She was also the sister of noted African-American physician, surgeon and researcher Dr. Charles Drew, who developed improved techniques for blood storage, and applied his expert knowledge in developing large-scale blood banks early in World War II, saving thousands of Allied lives.

He earned his wings after helicopter school, flew in Vietnam, transitioned to fighter aircraft, attended the Navy Test Pilot School, and then conducted testing as an

engineering test pilot for both the Air Force and NASA. He received a master's degree from the George Washington University in Information Systems…During his time in the Air Force, Gregory logged approximately 7,000 hours in more than 50 types of aircraft as a helicopter, fighter and test pilot. He flew 550 combat rescue missions in Vietnam.

- Wikipedia

The second expedition has come to be remembered, rather more economically, as simply the voyage of the **HMS Challenger**. The convoluted fate of the first is still a matter of discussion to this day; but of the second- **in more recent times one of the five American space shuttles was named in honor of the single British ship, which testifies to the success of that pioneering sea voyage undertaken almost exactly a century before.**

- Simon Winchester
  Atlantic

If women and persons of color are on the flight deck on your Gate 5, Concourse 3 flight, have no fear, as it is well documented passengers have walked off the airplane when glancing a black or a woman pilot on their pre-flight checklists, but count your blessings as their proven performance defies the tarnish of negative stereotypes. Expect them to be sterling in competency. They have all been rigorously tested under a microscope to an unquantifiable higher standard just by the factor of race and gender than perhaps their white male peers. These were opportune finds:

Meet 'easyJet's youngest female airline captain' - 26-year-old Kate McWilliams

26 SEP. 2016

http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/37469713/meet-easyjets-youngest-female-airline-captain---26-year-old-kate-mcwilliams

Kate McWilliams is 26 and the youngest ever commercial female airline captain, according to her bosses at easyJet.

She flies to around 100 destinations across the world and says most people "are pleasantly surprised and impressed" when she tells them her age.

Last year the airline company announced a plan to increase its number of female pilots. But Kate isn't the youngest ever female captain. Ronan Milne got in touch with Newsbeat to say his colleague Dawn Hunter was made a captain aged 24 at Loganair.

Sarah Hendry is also 24 and a captain with the same company.

Kate began flying in the air cadets when she was 13 years old, but admitted to the Press Association that she never thought she could become a commercial pilot. However, following aviation training in Southampton, she joined easyJet as a first officer (also known as the second pilot or co-pilot) in May 2011.

Recently she took up the rank of captain after passing the airline's command course. "Personally I don't think my age matters," she said. "I've been through the same training and passed the same command course as every other captain so I've proven myself capable regardless of my age.

"I do now get asked how old I am on an almost daily basis which didn't used to happen when I was a first officer. Usually that question comes from the cabin crew, but sometimes passengers ask too.

"When I tell them I'm 26, most people are pleasantly surprised and impressed with my achievement at such a young age."

Kate is originally from Carlisle, but now lives in Surrey so she can be near to Gatwick Airport.

From there she flies Airbus A319 and A320 planes to locations across the world, including Iceland, Israel and Morocco.

"My roster is very varied so I rarely fly to the same place twice in the same month," she said. "That keeps things interesting."

Around 5% of commercial pilots are women.

Last year easyJet announced a plan to increase its number of female entrants to 12%.

Julie Westhorp, chairwoman of the British Women Pilots' Association (BWPA), hopes Kate will inspire more women to think about working in aviation. She says: "Both the BWPA and easyJet are aware of the importance of visible role models for girls and young women when making career choices and continue to work together to encourage young women to consider a pilot career."

Constance Leathart: The forgotten 'aviatrix' of WW2

9 October 2015, BBC

Constance Leathart flew Spitfires in World War Two and was one of the first women with a pilot's licence - but her remarkable story has been largely forgotten, says Chris Jackson.

In 1925 a would-be pilot booked a flying lesson. The application to join Newcastle Aero club at Cramlington airfield was signed "CR Leathart". Only after she was accepted did anyone realise the first initial stood for Constance.

In her early 20s she hid behind those initials in order to break into the boys' club that was aviation in its early years.

She went on to become a hugely experienced pilot and flew fighters and bombers during WW2. In peacetime she flew alongside an elite band of socialite aviators and liked whisky, cigars and woodbines between flights.

But her flying career got off to a bumpy start. On her first solo landing she crashed Novocastria, the club's Gypsy Moth light aircraft, but emerged uninjured and undeterred.

In fact, very little could faze her. Aspiring pilots had to conduct a manoeuvre known as a height test but when her turn came one afternoon it suddenly became very dark.
On the ground, worried club members positioned their car headlights to guide her to the runway. Flight magazine records how, after executing a perfect landing, "Miss Leathart was quite surprised that anyone was perturbed about the matter. She certainly was not".

A few months later she became the first woman outside of London to be granted a pilot's licence. In 1927 there were only 20 British female flyers, or aviatrices, at all.
You couldn't afford to fly unless you had some money behind you. Leathart was born into a wealthy north-east of England family. The Leatharts had amassed their fortune as owners of lead works on Tyneside.

As an only daughter, she perhaps had something to prove. Family friend Dora Ions recalls how later in life she confided that her father had wanted a son. "She dressed more like a man. She told me herself that she did that for her father. She tried to please him."

She had a toolkit, knew how to use it and wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty. Together with lifelong friend Walter Runciman, later Viscount Runciman, she set up an aircraft repair business. The pair would take part in air races at which both were successful. For the sheer pleasure of flying they embarked on grand European expeditions with other well-to-do aviators. Constance even had a special locker cut into the fuselage of her trusty Comper Swift to accommodate the picnic hamper she rarely travelled without.

Yet amongst the rather glamorous winged socialites, Con, as her closest friends were allowed to call her, cut a rather solitary figure. She could look very smart with her short crop haircut, tie and jacket, but you'll not find many photos of her in feminine finery.

Her photo albums are testament to a life devoted to flying and are packed with images of aircraft both home and abroad. When naming those in the shot she identifies herself simply as "CRL" (the R stood for Ruth). The pages also betray something of her outlook on life. In the margins she'd write self-deprecating captions referring to her physique and appearance.

Her 1945 snapshot album is subtitled "One Fat Cow". Next to an image of her stood by her plane, she scribbled "How does it fit in?" On a flight to Hungary, where women pilots were unheard of, she was presented with a huge bouquet of flowers. Her only comment, apparently brimming with irony: "here comes the bride".

Leathart never did marry. If there ever was a chance of romance you won't find any hint of it in those albums which, along with other personal items are now in the care of the Northumberland Archives. It's a remarkable collection, not least because it contains a fantastic amount of detail about her service in WW2.

She was one of the first women to join the Air Transport Auxiliary. Its job was to ferry planes from factory to aerodromes across the UK to keep the RAF flying.

Any male pilots fit enough went into combat, so at first the delivery duties were given to World War One veterans. When they couldn't keep up with demand, the powers that-be were compelled to allow women in to the ATA.

Aviation historian Richard Poad says with more than 700 hours flying in 16 different types of aircraft, Constance had a remarkable amount of experience for a "new" recruit. At first female ATA pilots were only given rather mundane flying tasks, but it wasn't long before they were let loose on fighters and bombers.

Pilots were instructed to keep under 250 miles an hour when delivering a Spitfire, saysPoad, who helped establish the ATA museum at Maidenhead Heritage Centre. But he adds: "You tell that to a hot-blooded woman or man in a plane that will do 400. They weren't supposed to go low flying - they did. They weren't supposed to do stunts - they did."

The press couldn't resist the story of women flying combat aircraft and some were photographed as pin ups which rather undermined the serious nature of their war effort work. You won't find Leathart in any of those newspaper shots. She didn't fit the stereotype.

One of the few surviving ATA women recalls her surprise on meeting Flight Captain Leathart - her rank was the ATA equivalent of squadron leader - who was giving her a lift to pick up a spitfire. Molly Rose describes her senior officer as being "very short and extraordinarily square. I was amazed that she was tall enough or agile enough to cope with the flying".

Her ATA record states: "Leathart flies well and although rather lacking in polish she is perfectly safe."

It was dangerous work. The fighter planes they flew from the production lines were unarmed and without radio and they had to navigate by sight. The biggest enemy wasn't a Messerschmitt, but bad weather. Amy Johnson - who had become a national hero with her solo flight to Australia - was a friend and contemporary of Constance in the ATA. Amy died in service when she crashed in the Thames estuary after going off course in bad visibility whilst delivering a plane.

A little known fact is that women ATA pilots were, after some wrangling, paid the same as the men. **At the war's end, however, women were expected to report back for duty at the kitchen sink.**

But Constance felt the ravages of WW2 still needed her attention. She went to the island of Icaria which, ravaged by Nazi occupation and civil war, had left its population on the brink of starvation. As a UN special representative she helped distribute food and medical supplies. According to a story told years later, she arrived with supplies but the locals, fearing an attack, were at first hostile until in her no-nonsense style she explained she was there to help. The Northumberland Archives and librarians at the United Nations are unable to verify that account.

But a number of letters survive in which she pleads with her superiors for more assistance, especially for the children of the island. Friends recall some vague mention of Constance being given a Greek Island by a "president". In the archives there is indeed a presidential letter, effusive in its praise of a British heroine. Closer examination reveals "President" is the Greek title given to Icaria's civic leader. More of a mayor than the head of a sovereign nation. There's no promise of an island in return for her good work but she was given an Award of Merit by the prestigious International Union of Child Welfare.

On her return to the UK, she gave up flying and retired to a Northumberland farm to enjoy the obscurity she craved. It was a frugal life caring for rescue donkeys.

Friends recount how an invitation to dinner might be beans on toast and sleeping over in a bedroom colder than the air outside. If the living room fire needed energising a quick dousing of petrol seemed to do the trick and woe betides anyone she gave a lift to. Perhaps someone who was used to tearing around in a spitfire should never be trusted on the road.

In her will she asked to be buried in an unmarked grave. She might have vanished from this earth without a trace but Derek and Dora Ions who cared for her in later life had an inspired idea. Her friends agreed it would go some way to showing how much she was loved.

A stone that served as a step into an unheated swimming pool she used in all weathers was placed by her grave. Derek carved her initials. It was a discreet marker to commemorate the person, but not her remarkable achievements.

We know and admire the oft-told legend of Amelia Earhart from the war's winning side but meet the lesser known Hanna Reitsch, on the losing side and measure the gravity of her exploits in contrast. She doesn't warrant the same airplay in America's aviation community but clearly she could have flown unimpeachably any aircraft Howard, Mr. Hughes produced in his day:

That evening, one of the grotesque melodramas which so characterized the fall of the Third Reich took place. General Ritter von Greim, whom Hitler had summoned from Munich to take over command of the Luftwaffe from Goring, was carried into the bunker anteroom on a stretcher. He had been wounded in the leg by Soviet anti-aircraft fire. He was accompanied by his mistress, Hanna Reitsch, a test pilot and devotee of the Fuhrer. Flying in a Fieseler Storch for the last leg of their extremely hazardous journey, they had been hit over the Grunewald. Hanna Reitsch, reaching around the wounded Greim's shoulders, had managed to land the small aircraft near the Brandenburg Gate. It was a feat requiring considerable bravery and skill. Yet, that does not alter the fact that Hitler, by insisting on this symbolic handover, had nearly managed to kill the very man he wanted to promote to the supreme command of an organization which had effectively ceased to exist….

Hitler went straight to the bunker room where the newly promoted Marshal Ritter von Greim lay nursing his wounded leg. He ordered him to organize Luftwaffe attacks on the Soviet tanks which had reached the Potsdamerplatz and to ensure Himmler did not go unpunished. 'A traitor must never succeed me as Fuhrer,' he shouted at Greim. 'You must go out to ensure he does not!' No time was wasted. Hanna Reitsch was summoned to help Greim up the concrete staircase on his crutches. An armoured vehicle was waiting to take them to an Arado 96 trainer, specially ordered from outside and now ready for take-off near the Brandenburg Gate. Soviet soldiers from the 3rd Shock Army who had

just fought their way into the Tiergarten stared in amazement as the aircraft took off before their eyes. **Their immediate fear, on recovering their military reactions, was that Hitler had escaped them.** But the rather tardy explosion of anti-aircraft and machine gun fire failed to find the target. Ritter von Greim and Hanna Reitsch escaped.

- Antony Beevor
  Berlin 1945

Hanna Reitsch was a German aviatrix, test pilot, and the only woman awarded the Iron Cross First Class and the Luftwaffe Pilot/Observer Badge in Gold with Diamonds during World War II. She set over forty aviation flight altitude records and endurance records during her career, both before and after World War II, and several of her international gliding records still stood in 2012. In the 1960s she founded a gliding school in Ghana, where she worked for Kwame Nkrumah.

- Wikipedia

Indian woman wins top bravery award for dramatic sea rescue

22 November 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-38063326

Seven fishermen owe Captain Radhika Menon their lives.

After their engine failed and their anchor was lost off the coast of India's Andhra Pradesh state in June last year, the men were left stranded in dangerous waters. They drifted helplessly for a week in the Bay of Bengal until an oil tanker under the command of Capt Menon came to their rescue.

Her efforts have now been recognised with the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, handed out in London on Monday.

Not only is Capt Menon the first female captain in the Indian Merchant Navy, but she is the only woman to have won the award, which recognises those who risk their own lives to save others at sea.

As waves rose to 9m and wind speed reached 60-70 knots, she commanded a rescue operation last June that required three attempts to get the fishermen onboard the massive tanker via a pilot ladder from their small boat.

The Sampurna Swarajya tanker's second officer had earlier spotted the fishing boat 2.5km away off the coast of Gopalpur in Orissa. The men had been surviving off ice from their cold storage after food and drinking supplies were washed away.

"The sea was very, very turbulent, there was a depression... which was stagnant for two or three days and it had intensified into a deep depression," Capt Menon told BBC World News TV. "It was a very difficult task but we had to do it because if I didn't do that I was knowing very well that these fishermen never stood a chance of rescue, no survival at all."

As far as being a path-breaking female ship captain goes, Radhika Menon doesn't appear to make a big deal of it. She says gender means little on the kind of ships she works on. "[It is] gender neutral in the sense that even if you are female, you know how to do your job," she says.

"People appreciate you, they respect you, you'll be able to carry out your orders and all that."

Isogonic Lines Weighing Heavily on Our Minds:

Moral, Clean, Pure, Trustworthy = White
Immoral, Dirty, Criminal= Black
Good, Smart, Well-Educated, Productive = Rich
Bad, Foolish, Ignorant, Lazy = Poor

We are prone to simplistic knee-jerk observations and far too often judge on face value making the truth deceptive indeed. When the focal point measures beyond the scope of our protractors and rulers as we chart our bearings to situations, we question the person or object as though it were deceiving us and not boomerang to ourselves to question the integrity of our innate warped instruments of measurement! Notice how apps are constantly updated to fix recognized bugs but we go to sleep and wake-up brushing our teeth in the morning never declaring to ourselves that we still have particular issues in our own heads we would be better to lose. We must have the courage to recognize them so we can be aware to correct for the leading misreadings. If I believed every new white man encountered was racist and a threat unless he demonstrated himself to be otherwise, would I not be out of my mind? Life would be a sick and narrow experience if it were so.

We are consistently hit with the whipping Coriolis winds of the spinning world but we do not question the turbulence and, importantly, if we are indeed calculating the environment around us correctly. When you descend at a steep angle, does your airspeed accelerate to slow, when it should be doing the opposite? Is the Airspeed Indicator functioning properly or the pitot tubes perhaps blocked from ice? Would you, pilot-in-command, question your instrument? Now that the airspeed shows slow to near stalling speed (as opposed to Never Exceed speed) is it a good idea to add more power, drop landing gear and fancifully deploy flaps and full spoilers whilst thinking about what Alsace Grand Cru Riesling to have with Thai cuisine

tonight with your beloved or, perhaps better, the tasty Napa Zinfandel that can tame the spice? Did you look at the second Airspeed Indicator for the same reading or would it be better to accept categorically what your primary instrument indicates? If the thermometer indicates Cabo San Lucas seafood when you see winter Sierra pot roast icicles, will you now change to your swimsuit and tanning butter for balmy conditions? Will you investigate first and make verifications before reaching sage and sober conclusions? Are you as a white police officer being physically assaulted or dragged by a car and your life was undeniably threatened so you hit the panic button, and being bilingual, fluent in appropriate force, got to rapping bang-bang? Probably, a hero fantasy of your mind it too often appears with fatal consequences for the black receiver of your wrath, jolly as you stroll along with pats on the back for solid professional work worthy of commendation from the force, the white force, that is even after videos emerge telling of another sad tall tale.

Alabama governor apologises for police 'assault' on Indian
18 February 2015, BBC

The governor of the US state of Alabama has apologised to the Indian government for the treatment of an Indian man left partially paralysed after being thrown to the ground by a policeman. Robert Bentley said the policemen used "excessive force" on Sureshbhai Patel, 57, earlier this month.

The officer involved was charged with the assault but has pleaded not guilty. **Mr Patel, who had recently arrived in the US, has filed a legal case alleging race played a part in the incident.**

He was walking outside his son's home in an Alabama suburb when police said they received a call from a neighbour about a suspicious person. Footage from police cameras showed Mr Patel - who speaks no English - trying to walk away when the officers approached him. They detain him and eventually shove him to the ground.

Mr Patel suffered injuries, including partial paralysis in his leg. His lawyer said he was now in rehabilitation after leaving hospital on Monday. Mr Bentley's office released a letter to Indian general consul Ajit Kumar a day after the two men met to discuss the case.

He expressed "sincere apology for this tragic incident to your government, Mr Patel, and the citizens of India who reside and work in our state". "I deeply regret the unfortunate use of excessive force by the Madison Police Department... and for the injuries sustained by Mr Patel."

The governor said the state would investigate the incident along with the FBI. Police officials in Madison have apologised to Mr Patel and his family.

Mistrial over US police officer 'assault' of Indian man

12 September 2015

A federal judge in Alabama has declared a mistrial in the case of a police officer accused of assaulting an Indian man who had recently moved to the US. Prosecutors said police officer Eric Sloan Parker seriously injured 58-year-old Sureshbhai Patel as he walked near his son's home in February.

Mr Patel's arrest, which was filmed, drew international attention. The governor of Alabama issued an apology to the government of India for the incident
Jurors on Friday could not reach a unanimous decision in the case, which forced a mistrial.

US District Judge Madeline Hughes Haikala repeatedly urged jurors to come to an agreement, but the panel remained deadlocked. Prosecutor Robert Posey said Mr Parker would be tried again.

Mr Parker, 26, was charged with violating Mr Patel's civil rights. He also faces state assault charges. Defence lawyer Robert Tuten called the arrest an unfortunate escalation, but said it was not a criminal offense.

Mr Patel was walking outside his son's home on 6 February in an Alabama suburb when police said they received a call from a neighbour about a suspicious person. Footage from police cameras showed Mr Patel - who speaks no English - trying to walk away when the officers approached him. They detained him and eventually shoved him to the ground.

The arrest left Mr Patel - a grandfather - partially paralysed.

It was a mistrial simply because the police officer is white and the white majority will do all they can to cover their own at any ridiculous cost especially if those charged are police. If the governor is apologizing – in Alabama, not Vermont - we know something is more than just plainly wrong. That's our bellwether. I didn't find any mention that Louisiana's Governor Piyush "Bobby" Jindal – who last time we looked appeared to be of Indian ancestry – yet with a Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn paint can and brush to whitewash himself to assimilate further in his failing tortured presidential campaign with a fresh ivory coat over his brown complexion- didn't murmur any criticism about egregious police conduct or publically support the apology to India or the family which would have shown a measure of backbone needed in the South, indeed, America. The same police assault easily could have been performed in Jindal's home state. He chose the shrewd tact of political cowardice by remaining conveniently mute. To garner a few nods of approval, he probably bent logic like a willow tree in a hurricane to state the police probably had credible reason since the grandfather didn't follow the officer's directions. The family, perhaps, should be held negligent for not pinning a note on the grandfather's back that should have said, "I can't speak English but make a great mango lassi." Not everybody is as smart as Piyush. Uncle Toms come in different flavors and his is uniquely melting butter chicken. I do hope I am wrong but I wouldn't bet hard dough on it.

Bobby Jindal drops out of the race for US president
17 November 2015, BBC

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal has dropped out of the race for the US presidency after struggling for months to gain traction amid a sprawling field of Republican candidates. Although he showed some strength in the early voting state of Iowa, the 44-year-old governor consistently performed poorly in national polls. He was shut out of the main Republican debates, relegated to secondary stages.

"This is not my time," Governor Jindal said on Tuesday.

The Oxford-educated son of Indian immigrants added diversity to the Republican field, which includes African-American neurosurgeon Ben Carson and businesswoman Carly Fiorina.

However, Governor Jindal sought to distance himself from his Indian heritage during the campaign. "We are not Indian-Americans, African-Americans, Irish-Americans, rich Americans, or poor Americans. We are all Americans," he told supporters when he launched his campaign in June.

It may be difficult to recall at this point, but there was once a time when Bobby Jindal was a rising star in the Republican firmament - a charismatic policy wonk who could broaden his party's appeal to minority voters in the age of Obama. Now, however, he's a political afterthought - gone before all the autumn leaves have fallen.

By the time he announced his White House bid earlier this year, his star had lost much of its lustre. He had suffered reputational damage from political battles in his home state and was competing in a crowded presidential field where many candidates were vying for the same evangelical slice of the conservative electorate.

Mr Jindal is now the third Republican to drop his presidential bid. All three are current or recent governors, which comes as somewhat of a surprise given the value that voters usually place on candidates with executive-level government experience. This has been the year of the political outsider, however, and that trend shows no sign of changing anytime soon.

Analysis: Anthony Zurcher, BBC North America reporter

Unpopular in his home state after a budget shortfall, Governor Jindal had been considered a long-shot for the nomination.

During his campaign, Governor Jindal sought to appeal to evangelical Christian voters, taking hard lines on gay rights and Islamic extremism. However, he was courting the same slice of the electorate as rival candidates such as Mr Carson, Texas Senator Ted Cruz and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

Governor Jindal joins former Texas Governor Rick Perry and Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker who have also suspended their campaigns for president. Fourteen Republicans remain in the race

Maybe the grandfather looked like a Pakistani Muslim and was pushin' curry leaves on kids, leading them astray. Maybe he was looking for soft targets in his son's own neighborhood. Maybe he was peddlin' paneer cheese and incense whilst looking both ways in a whispered voice with dark sunglasses with large amounts of cash on him. I know, he must have had some Mississippi masala in a black bag, acting like he can't speak English- we know that game. Sure he had more than dal and garlic naan on him! Assam tea, cumin and cinnamon sticks! What on Earth could have made this man even remotely suspicious to even call the police, and then spiraling lower, the police can't even exercise good judgment to realize what the real issue is? The police are just as foolish and prejudiced as the caller! These are the so-called professionals we trust in American police departments: academic over-

achieving unbiased sterling whites put into uniforms with flags on the sleeves. The incident illuminates the dumb leading the dumb and the grandfather duly paid a very high price of the officer's ignorant malfeasance. We Americans, however, can be proud the officer showed tactful restraint by not shooting the grandfather in the back and declaring later that he was under mortal threat because he thought the gentleman was holding a cobra for attack or was going to set a Bengal tiger on him. We can all sleep better tonight.

This incident also demonstrates how grossly racist America is when you can be middle aged in midday and people call the police on you for simply walking or sitting in a park. I personally had a similar incident in which I was stopped and questioned by police for walking in a predominately white neighborhood of my wife's acquaintance, not even driving, whilst the ladies were inside the house talking. I have white friends that I am certain, even if unknown in the same neighborhood, whom would never have had anybody call the police to check on them as being suspicious even if they were walking around even at night. We are guilty for being not the proper profile in certain places. Buttons do get pushed especially on telephones. Fortunately for me, beyond my many personal shortcomings, I have a constrained command of English with an American passport and declared openly what the real reason was- encouraged since I left my neck and basketball player arm tattoos and gangland attire at home getting laundered for the weekday grind- but was sporting instead a basic short sleeve shirt, khaki pants and Birkenstocks with nothing but air in my hands on Sunday afternoon, which quickly dispatched the officer to the nearest donut shop to assuage his chafed feelings of vacant valor. Even responding to the call, the officer should have been cognizant of the fact that the real issue when approaching me was not about a suspicious man, but it was purely the concern about race. What I was doing could not be construed as suspicious behavior, but just by being black categorically made me suspicious. The word suspicious is vague and opens a lot to interpretation by anyone. His job, however, was about protecting white privilege in a white neighborhood that he personally could not afford live in.

I wish Mexicans would call the police to say that a suspicious white man was in the neighborhood, the same guy ordering tacos from a street corner food truck. I wonder how that response would be dealt. “He looks like he can’t speak Spanish to me. I think he’s trying to sell drugs to our community. Why is he here? Something strange going on. You know how those white guys can be.” Imagine how fast police cars would be coming around the corner on that call. Or, “Yin, call the police, white man came into the store asking for Zheng Gu Shui liniment and Tiger Balm for a sore shoulder. Something’s odd and I don’t trust any of them! That’s very suspicious. I think he was casing our shop for a robbery.” Would the police take that rubbish seriously in responding? Under those circumstances, the police dispatcher could find reality and not run with the fantasy to note to ignore it. However, just a blip of whites possibly under threat or their property needs to occur for squad cars to roll around the corner with a purpose. Flippantly everybody of African, Latino and Asian descent should start calling the police on suspicious white people walking down a street. We all know the kind which are really nefarious that resemble noisy miscreant motorcycle gangs: buying ice cream for their kids after church, asking for directions to a restaurant, purchasing wine bottles for a weekend picnic, grandparents at a park bench, Spanish tourists (English not perfect, dangerous, look white but talk like a Mexican!) and we can surmise more than a few people would get bent out of shape with the flood of calls. The game is only fun when played in one direction and loses its allure when it can swing back with consequences. It’s no longer fun, well-intentioned or clever when there is a push back. No doubt, the most justified social threat, is the black male. You can be a medical doctor or a university professor and still be suspect just by race and all that it implies. Do not be an Arab financier ordering falafel in Arabic with a classy white woman and a new Mercedes, neither of which other white men could well afford, beyond the simple bite to eat. Dangerous and jealous! Guilty until proven innocent, which by the way, is how Americans like to point fingers at other nations for social and judicial corruption. The mirror held up shows us our warts and all too; we are not as removed from that reality as we would wish to believe in contrast to our national propaganda. We have

lofty Athenian ideals subject to straining moorings from medieval castle Carpathian interpretations which are constantly at odds with each other like oil and water.

The South always after the Civil War has been rife with cases of all white juries acquitting white police and citizens of gross misconduct even for murder. Law enforcement can work magic by exonerating their own with elastic degrees of tolerance for conduct, which in other capacities would be patently reprehensible behavior to defend, breaking well beyond any reasonable test of tensile strength:

US Police Violence

1,152 people killed by police in 2015

- 30% of victims were black
- 13% of US population is black
- **97% of deaths were not followed by any charges against police officers (1,118).**

mappingpoliceviolence.org, US Census Bureau

White and black Americans split on race

27 June 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36646917

US police shootings

Views on racial discrimination and race differ wildly among black and white Americans, a new report from the Pew Research Center has found. Most black Americans say they are treated unfairly and do not feel that racial equality has been achieved in the US, according to the report.

Eighty-eight percent of black Americans surveyed think the country must change, but only 55% of white Americans.

The survey comes amid ongoing conversations about race in the US. Race tensions are high in the US, especially with the 2016 presidential election approaching.

There are more than 1,000 deadly shootings by police in the country each year, and those killed are disproportionately black Americans.

The fatal shooting of teenager Michael Brown in Missouri in 2014 by police sparked protests across the country and gave fire to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Other key points from the report:

- Black Americans are twice as likely as white Americans to say there is not enough attention paid to race relations
- There is widespread support for the Black Lives Matter movement among black Americans
- Gaps between black and white Americans in economic security have widened
- White Americans are polarised among partisan lines on racial issues
- A majority of black Americans surveyed (71%) say they have experienced discrimination

"Blacks, far more than whites, say black people are treated unfairly across different realms of life, from dealing with the police to applying for a loan or mortgage. And, for many blacks, racial equality remains an elusive goal," the report's authors write.

There were 3,769 adults polled between 29 February and 8 May of 2016 - a group made up of 1,799 white, 1,004 black and 654 Hispanic Americans.

US race relations: Six surprising statistics
18 June 2015

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-30214825

A white gunman shot dead nine people in an African-American church in the city of Charleston on 17 June, police say, two months after an unarmed black man was killed by a white police officer in North Charleston.

The killings have reignited the debate about race relations in the US. Here are six surprising statistics that help tell the story.

2 black billionaires

There are only two black billionaires in the US - chat show host Oprah Winfrey and former basketball star Michael Jordan. This compared with about 500 white billionaires.

9.8% over-25s have a degree

Black students appear to do well in high school - just over 30% of over-25s have a diploma, compared with 27% of white over-25s. **But fewer than 10% of black over-25s completed a bachelor's degree, compared with 14.4% of whites.**

75% of white Americans have only white friends

A survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute in 2013 asked a range of questions to assess how diverse people's friendship groups were. It found that while 65% of black Americans reported only having black friends, **75% of white Americans said they had only whites in their social circle.**

10.9% black unemployment

Unemployment remains far higher among the black population, than the white. Currently 4.8% of white Americans are out of work, compared with an overall average of 5.8%

37% male prison inmates are black

Figures based on the prison population at the end of December 2013 show black Americans made up a disproportionate number of inmates. Some 32% were white and 22% Hispanic.

Data sources: US Census, Public Religion Research Institute, Forbes, US Dept of Labor, US Dept of Justice

Correction: An earlier version of this story did not make clear that the figures for people with high school diplomas or bachelor's degrees were for those aged over 25.

New York police officer kills mentally ill black woman

19 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37707892

A US police officer has been stripped of his gun and badge after he shot a mentally ill black pensioner dead. Sgt Hugh Barry was among officers called to Deborah Danner's New York apartment on Tuesday evening to reports of an "emotionally disturbed person". He persuaded her to drop a pair of scissors, but shot her twice after she tried to hit him with a baseball bat.The killing has sparked outrage - not just because of the 66-year-old's race, but also her fragile mental state.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Wednesday she "should be alive right now", while NYPD Commissioner James O'Neil said his department had "failed".
"It's not how we train; our first obligation is to preserve life, not to take a life when it can be avoided," he said

Blame

New York City police respond to 128,000 calls about emotionally disturbed people each year, and are supposed to use techniques to "de-escalate" a situation, rather than resort to force.

They had already come to Ms Danner's apartment on a number of occasions, each time taking her to hospital. It is not known why Sgt Barry, who had been an officer for eight years and was equipped with a stun gun, did not follow his training. But Ed Mullins, the head of the police union representing sergeants, argued the shooting was self defence - and Sgt Barry was being used as a political pawn.

"They're taking the weak political spot and blaming the sergeant for everything," Mullins said. "I'm not surprised. [Mr de Blasio is] up for election next year." Police shootings have come to the fore in the US in recent years, with the black community suffering disproportionately.

In 2015, US police officers killed 346 black people, according to Mapping Police Violence. Anger over the shootings started the Black Lives Matter campaign.

Tulsa shooting:
Manslaughter charge for police officer who shot black man

23 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37447533

A police officer who fatally shot an unarmed black motorist in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been charged with manslaughter, a prosecutor has said. Officer Betty Shelby shot and killed Terence Crutcher last week while he was standing next to his broken-down car.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, a curfew went into effect to prevent a third night of violence after a black man was shot dead by a black police officer.

Keith Lamont Scott's family deny police allegations that he was armed. Demonstrators protesting against Mr Scott's death in Charlotte have defied the curfew - running from midnight to 06:00, some remaining on the streets singing gospel songs.

According to Cpt Mike Campagna, officers have not enforced the curfew as protests were largely peaceful. However Charlotte police reported two officers were injured on Thursday night.

Hundreds of National Guard troops have been deployed on the streets. Some demonstrators demanded to see footage of the shooting which was released to Mr Scott's family but has not been made public.

The family's lawyer said the footage was inconclusive. But they have demanded its release to the public, which police have so far refused. Officials say Keith Lamont Scott refused to drop his gun but his family say he was unarmed and holding a book.

It has also emerged that one man injured in gunfire in Charlotte died from his wounds. The police use of force against black men has for two years been the subject of protests across the US, and now it has also become an election issue.

Four days before the first presidential debate, Republican Donald Trump said the violence was largely due to drugs. "If you're not aware, drugs are a very, very big factor in what you're watching on television at night," he said. Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Kaine said the list of black men fatally shot by police had "grown too long" and the country needed to confront the issue of racial tensions.

Republican Congressman Robert Pittenger, of North Carolina, told the BBC the protesters hated white people because white people were successful, but he later apologised for his comments in an interview with CNN.

In the aftermath of the Tulsa shooting, Officer Shelby said Mr Crutcher had not followed her commands and she had opened fire when he began to reach into his car window. Ms Shelby's lawyer, Scott Wood, has said she believed Mr Crutcher was under the influence of the synthetic drug PCP. A vial of the drug was found in the car. His family have disputed Ms Shelby's claim, arguing that his window was closed at the time of the incident.

Police have said no gun was found on Mr Crutcher or inside his vehicle.

As well as being shot, Mr Crutcher was also struck with a stun gun by another officer. His death sparked protests in Tulsa too but these have been peaceful.

Tulsa County District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler said a warrant has been issued for Ms Shelby's arrest. She faces a minimum of four years in prison.

The US justice department has also opened a separate investigation to see if Mr Crutcher's civil rights were violated.

Tulsa shooting: The unanswered questions

23 September 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37435445

The shooting of an unarmed black man by police in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has led to protests and demands by his family for justice.

Terence Crutcher, 40, was shot dead next to his stalled car last Friday. Officers had encountered the car while on their way to another call-out.

The incident was caught by two police cameras - one in a helicopter, the other inside a police car - and the officer in question has been charged with first-degree manslaughter.

However, much of what happened remains unclear.

Did Mr Crutcher lower his hands?

Both sources of footage show armed police approaching Mr Crutcher next to his vehicle - he has his hands in the air, and places them on the side of the car. It is not clear whether Mr Crutcher drops his hands at any point - his family say he did not - and angles on both videos obscure him moments before he is shot by a stun gun then a gun.

Police said soon after the shooting that he had ignored officers' commands, but a lawyer for the Crutcher family said witnesses were "shocked and outraged that he actually was shot" as he had been responding to the requests.

Was the car window open?

A lawyer for Betty Shelby, the police officer who shot Mr Crutcher, also said he had ignored officers' commands.

Scott Wood told the Tulsa World newspaper that Mr Crutcher had repeatedly reached into his pockets, despite being told not to. Shots were fired when he reached in through the window of the car, Mr Wood said. However, on Tuesday, Mr Crutcher's family held a press conference showing a magnified photo appearing to show blood on the driver's window, indicating it was not open. It is not clear if the window of the back seat was open or not.

Were there drugs involved?

While Betty Shelby came across the stalled car while on an unrelated call, audio released by police shows a phone call was made by a member of the public about concerns someone was "smoking something".

Mr Wood also said that Officer Shelby, thanks to training she had received, suspected Mr Crutcher was under the influence of PCP, a synthetic drug.

On Tuesday, police confirmed to the Tulsa World that a vial of the drug was found in the car.

"Let us not be thrown a red herring and to say because something was found in the car that is justification to shoot him," Crutcher family lawyer Benjamin Crump said.

Police release bodycam footage of Keith Scott shooting

25 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37464614

Police in Charlotte, North Carolina, have released officer bodycam and dashcam footage of a controversial shooting of a black man on Tuesday.

They also released pictures of a handgun and marijuana that police say Keith Lamont Scott possessed.

Calls for the footage to be released had increased in the four days since Mr Scott was shot. His wife released her own video from her phone on Friday.

Mr Scott's family says he was carrying a book and not a gun. Charlotte police chief Kerr Putney told reporters the victim was "absolutely in possession of a handgun".

The dashcam footage released on Saturday shows Mr Scott getting out of his car and walking backwards with his hands down. It is unclear if there is anything in his hands. Four shots are heard and he falls to the ground.

The bodycam footage shows Mr Scott outside his car with his hands down but does not show the moment of the shooting.

The BBC's Laura Bicker in Washington says it does not clear up the key question of whether Mr Scott had a gun, or if he pointed a gun at police.

The lawyer for Mr Scott's family, Justin Bamberg, told reporters that the latest footage only raised more questions about the incident. He said the video did not show a gun in Mr Scott's hand.

Speaking at a press conference earlier, Mr Putney released the first specific details from police on a case that has been mired in controversy and uncertainty.

Mr Putney said Mr Scott, 43, was in possession of marijuana and that he had committed another crime, which the police chief would not elaborate on. He said that the officers who confronted Mr Scott were conducting surveillance when they spotted marijuana in the victim's car, and subsequently saw a gun.

In a video released on Friday, filmed by Mr Scott's wife, she can be heard telling officers repeatedly that he does not have a weapon.

Mr Putney said that the bodycam footage contained "no definitive visual evidence that he [Mr Scott] had a gun and pointed it at officers", but that police were satisfied he did.

'Don't shoot!' wife tells Charlotte police in video

24 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37456727

The moment North Carolina police shot a black man was captured on video by his wife, who can be heard pleading with officers: "Don't shoot him!" In the footage, Rakeyia Scott tells husband Keith Scott to get out of his car as Charlotte police surround him.

The clip does not show the actual shooting, or make clear if Mr Scott was carrying a gun, as police say.

Officers can be heard urging him to "drop the gun" but his wife is heard telling them he is unarmed. On Friday evening, a few hundred protesters took to the streets, but the demonstrations was smaller than on the previous three nights. They chanted "No justice, no peace" and "Release the video" - a call for the police to release their dash-cam and body-cam images of the incident. The state governor has declared a state of emergency in the city, and a midnight curfew has been imposed for a second night running, after rioters looted businesses and threw objects at police on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

Unnamed police sources told local media and CNN a gun found at the scene was loaded and had Mr Scott's fingerprints and DNA on it. But the police have said nothing officially. Charlotte city leaders have been under mounting pressure to release their footage of this week's shooting. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton joined the chorus, adding: "We must ensure justice and work to bridge divides."

Mrs Clinton's campaign team had said she would visit Charlotte on Sunday, but later announced the visit was being postponed until the following Sunday after discussion with community leaders "as to not impact the city's resources". In the clip, an officer is heard shouting: "Hands up!"

Mrs Scott cries: "Don't shoot him. Don't shoot him. He has no weapon. He has no weapon. Don't shoot him."

An officer says: "Don't shoot. Drop the gun. Drop the [expletive] gun."
Mrs Scott says: "He doesn't have a gun. He has a TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury]. He just took his medicine."

Family lawyers have previously said Mr Scott suffered head trauma in a car accident last year.

Mrs Scott is then heard shouting "Keith, don't do it!" It is unclear what she is referring to. Seconds later shots ring out, and Mrs Scott rushes forward shouting: "Did you shoot him? He better not be [expletive] dead!"

The incident occurred in the car park of an apartment complex where police who were searching for another person. **The officer who fatally shot the 43-year-old father-of-seven was identified as Brently Vinson, who is also African-American**.

There are conflicting accounts of his death - police say he was armed and that a pistol was recovered at the scene; his family says he was holding a book.

Mr Scott's mother, Vernita Scott Walker, told South Carolina broadcaster WCSC he was probably reading the Koran.

She said he read the Islamic holy book every day, often while waiting for his son to get off the bus. "That's what he was reading because he loved to read that book," said Ms Scott Walker.

At a press conference on Friday, officials defended their refusal to release body-cam and dash-cam video of the shooting.

Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts told reporters: "I do believe the video should be released - the question is on the timing." She said the video was "inconclusive" as to whether Mr Scott was holding a gun.

City Police Chief Kerr Putney said the video alone does not provide sufficient evidence of probable cause for the shooting. Releasing it without "context" could only inflame the situation, he added.

Critics have accused Charlotte authorities of a lack of transparency, compared with the swift action taken after a police shooting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where a white officer has been charged. Charlotte police said they arrested a suspect in Wednesday's fatal shooting of a protester, Justin Carr, in in the city.

The alleged gunman was identified as Rayquan Borum.

Two videos have been made public, one filmed by an officer's bodycam and another by a patrol vehicle dashcam. Mr Putney said that the officer who shot Mr Scott was not wearing a bodycam, because not all Charlotte police tactical teams wore them.
The officer who fatally shot the father of seven was identified as Brently Vinson, who is also African-American.

Quizzed about claims that police were not at the location because of Mr Scott, and encountered him randomly, Mr Putney said: "They were intentionally detaining this man. It was to take this man off the streets."

He said that that police would release DNA evidence as well as the footage. Asked whether any officers would be charged, he said: "No officers are being charged by me at this point, but there is another investigation underway".

The shooting is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Mr Scott's mother, Vernita Scott Walker, told South Carolina broadcaster WCSC he was probably reading the Koran.

She said he read the Islamic holy book every day, often while waiting for his son to get off the bus. Mr Scott's family claim that he suffered from a brain injury brought on by a motorbike accident.

Critics have accused Charlotte authorities of a lack of transparency over the delay in releasing the footage, compared with the swift action taken after a police shooting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where a white officer has been charged.

Tulsa shooting: Family of man killed by police call for protests
20 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37413558

The family of an unarmed black man shot dead by police in Oklahoma have called for peaceful protests.

Authorities are investigating the death of Terence Crutcher, 40, who had his hands in the air when he was shot next to his car, relatives say.
Police footage shows Mr Crutcher walking away from officers, his hands in the air, before he is shot.

An officer is heard on a recording from a police helicopter calling him "a big dude" who was "probably on something".

"The big bad dude was my twin brother," his twin sister, Tiffany, told reporters.

"That big bad dude was a father. That big bad dude was a son. That big bad dude was enrolled at Tulsa Community College, just wanting to make us proud.

That big bad dude loved God. That big bad dude was at church singing with all of his flaws, every week. That big bad dude, that's who he was." She went on to ask that people turn out to demonstrate."Just know that our voices will be heard," she said. "The video will speak for itself. Let's protest.

"Let's do what we have to do, but let's just make sure that we do it peacefully, to respect the culture of (the Crutcher family)."
In another video filmed inside a police car, Mr Crutcher is seen walking away from officers and toward his vehicle with his hands up before he approaches the door on the driver's side.

There he drops to the ground after a stun gun, and then a gun, are fired.He died later in hospital, police said.

The video and the helicopter footage appear to back up his family's assertion that his hands were in the air at all times.

Officers came across Mr Crutcher's stalled vehicle while they were en route to another call, reports say.

A lawyer for Betty Shelby, the police officer who shot Mr Crutcher, said he had ignored officers' commands.

Attorney Scott Wood told the Tulsa World newspaper that Mr Crutcher had repeatedly reached into his pockets, despite being told not to.

Shots were fired when he reached into the window of a vehicle, he said, but it is unclear in the videos what occurred just before the shooting.

The US Justice Department is investigating the circumstances of the shooting.

A series of high-profile incidents involving African-Americans dying at the hands of police have led to demonstrations across the US.

Jamar Clark death: No police disciplinary proceedings

22 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37736178

Two police officers involved in the fatal shooting of a 24-year-old unarmed black man will not be disciplined, police in the US city Minneapolis say.

Police say an internal probe found the officers were justified in using force against Jamar Clark last November.

In March police said officers would not be charged over his death.

An attorney for Mr Clark's family has said they are "anguished and frustrated" that the policemen will not face discipline proceedings. Police involved in last November's shooting said they were responding to an alleged assault by Mr Clark and that he tried to seize one of their weapons as they were doing so

Mr Clark's death came after a series of fatal US police shootings involving African-Americans.

Police said the suspect was not handcuffed and they were forced to shoot in self-defence. Their version of events has been supported by the Minnesota state Department of Criminal Apprehension. But witnesses insisted he was handcuffed and did not struggle with the officers.

Minneapolis police chief Janee Harteau told a news conference on Friday that the two policemen did not violate any police policy and their use of deadly force was warranted. "I have concluded these officers did not dictate the outcome of this incident. This was an outcome no one wanted," she was quoted by the Minneapolis Star Tribune as saying. Ms Harteau said she could say "with absolute certainty" that she supported the actions of the two officers, who have been named in US media as Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze.

Mr Clark's death triggered protests lasting several weeks, including an 18-day encampment around Minneapolis' police precinct.

Pastor Danny Givens of Black Lives Matter Minneapolis was quoted by the Star Tribune as saying that Friday's announcement was "another example of how this broken judicial system continues to fail black people". He said the decision "further perpetuates a culture of policing that says killing unarmed black men and women is OK".

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Our kind of jury is the kind that is stacked in the defense's favor, if police are on trial. Let a black police officer shoot a white driver in the back a few times, captured on a phone video, and let the same nearly all white jury deliberate. Certainly the officer had to use fatal force because their life was under threat by a white man running from them and a mistrial would have occurred, that is if he or she were not duly exonerated.

Would we dare believe that?

Walter Scott murder case ends in mistrial for former officer

5 December 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38215957

The case of a South Carolina police officer accused of murdering a fleeing black motorist by shooting him dead has ended in a mistrial.

Jurors could not reach a verdict after four days of deliberations in the case against former North Charleston patrolman Michael Slager, 35.

A bystander filmed the officer opening fire on 50-year-old Walter Scott after he fled an April 2015 traffic stop.

The jury of 11 white people and a black man heard four weeks of testimony.

Charleston County prosecutor Scarlett A Wilson said her office would retry Mr Slager, who is also scheduled to stand trial in federal court next year.

"We hope the federal and state courts will coordinate efforts regarding any future trial dates but we stand ready whenever the court calls," she said in a statement, referring to his federal trial.

The case gained national attention after video emerged appearing to show the moment the officer opened fire on a fleeing Mr Scott.

Mr Scott was fatally shot five times in the back as he tried to run away after he had been pulled over for a broken tail light. Mr Slager was fired from the police force after the shooting.

He pleaded not guilty to murder, but jurors were also allowed to consider a voluntary manslaughter charge against him as the trial came to a close last week.

The jury announced on Friday they were unable to reach a unanimous verdict, but the judge sent them back to continue deliberations.

One of the jurors wrote Judge Clifton Newman a letter saying he could not "in good conscience approve a guilty verdict" and would not change his mind.

On Monday, a note from the jury said "the majority" of jurors were still undecided.

The panel also submitted a number of questions, including why voluntary manslaughter was added as a possible verdict and whether the definition of self-defence is different for police than for civilians.

Mr Slager had testified that he feared for his life during the encounter.

"Like so many others in our community, I'm deeply disappointed by the jury's inability to reach a unanimous verdict", Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said in a statement.

"However, despite that disappointment, I also understand that justice is not always delivered by a single jury, in a single courtroom, on a single day. Justice is often a journey. And the journey to justice in the Michal Slager case is far from over."

The former police officer would have faced 30 years to life in prison on a murder charge while a manslaughter conviction would have carried a sentence of two to 30 years behind bars.

The North Charleston City Council reached a $6.5m (£5.1m) settlement with Mr Scott's family in October 2015 over the incident.

Charlotte protests: Police injured after black man shot

Sep. 21, 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37427164

Twelve police officers have been injured during protests sparked by the police shooting of a black man in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Demonstrators destroyed marked police cars around the block of flats where the shooting took place, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department tweeted. One officer was hit in the face with a rock, it said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Keith Lamont Scott, 43, was shot by a black officer and died in hospital.

Police say he was carrying a gun and posed an "imminent deadly threat", but relatives told local media he was not holding a weapon but a book.

"He didn't have no gun," a woman identifying herself as his sister told local television. "He wasn't messing with nobody."

Protesters outraged over the incident blocked streets and police used tear gas, local media reported. Mayor Jennifer Roberts appealed for calm, and said the shooting of Keith Lamont Scott would be looked into.

"The community deserves answers and full investigation will ensue," she tweeted. "Will be reaching out to community leaders to work together."

The unrest came a day after police in the city of Tulsa, in Oklahoma, said a black man they had killed on Friday was unarmed.

Hundreds of people have been protesting outside police headquarters there. Terence Crutcher was walking away with his hands in the air when he was shot by police, his family said. Video footage showed him walking with his arms raised to the door of his vehicle, but a lawyer for the officer who shot Mr Crutcher said he had ignored officers' commands. The footage at the moment of the shooting is not clear.

In Charlotte, officers had been looking for a different suspect at a block of flats when Mr Scott was killed, police spokesman Keith Trietley said. They saw Mr Scott get out of a car carrying a gun before getting back in, he said. When the officers approached, Mr Scott got out of the car with the gun again and police opened fire after deeming him a threat. He was not the suspect police were originally looking for, Mr Trietley confirmed.

Brentley Vinson, the officer who shot Mr Scott, has been placed on administrative leave as part of police protocol. A woman claiming to be Mr Scott's daughter has contested the police department's account in a Facebook video, the Charlotte Observer reports.

She says Mr Scott was unarmed and reading while he was waiting for his son's school bus and was tasered before being shot four times.

She also said he was disabled. Police have not responded to the claims but say they recovered a gun at the scene.

Alton Sterling: Video 'shows US police shooting black man in Louisiana'

6 July 2016, BBC

A video has emerged appearing to show two white police officers holding down and shooting dead a black man during an incident in the US state of Louisiana.

The confrontation took place in the state capital**, Baton Rouge,** on Tuesday after reports of a man threatening people with a gun outside a shop.

A post-mortem examination showed the victim, Alton Sterling, 37, died of gunshot wounds to the chest and back.

The video shows two officers wrestling a man in a red shirt to the floor. Family members and local leaders have called for a federal investigation, adding that they do not trust local law enforcement officials,

Mr Sterling's family told reporters they want to know why Mr Sterling was killed.
In the video, the man appears struggles and one of the officers pins his arm to the floor with his knee and then appears to pull out his gun and point it at the man.

A voice is heard shouting: "He's got a gun. Gun." Then shots ring out and the camera moves away. A woman - apparently a bystander - can be heard saying "Oh my God", followed by another asking: "They shot him?" The first woman replies: "Yes."

The incident comes amid heightened tension in the US over the deaths of African-American men at the hands of police.

There are more than 1,000 deadly shootings by police in the US each year, and disproportionate numbers of those killed are black Americans.

Alton Sterling death: Fresh protests over Louisiana shooting
7 July 2016, BBC

Hundreds of people have gathered for a second night of protests at the spot where a black man was pinned to the ground and shot dead by police. Mourners, friends and relatives of Alton Sterling met at the shop in Baton Rouge where he was killed on Tuesday.

Meanwhile video has emerged of another black man being shot dead by police, this time in Minnesota. Philando Castile was shot in his car as he reached for his driving licence, his girlfriend said.

He had earlier told the officer who pulled him over that he was licensed to carry a concealed gun and had one in his possession, she said.

The footage taken by her shows Mr Castile covered in blood next to her and the officer outside the car pointing his gun at him.

"You shot four bullets into him, sir. He was just getting his license and registration, sir," the woman says, local media reported. Police said an investigation was under way.

In Baton Rouge, some demonstrators chanted "Black lives matter" and called for justice.

A second video emerged on Wednesday that showed the altercation between the 37-year-old and two police officers.

It appears to show Mr Sterling being held down and then shot several times, although some shots are heard when the camera moves away from the confrontation. **Seconds later, one of the officers is seen removing an object from the man's trousers as he lies on the ground with blood on his chest.**

Police have said Mr Sterling was found to be armed. Officers were initially called because of a 911 report of a man brandishing a gun.

The latest video was provided to the Daily Beast by the shop owner, Abdullah Muflahi, who said it proves the man was no threat to the officers when he was shot.

At the scene: Laura Bicker, BBC News, Baton Rouge

The cry is for "justice". But most of those here say it's not something they expect. They distrust the police, they say they fear all authority and they've gathered at this street corner where Alton Sterling was killed to stand together and say "no more".
They've prayed, they've sung, they've cried and they've danced. An artist has spray painted Mr Sterling's face on the side of the convenience store. Others lit candles and released balloons.

It has been peaceful but there is real anger here and at times almost despair.
It's not just about the death of one man. There are some who feel that the fight for equality might be one that they will never win.

Mr Sterling, a father of five, died at the scene and hours later a video filmed by a bystander and showing his death was released. Officers Blane Salamoni and Howie Lake II were put on administrative leave.

About 200 people protested on Tuesday night and on Wednesday there was unrest in Philadelphia where about 75 people blocked a busy road as they protested about the killing of Mr Sterling.

His death follows a long line of high-profile incidents involving African Americans at the hands of the police, igniting a national debate about the lethal use of force.

Agonic Line News:

Police shootings: Louisiana and Minnesota protests near boiling point

By Laura Bicker & Barbara Plett Usher
10 July 2016, BBC News

'We are praying that it stays peaceful' - Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In Baton Rouge, it's not anger they feel. It's rage.

The people here raised their voices in prayer, in chants and in song at the death of Alton Sterling. At one point during a demonstration, they broke into frenzied dancing to a marching brass band while singing "Free the People". This is grieving, Louisiana style.

The events in Dallas have not altered this pattern of daily protests. But it has given community leaders pause for thought. How do they channel this need to air their grievances with the police without it breaking into violence?

On Saturday hundreds of people marched through the streets to the imposing Louisiana State Capitol Building. The men stood on the steps - clenched fists raised high. The unmistakable black power salute.

State Representative Patricia Smith, one of the organisers, told me: "We are praying that it stays peaceful here. We made it through another day. We've had a few arrests, but none of them were really violent.

"We are asking our young people and those from out of town to respect our wishes and the wishes of Alton Sterling's family, that there is no more bloodshed in Baton Rouge." Community leaders are intervening whenever it looks like the gatherings could turn violent. On several occasions protesters have gathered outside the police headquarters. On Saturday evening they were led by a more militant group, the New Black Panther Party, whose members openly carry weapons.

Officers dressed in riot gear responded by forming a police line and the two sides came face to face across the street. There have been a few clashes and some arrests. Cleave Dunn Junior is a business owner who, along with others, has worked day and night to defuse the worst of the tension.

He said: "The major thing we want to do is manage emotion and direct that energy on the right path. What we've done here is set the right tone. We want to show outrage, protest and we may even do some civil disobedience, but we don't want to tear our community up and we don't want to harm our city."

Despite the circumstances, our team received the warmest of welcomes. The protesters want the world to hear their cries. But in the feverish heat of summer, it's hard not to feel that this city is close to boiling point. - *Laura Bicker*

'This might be the tipping point' - St Paul, Minnesota

In St Paul, Minnesota a core of committed protesters still hold a round-the-clock vigil outside the governor's mansion.

On Saturday their numbers swelled for another march to remember Philando Castile, the school cafeteria supervisor shot dead by police last week - drawing a multi-racial crowd, old and young. 'It's been a very long week, a lot of anger and sadness and emptiness,' said Corydon Nilsson, a young Black Lives Matter activist.

The killing of five police officers in Dallas has deepened those emotions but hasn't overtaken the outrage caused by the video of Castile's dying moments, documenting a routine traffic stop that turned into a killing.

"We mourn with everyone who dies," said Jason Sole of the Minneapolis National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). "But I don't think it's

changed what we're out here fighting for. We're dying consistently for the colour of our skin… and it has to stop."

"I think [the Dallas attack] was a setback but we've reached a point where everyone is galvanized by what happened here," said Mr Nilsson, who grew up in the middle class suburb of Falcon Heights, where Castile died.

At a mostly white church in Falcon Heights, a service was held to honour all those who died in the tumultuous week and to renew pledges to fight racial injustice - mindful of the shadow of Dallas.

"I think we do have to be careful that we don't lose attention on the two deaths from earlier in the week, as much as our hearts grieve for those killed in the line of duty," said pastor Reverend Anne Swallow Gillis. "So we have to be able to hold both in our hands and that's very difficult, very difficult," she said.

Jay Bryson, a protester, said: "Our gun culture is out of control right now. It's got to flip sometime, this might be the tipping point."

As night fell, some protesters shut down part of an interstate highway west of St Paul, throwing bottles and fireworks at policemen who used smoke bombs to disperse the crowd.

"This is what's going to get attention," said one bystander, who did not want to be named. "If I had done the same thing [as the policeman who shot Castile] I'd be in jail," said another. "This is the consequence." - *Barbara Plett Usher*

Louisiana floods: Obama 'heartbroken' after tour

23 August 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37171151

President Barack Obama has toured the flood-ravaged areas of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he vowed to help residents rebuild in the coming months.
"We are heartbroken by the loss of life," he said after his tour.

Mr Obama dismissed criticism that he arrived too late and praised state officials for their initial response.

The president also met the family of Alton Sterling and the families of the Baton Rouge police officers killed last month. **Mr Sterling, a black man, was killed at the hands of a white police officer in Baton Rouge.**

His death, along with the police killing of Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, stoked racial tensions and led to protests across the country.

Nearly two weeks later, three officers were shot and killed and three more were injured in a shooting near the Baton Rouge police headquarters. The gunman, Gavin Long, was shot dead at the scene.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, who travelled to Louisiana four days ago, and others have criticised Mr Obama for not cutting short his vacation on Martha's Vineyard to visit the devastated areas. But Mr Obama hit back after meeting with flood survivors, urging Americans to stay focused on helping the state.

- How bad is Louisiana flooding?

"Let me just remind folks. Sometimes once the flood waters pass, people's attention spans pass. This is not a one-off. This is not a photo-op issue," he said. Mr Trump fired back on Tuesday, tweeting: "President Obama should have gone to Louisiana days ago, instead of golfing. Too little, too late!"

The deadly floods, which began on 11 August, have killed at least 13 people and have left more than 2,800 people in shelters.

The president declared a major disaster on 14 August, allowing the state to access federal resources to assist local officials with the clean-up.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has already dispensed $127m (£96m) in assistance, according to the president.

'Historic' Louisiana flooding: Five dead and thousands rescued

15 August 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37081934

At least five people have died and thousands have been rescued after "historic" flooding swamped the US state of Louisiana.

President Barack Obama has declared the state a disaster area, meaning federal aid can be sent to the affected areas. Soldiers and emergency teams have rescued more than 20,000 people from their homes or cars after the floods, which were caused by torrential rain.

Emergency workers told the BBC some people were still stuck in their homes.

The neighbouring states of Alabama and Mississippi also experienced severe weather, although rains are lessening as they move west over Louisiana and further.

One of the worst-affected areas is the Louisiana capital, Baton Rouge.

William Daniel, an official there, told the BBC from an emergency control centre that between 8,000 and 10,000 people were in shelters. "We're still receiving phone calls about people who're trying to get out of their homes because they can't get out because either there's water coming in to their houses or their streets are blocked.

"**It is definitely an unprecedented flood here in Baton Rouge.** Houses that have never ever even come close to flooding have water three and four foot high in to the houses." "This is a flood of epic proportions," JR Shelton, the mayor of Central City told local media. "**When we talk about floods now, we'll talk about the great flood of 2016.** "Everything else pales in comparison."

Shanita Angrum, 32, called the police when she realised her family were trapped in their home. An officer arrived and carried her six-year-old daughter to safety. "Snakes were everywhere," she told Associated Press. "The whole time I was just praying for God to make sure me and my family were OK."

John Mitchell, a 23-year-old Louisiana resident, was forced to swim to safety with his girlfriend and her one-year-old daughter. They were rescued by police officers in a boat. "This is the worst it's been, ever," Mr Mitchell said. "We tried to wait it out, but we had to get out."

Several rivers in Louisiana and Mississippi are overflowing. The state is prone to bursts of extreme weather; thousands of acres of Louisiana were flooded in 2011 to divert water from the flooded Mississippi River and to spare cities, including Baton Rouge and New Orleans, that lie downstream.

In 2005, New Orleans suffered one of the worst natural disasters in US history, when Hurricane Katrina hit the city. The storm killed nearly 2,000 people and displaced one

million. Thousands of homes were flooded and destroyed in Louisiana and along the Gulf coast.

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Tamir Rice shooting was 'justified' - experts

11 October 2015, BBC

A white police officer was justified in shooting and killing last year a black 12-year-old boy who was carrying a toy gun in Cleveland, Ohio, two outside experts have concluded. The conclusions come ahead of an expected decision by a grand jury on whether criminal charges are warranted.

In June, a judge ruled the policeman should be charged with murder. **Rice family lawyer Subodh Chandra accused the experts of assisting in a "whitewash" of the incident.**

Tamir Rice was shown on CCTV waving a pellet gun outside a recreation centre last November, before being shot twice. He later died in hospital.

Retired FBI agent Kimberly Crawford, in a review of the shooting, wrote that "not only was Officer [Timothy] Loehmann required to make a split-second decision, but also that his response was a reasonable one". He "had no information to suggest the weapon was anything but a real handgun, and the speed with which the confrontation progressed would not give the officer time to focus on the weapon", she wrote.

In another report, Colorado prosecutor Lamar Sims also concluded that "Officer Loehmann's belief that Rice posed a threat of serious physical harm or death was objectively reasonable, as was his response to that perceived threat".

Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty said in a statement his office - which commissioned the expert reports - was not reaching any conclusions based on them. In June, Judge Ron Adrine said there were sufficient grounds to prosecute Officer Loehmann with murder, manslaughter and reckless homicide.

Police have maintained that Rice's pellet gun looked real and that they asked him to raise his hands three times. But his family said video footage shows the police acted too quickly after arriving at the scene.

Rice's death sparked protests in Cleveland, at a time when the deaths of black men at the hands of police had sparked a national debate.

US Supreme Court hears white jury case

2 November 2015, BBC

The US Supreme Court is determining whether racism played a role when an all-white jury put a black teenager on death row for killing a white woman. Justice Elena Kagan said Timothy Foster's case seemed as clear a violation "as a court is ever going to see" of rules meant to prevent racial discrimination in jury selection. Foster was sentenced to death in 1987.

He argues that excluding black people from the jury made his sentence more harsh. The prosecutor in his case had asked for a death sentence to "deter other people out there in the projects". The Supreme Court will determine whether prosecutor Stephen Lanier and his team violated the constitutional rights of Foster. Mr Lanier has denied any intentions to discriminate against Foster.

Analysis - Jessica Lussenhop, BBC News, Washington

There is still much concern that African Americans are being struck from US juries at a higher rate than whites. **A 2011 lawsuit argued that 82% of black jurors were denied in death penalty cases in Houston and Henry counties in Alabama. A**

2015 study of jury strikes in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, showed that prosecutors struck black jurors at three times the rate they struck non-blacks.

Potential jury members are selected from a large pool, then whittled down to 12 members. Each trial lawyer is given a number of "peremptory strikes". If a peremptory strike is challenged as being racial in nature, the lawyer must give a so-called race-neutral reason. This can be a low bar to clear. **An Equal Justice Initiative study found a "startlingly common" reason for striking black jurors was "low intelligence". Other reasons included living in "high crime" areas, or being on food stamps.**

The US's highest court had ruled in 1986 that jurors could not be excluded due to race. **In 2006, the case was re-opened when the state of Georgia made public notes that showed prosecutors had singled out black people during jury selection - the world "black" had been circled next to the "race" option.**

One handwritten note said "Definite No's" with six people, five of whom were black. **Three prospective black jurors were labelled on the notes as "B#1", "B#2" and "B#3.**

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The US Supreme Court reversed, holding that when a pattern of race-based strikes has been indentified by the defense, the prosecutor need not provide “an explanation that this is persuasive, or even plausible.” Once the reason is offered, a trial judge may choose to believe or (disbelieve) any “silly or superstitious” reason offered by prosecutors to explain a pattern of strikes that appear based on race. **The Court sent a clear message that appellate courts are largely free to accept the reasons offered by a prosecutor for excluding black jurors – no matter how irrational or absurd the reasons may seem.**

- Michelle Alexander
  The New Jim Crow

This article does not indentify an important component: the jury was all white & male and was intended to have been stacked in favor of the police officer's defense. Oklahoma is a notoriously racist and conservative state. The quantity of sexual offenses were so egregious that even with the officer not found guilty on some counts, he received a Happy Birthday present he will always fondly remember with some new government clothes. He always had a preference for uniforms and may soon acquire a new alias of endearment in the Big House as Daniela, or should it be, Danielle?

Oklahoma police officer guilty of raping women on his beat

11 December 2015, BBC

An Oklahoma City police officer has been convicted of raping and sexually assaulting black women in the poor area he worked in. Daniel Holtzclaw, 29, stopped the women while out on patrol, searched them and then forced himself upon them. Holtzclaw was convicted of assaults on eight victims, including a grandmother in her 50s and a 17-year-old. The jury recommended a prison term totaling 263 years. He is due to be sentenced in January.

"Justice was done today, and a criminal wearing a uniform is going to prison now," Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater said.

Standing with 'imperfect' accusers

The verdict was delivered on Holtzclaw's birthday - a reporter at the trial tweeted a video of supporters of the victims singing Happy Birthday in celebration at the verdict. **The**

case has drawn attention on social media, with some users commenting on a perceived lack of interest in the case from major media outlets.

The court heard from several women during the trial. The grandmother said she was driving home late at night when Holtzclaw pulled her over, asked if she had been drinking and then told her to get into his squad car and and ordered her to perform oral sex.

Another victim, who was 17 at the time, said Holtzclaw pulled up in his car as she walked home one night, drove her there, told her he had to search her, forced off her clothes and raped her.

Holtzclaw's lawyer insisted his client had been attempting to help the drug addicts and prostitutes he encountered in his work. Many of the women had arrest records or histories of drug abuse.

Two of the victims spoke out on their experiences at a news conference a day after the verdict was handed down. "I wasn't a criminal, I have no record, I didn't do anything wrong," said Janie Higgins. "He picked the wrong lady to stop that night."
"I was helpless, I thought he was going to shoot me and kill me," she said. "He did things to me I didn't think a police officer would do." Ms Higgins said she was traumatised and had a stroke following her encounter with Holtzclaw and that she went to therapy. "I still live with this day after day." Another victim, Sade Hill, spoke of her experience being violated by Holtzclaw in a hospital.

"I just couldn't even believe it. I was speechless, I was scared," she said. "I didn't know what to do. I felt like I was in survival mode so I had to do what he was making me do."
Ms Hill was abused in 2013 and did not come forward with her story until this July.
She said she never doubted during the trial that Holtzclaw would be brought to justice.
"My faith was strong in this whole situation," she said. "Black lives do matter. We matter. We are survivors."

Tim Wolfe: US university chief quits in race row

9 November 2015, BBC

The president of the University of Missouri has resigned amid accusations that there is endemic racism at the university that is not being addressed. Tim Wolfe made the announcement as students and professors staged a walkout at the Columbia campus. Some members of the university's football team have threatened not to play at a game on Saturday over the racial issues.

Black student groups say racial slurs are commonly used around campus.

"The frustration and anger that I see is clear and real and I don't doubt it for a second," said Mr Wolfe. "I take full responsibility for the frustration and inaction on this campus." Missouri graduate student Jonathan Butler, who had been participating in a hunger strike as a protest, said the resignation was a "great step towards change" but there was still a lot of work to do.

"We still have a lot of healing that needs to happen on campus," he said, adding that his hunger strike would now end.

Mr Wolfe served as president of the entire university system and not specifically for the flagship Columbia campus.

Among the offences black students have complained about:

- a swastika drawn in faeces was found in a dormitory bathroom
- being subjected to racial slurs by passerby in cars and on campus
- one student told the Los Angeles times she and other girls were kicked out of a fraternity party for being black

- another student said a professor told her she was only at the university because of affirmative action requirements
- not receiving any university support after the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri
- no response from Mr Wolfe after black students stopped his car at a homecoming parade
- being treated differently to white students on campus

Concerned Student 1950, the student group that has been having a sit-in on campus since last Monday, tweeted that his resignation was a victory but its work was not done.
"Our brother can eat, but we are still owed Demands! Stay strong!" the group tweeted.

Reaction on social media

Rather than jubilation, the main sentiment was disappointment and frustration - at least if you looked at Yik Yak.

- "I need to transfer," said one user.
- "I guess we will now see if the protesters are happy or not," said another. "I wonder how long it will be until there's another big protest."
- Another said sarcastically: "Thank god Tim Wolfe resigned! Racism is no longer a thing."

Online threats against black students rattle Missouri campus
11 November 2015, BBC

Police at the University of Missouri have arrested at least one man after death threats were posted online against black students. Officials linked 19-year-old Hunter Park to some of the threatening posts but did not say how.The university increased security but said there is no "immediate threat".

Mr Park's arrest comes days after University President Tim Wolfe was forced out, accused of not doing enough to address racism on campus. Threats mostly came from users of the anonymous messaging app Yik-Yak.

Yik Yak condemned the threatening messages and said in a news release that the company works alongside authorities to help in investigations and it may share information with law enforcement.

Mr Park was not on campus or nearby when posting the message, police said. He lives in Rolla, Missouri, about 100 miles (161km) south of the Columbia campus and is a student at the Missouri University of Science & Technology, the school confirmed. **"I'm going to stand my ground tomorrow and shoot every black person I see," one anonymous post read on Yik Yak.**

Another warned black students simply not to come to campus the next day and another said "we're waiting for you at the parking lots… we will kill you."

Before the suspect was apprehended, protest leaders said the university administrators were not doing enough to address the threats against minority students. One black student tweeted an email conversation with his professor in which he told the professor he was scared to come to class because of the threats.

"The only way bullies are defeated is by standing up to them ... If we cancel the exam, they win; if we go through with it, they lose," the professor wrote.

In recent weeks, students staged a sit-in on a university plaza and one graduate student participated in a hunger strike, calling for Mr Wolfe's resignation.

Among the offences black students have complained about are that a swastika drawn in faeces was found in a dormitory bathroom and that they are subjected to racial slurs by passerby in cars and on campus.

Mr Wolfe stepped down after the university's American football team joined the cause, threatening not to play until action was taken to address racial issues on the mostly white campus.

Apple apologises after allegations of racism by Australia schoolboys
12 November 2105, BBC

Apple has apologised to six schoolboys asked to leave one of their shops in Australia, in what the students described as a racist incident. Footage of the incident at Melbourne's Highpoint shopping centre emerged on Tuesday sparking a social media outcry.
A staff member can be heard saying security are concerned that the boys will shoplift. Apple said the store manager apologised to the boys, who are all black, and their school principal.

In a statement the firm said: "Inclusion and diversity are among Apple's core values. We believe in equality for everyone, regardless of race, age, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. That applies throughout our company, around the world with no exceptions. We've looked into the details of the situation and we apologise to the customers involved. We will continue to do everything in our power to ensure all our customers are treated the way they should be."

The student who filmed the video, Francis Ose, said on Facebook: "Simply racism - made them apologise tho (sic)."

Another of the boys involved, Mohamed Semra, later said on Facebook that they were satisfied with the response from Apple. "They apologised, so we're chilling, no need to take it further," he wrote.

The video of the incident has been viewed more than 62,000 times on Facebook and sparked debate across social media.

In it, a staff member can be heard saying: "These guys are … just a bit worried you might steal something".

Foolishly we want to believe our thinking is safe and static when we know everything around us is dynamic. We need to account for taking personal responsibility to factor social isogonic line Variations and then further correcting for our personal internal Deviations to reach much more enlightened decisions for our own good and the good of society to reach the best courses going forward. If we did so, we would unburden ourselves of a lot of perilous weight and our hearts would be less heavy as we transit courageously to new experiences without obstructions and distractions. Our visions of the world would be so much more vivid and brilliant and we each would be the selfish recipients of these newfound rewards.

How well do we really cope with what we assume is safe is really a mirage, a delusion, waiting only for the day for our assumptions to be torn and shredded eventually? Police are supposed to be safe, not predators, which is why they have earned the dubious distinction of being untrustworthy and dangerous- if you are black in America, yet heroes if you are white as gallant protectors- projecting and enforcing not soft white power, but cold and hard as steel.

Consider events that proved just how tenuous and exposed our perceptions are when tested with the unexpected: passenger jets deliberately flying into skyline towers on 9/11, one out into the Indian Ocean last year then another frightfully deliberately into mountains with school kids this year, ferries sinking carrying good people – school children in Korea and elder retirees on a river this year in China, a major earthquake in Nepal where thousands die as a clock ticks, beloved Fatherhood & Parenthood known hoodwink author Bill Cosby with a bag of pills to

check under hoods, a bomb randomly killing and maiming deplorably at a popular tourist shrine in Bangkok, fatal blasts in Beirut, millions of refugees escaping wars with anguished Niobe of the Greeks amongst the masses wailing for her lost children in Lesbos then dutifully returning briefly to Mecca after another fatal stampede of hundreds at Hajj- then doubling back to the Turkish coast to continue, a selfish grudge killing on live television in Virginia then posted on Facebook by the killer that would have offended the honor of Nat Turner to free his people for a noble selfless cause, murderers masquerading as Believers snuffing out fragile lamps of life in the City of Light, and of course, the pious at prayer inviting a young stranger inside- not caring about his race but he perniciously caring very much about theirs- not knowing their minutes on this plane were numbered beyond any of their imaginations inside their own spiritual sanctuary, the House of the Lord. Body scans needed at the airport, yes; needed at movie theaters and at a mid-week Christian worship service? A stewing Dutch oven slow fire sobering wow.

The Airspeed Indicator breaks beyond redline and Vne, Never Exceed Speed, is solemnly and faithfully betrothed with vows of being united until we depart through thin then thick, well at least through the atmosphere, singularly sealed with a faithful kiss. Damn those who joke and smirk that ours is a shotgun marriage of convenience! To spread the good cheer, we broadcast our sudden unforeseen elopement to traffic control, change our transponder frequency to emergency priority to broadcast now to all flight service radar posts in observation of our deepest and true blue with a sigh of commiserate relief and soulful exhalation. We reached a turning point in our lives and have reconciled to never turn back to the misery of lasting low-speed loneliness as this final flight is not truly fatal, as this fateful reverie is indeed everlasting as it conquers all. This is a proclamation of our profound and racy love with control's loud applause and heartfelt best wishes of congratulations. Godspeed!

The Attitude Indicator first tilts and then willfully resigns itself as it finally tumbles, not knowing anymore in the death spiral what to believe as blue skies blur

boundless Earth and twisting wisps of roads, roofs and concrete are gladly socially sipping with dark rum Planters Punch in hands, rattle to pull up their rattan tiki lounge chairs to beckon for a better intimate Gauguin view of our crashing colorful exposé of courageously embracing oblivion together; as common as we bonded mortals are, uncommon will prove to be our devotion and infinite love, undyingly free from the immense gravity of the void.

Boucher's endearingly immodest Marie-Louise O' Murphy even pulls herself up from her exquisite exposed backside pose to catch a better glimpse of our fate, wrapping herself in a lush pink Madame Pompadour selected robe with her fresh tart beaming unblemished face held unflinchingly skyward, unreservedly plucking simple pleasures from a cloyingly generous Lyon gift box from a jilted lover that is decadently filled with salted nuts, sugared dried fruits, bonbons & dark chocolate petit fours to foolishly woo back her capricious heart; happily rocking on her saucy lap as her bright white thighs soon break open below the robe's coy slippage off to side, allowing her sensuous late afternoon sun-kissed calves to swing carelessly, and pampered lilac lightly powdered feet to swing gaily and effortlessly, as both her intoxicating mixed case of two ice blue disarmingly soft eyes and fiery andante-timed ten upswing brush-touched rouge Rococo toes bear witness for the coming explosive ghastly climax captured so succinctly by grotesque FX Messerschmidt raging busts in the bracing accelerating plunge, echoing Ka-Boom! then rising Castle Bravo Portobello plume at Ground Zero: the Agonic Line of zero declination, no Variation, where the Lie is so pure it runs through Dixie slowing sweeping west through the Deep South, now mocking the mighty Mississippi River directly through New Orleans, a hand wave east of Baton Rouge, splitting Faubus' Little Rock Arkansas fables and Memphis Tennessee's Beale Street blues, skirting just east of University of Missouri in Columbia but west of the Spirit of St. Louis, a bit further west of Ferguson– first unknown yet now famous with a peculiar interpretation of Southern justice to exonerate failed white police enforcement and complicit black murder; a cultural frozen trough where the legacy of long lost Confederate soldiers' rigor mortis gauntlet grasp resign to never let go of its wicked past of being

immortally pledged beyond an end for defending the acrid immorality of man owning man. Heed and declare it toxic! Call it ironic, that the Agonic is the Lie so dreadful it appears so deceptively harmless that time is held to a near stop in hardly dissipating its wretched past values; where the Lie splits unholy across the Southern terrain as a stretched serpentine white line of uncut cocaine being valued, hoarded, snorted and pushed into veins with rusted needles shared by its battle-flag waving myths-over-books yet Bible thumping, gun-toting addicts, for its glacial white almighty purity as being the absolute gospel Truth of everlasting supremacy!

Louis Cipher's royal flush is dealt from greasy marked cards pulled at the bottom of the deck where agony on the Agonic is again the true-blue ribbon prize winner in the hemisphere where he stubbornly stacks high the bountiful chips of his debased sinister gunpowder charades with a glint in his eye, sly wink and gloppy black oil slick kiss blown across the table, not out of Quaker's brotherly love, but of raw unrefined Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist bombed church and Selma's Pettus Bridge police-gang cranium-cracking hate.

This is all an observable lower strata in humanity's explorations of hell's abyss fully in effect in HD digital pixels with postings, tweets, fast food commercials assuring us of smart healthy choices processed from humanely treated GMO grain-fed cattle and Hungarian dinette sets of eco-friendly certified Borneo hardwood assembled in the Philippines, regulated by fair trade inspections, complete with Taiwan brass fittings-really made in Manchuria- requiring no down payments and 0% interest for 120 days with no credit checks because all clients are treated just like extended family if they sign on the dotted line with a large X. "Hold on tight with all your might! Don't go anywhere because we'll be right back after this word from our generous sponsors."

The blasphemous trinity of Race, Ignorance and Guns has been *rigged* from the beginning to complete the Devil's Triangle with a quaking, demonic cavernous laugh bellowing from ancient inhumane bowels that echoes with limitless Doppler effect

over the continent. God Bless America's steaming hot apple pie because the myth of the great melting pot, like the Liberty Bell, cannot be recast in the mold as it is hanging on the pipe, unmistakably and irrevocably *cracked.*

Trinity.

Humanity.

It all comes down, down

and

down to

Lindsey.

Dec. 2016 Note:

The Agonic Line extends from New Orleans, now closely adjacent to Baton Rouge running north to St. Paul, Minnesota. Both fatal police shootings of African American men occurred next to the Agonic Line within a day of each other. Also, the historic flooding in Baton Rogue has occurred 2016. Could one argue that the Agonic Line was pivotal in directing Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as it was a bit further east at the time, possibly propelling it further west to sweep into New Orleans too? The Line was crossed, unlike many other major hurricanes, which have not going north prior.

Do major calamities, both natural and human – such as the BP oil spill, floodings, violence, deaths and damage spike disproptionately on or near the Agonic Line? Is there a propensity for pain at the zero? Many cultures believe a full moon is ominous which is believed by many that emergency rooms become busier than normal; is the Agonic Line another mysterious hidden influence that is ill-logical yet still perceptible by results? Is it all just coincidental? Is this the natural zero of the Earth, not man made as the Prime Meridian for time, but a distinct phenomenon- a moving line on its own accord resonating from the planet's core, that has an influence, with an inclination for mayhem that ancients were aware of. If zero is about the appearance of stability, is its twin just the opposite: an agent of tragic instability, a void. If we studied where the Agonic Line was in the past, were major events or cataclysisms prone to occurring on or near the Agonic Line?

vfrmap.com/ Baton Rouge & St. Paul

II

LAMENTATIONS OVER LINDSEY

Hues of blues and greens surround me
Knowing you have found another love
Has turned me world to sorrow
Green with envy for another
Fearing she may be the one to soar
Through life with you, can't lose these
Hues of blues in green

-Miles Davis
Kind of Blue

"FBI Director James Comey discussed race and law enforcement, Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015, at Georgetown University in Washington… And he spoke openly both about the painful calls he makes to local police chiefs when an officer is killed in the line of duty and about the "hard truths" law enforcement must confront regarding race. These include law enforcement's legacy of poor treatment toward African Americans, the unconscious biases that all Americans inevitably hold, the *"cynicism"* police must try to avoid, and this country's underlying issues like poverty and education gaps that reinforce racial disparities."

- Washington Post

"Oh yes, Nat," I heard Hark say beyond the wall, "yes, dey was lots and lots of niggers kilt afterwards, w'ile you was hid out. And warn't our niggers neither. Dey tells me roun' about a hundred, maybe lots mo'. Yes, Nat, de white folks come down like a swarm of golly-wasps and plain long stomped de niggers ev'ywheres. You didn' know about dat, Nat? Oh yes, dey was plained stomped. White folks dey come fum all over ev'ywheres. Dey come a-gallopin' down from Sussex an' Isle of Wight and all dem other counties an' run de niggers clean into de groun'. Didn' make no nem'mine dat dey didn' fight fo' Nat Turner. If'n he had a black ass, dey fill hit full of lead." Hark was silent for a while and I could hear his thick, tortured breathing. "After you was hid out I heerd tell of some ole free nigger dat was standin' in a field up somewheres aroun' Drewrysville. Dese white folks rode up an' stop dere. 'Is dis yere Southhampton?' dey holler. Nigger he say, 'Yassuh, boss you done jes' passed de county line over yondah.' 'Pon my soul, Nat, dem white folks shot him dead." Again he was silent, then he said: "I heerd tell of a nigger name of Statesman livin' down aroun' Smith's Mill what ain't even heerd of de ruction, bein' slow in de head, you know? Anyways, his massah he powerful exercise' an' mad an' he take old Statesman out an' tie him to a tree an' shoot him so full of holes you could see de sun shine th'ough. Oh me, Nat. Some said stories I done heerd all dese months in jail…"

…A shudder passed through my bones and I clasped my arms around my legs, trying to still their shaking. Then as if to blot out this new knowledge, I broke in upon Hark, saying: "Tell me, Hark, tell me. Nelson. Tell me about Nelson. How did he die? Did he die brave?"

"Why sho he die brave," Hark said. "Hung ole Nelson back in September. Him and Sam together, standin' up straight as you could pray for, both dem. Dey tells me old Sam wouldn't die right off, flew off'n dat hangin' tree an' jes jiggle dere like a turkey gobbler a-jumpin' and a-twitchin'. Feebly, softly, Hark began to laugh. "Reckon dat li'l ole yellow nigger was too light fo' de rope. Dem white folks had to yank on old Sam's feet afore he'd give up de ghost. Be he died brave, though, him an' Nelson. Didn' hear no mumblin' nor groanin' when dem two niggers died." He paused and sighed, then said: "Onliest thing

old Sam was sad about was dat we didn' cotch dat mean sonabitch Nat Francis dat owned him. Cotched his overseer and two chillum but not Nat Francis. Dat's what give Sam a misery. I seed Nat Francis in de cou'troom de day dey tried old Sam. Jesus jumpin' Judas! Talk 'bout a mad white man! Oo-ee, Nat, he let out a howl and jump straight over de railin' an' like to strangle dat Sam befo' dey could haul him off. I heerd tell Nat Francis like to went clean out'n his head after we finished de ruction. Got him a gang of folks an' rode from Cross Keys to Jersusalem, shootin' down ev'y nigger in sight. Dey was a free nigger woman name Laurie, wife to old John Bright live Cloud School way, you know? Well, dey took dat woman an' leant her up 'longside a fence and druv a three-foot spike right up her ole pussy like dey was layin' out a barbecue. Oh me, Nat, de tales I heerd tell dese months and days! Dey was two white mens I heerd about, come up from Carolina, has actual got dem a real bunch of black nigger heads all nailed to a pole and was out to git dem some mo' till de troops grabbed holt 'em an' run 'em back to Carolina---- "

"Hush," I broke in. "Hush, Hark! That's enough. I can't bear such talk no more.

- William Styron

The Confessions of Nat Turner

Tiger Woods should be in a white toga standing as tall and as proud as Julius Caesar modestly waving at well-wishers, those conquered by the awe of his might and spectacle. With riches beyond being mere rich and fame as luminous as a movie star, his early trajectory in this life has been meteoric. A big toothed somewhat goofy kid with glasses transformed into a man of color beating white men at their own game of hitting little white balls with maximum strength coupled with dexterity of the sublime of tapping in for birdies and eagles. How well can you throw a boulder and end by tickling with a feather? People often prophesized the day would come and it came faster than they imagined. Being a brute force pugilist will not beat a golf course as a strategy and a tangible execution of the will of the player will hopefully result in success.

Tiger is fast approaching forty now and I'm told by reliable sources, has not spoken to his attorneys and financial advisers about the need of a 529 college savings plan for his adorable children, who had no worries of not being the recipients of fresh genes unlike the Hapsburgs, which he had the joy of showing that he is a family-values competent and good father at this year's Masters tournament. The swiftness of the calendar has no option but to heal wounds public and private, as it should.

I first heard of Tiger from an unlikely source: my former brother-in-law. He and I got along well and he was an avid tennis fan. During a tournament approximately twenty years ago in Oakland he asked and received on the same program's cover autographs of both W&W and inch apart from each other: Woods & Williams- Venus that is. Many people at the time did not know the college kid named Tiger attending Stanford and Venus was this unlikely young woman beating women who were aghast that the Kool-Aid kid from the grit of greater Los Angeles could force her will upon them. This, we all found out later, this version of Williams was Williams light as compared to her even more punishing younger sister. Venus is one of the best in the business and her accomplishments alone over the past twenty years is nothing to sneeze at. Venus has earned her keep in tennis' hall of fame but the issue is that her sister has been so domineering that certainly in some quarters viewers turn off in disgust as she trounces another opponent to soon uphold the bountiful rewards of her efforts.

I digress. Tiger, young Tiger in his early twenties, turned the world of golf on its head. Young Jordan Spieth gave a Tigeresque performance by winning Masters in such commanding fashion, so much so by beating Tiger's own mesmerizing performance, when he first won at only twenty-one too. Then Mr. Spieth was the youngest to win another major in ninety-two years at the U.S. Open; top Five finish at The Open.

Tiger of the present did show up at this Masters and demonstrated that though struggling with the oscillations of game and life and divorced fatherhood and losing corporate patrons, he was still one of the very best in his craft. Typically, he can be beaten but you have to be on your game to beat him. The very next tournament Master's champion Jordan missed the cut which illustrates the peaks and valleys of the sport. Rory will beat you mercilessly one week and the next week shoot a respectable eighty if you are a weekend hack and he will miss the cut. Rory is poised to shoot a 59 and will hardly gave any slack to a course for a runaway easy victory when in form. Golf can be so most unforgiving as even the very best can attest. The fact is golf is a rollercoaster of thrills and spills which is why the game is addictive to watch. The golfer and the fans are looking for a semblance of stability in an unstable world where performances are uniquely impermanent as are the venues played. Life is always changing and the courses change, the players change, our relationships change but we grasp and dearly hold onto the ideal of permanence when we know that it is akin to grasping clouds of billowing puffs of steam in our hands. Life with its people and places proves that so much of it is unreliable including ourselves if we can muster the spirit to take an introspective look. Golf is a microcosm of life with swings and taps to humble you and put you quickly and firmly in your place, even for those who are undeniably masters of the game.

Tiger, bless him, I no longer root for him in the positive as at the turn of the century. I tumbled off the bandwagon long ago and hobble along alone dusty on the side of a county road of broken dreams with unwanted shards from castaway brown beer bottles. I hope his barbecue sauce & tom yum black 'hind drives into the thorn bushes and balls hit deep into the beach cliff perpendicular to the greens because he doesn't need tanning butter. Tiger lives in a world of cirrus blue skies and soft putting greens, tapping little white balls delicately and white shoulders for their numbers tragically, cookie-cutter blond, of course. Golf may be riddled with impermanence but Tiger's taste for women points true as a K-Line ship's compass to Yokohama. That fact, as thus far, assuages us has proven permanent. Tiger pulls the white women that other white men feel are far out of their league. My issue is a man

of his means can date women in all their fantastic Jamoca almond fudge flavors and die content. He is the same guy who can afford what ever he wants and always, without fail, purchases a case of Kistler Chardonnay failing to sample the cellar's other delights. He climbs into his jet whistlin' because he knows he got some Kistlin'. A poorer version of Tiger is less Pebble Beach and more Seal Beach, loading a case of K-J Chardonnay into his Jeep's backseat who then straightens his shoulders with his chest proudly out as though he is a proud Broadcom shareholder who got handsomely paid. What a fool believes. Poor Tiger. No Barolo, no Barbaresco, no Burgundy, no Brunello nor even right bank Bordeaux – only Kistler Chardonnay because he was told- conditioned – that this choice is the best and he is the best. No color need apply. He has been dyed-in-the-wool-as-a-fool that women of only these conspicuous characteristics he can publically acknowledge as being worthy to be seen with, more importantly, love with. These are desirable human trophies which he pursues with a discriminating gusto perhaps to dilute his unfortunate Afro-Asianess for a man with real lasting tangible trophies on display at his lavish home, which he so deserves, of which you and I certainly will not be invited to visit. Okay, I settle, just me.

Why don't black and white Americans live together?

By Rajini Vaidyanathan, BBC News
08 Jan 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35255835

- Legal segregation in the US may have ended more than 50 years ago. But in many parts of the country, Americans of different races aren't neighbours - they don't go to the same schools, they don't shop at the same stores, and they don't always have access to the same services.
- In 2016 the issue of race will remain high on the agenda in the United States. The police killings of unarmed black men and women over the past few years reignited a debate over race relations in America, and the reverberations will be felt in the upcoming presidential election and beyond.

- **Ferguson, Baltimore and Chicago are three cities synonymous with racial tensions - but all three have another common denominator. They, like many other American cities, are still very segregated.**
- In my reporting across the United States I've seen this first hand - from Louisiana to Kansas, Alabama to Wisconsin, Georgia to Nebraska. In so many of these places people of other races simply don't mix, not through choice but circumstance. And if there's no interaction between races, it's harder for conversations on how to solve race problems to even begin.
- Newly released census data, analysed by the Brookings Institution, shows black-white segregation is modestly declining in large cities, but it remains high. If zero is a measure for perfect integration and 100 is complete segregation, analysis from Brookings showed most of the country's largest metropolitan areas have segregation levels of between 50 to 70.
- According to the Brookings report, "more than half of blacks would need to move to achieve complete integration".
- (Some have pointed out that the wording of this part of the report itself highlights the challenges in these issues - why can't this be measured in the number whites who would have to move?)
- Racial and socioeconomic segregation are closely linked - if you're a black person in America, you're more likely than a white person to live in an area of concentrated poverty.
- This isn't simply a matter of choice, or chance. Some of it is by design - and down to decades-old housing policies which actively prevented African Americans from living in certain areas.
- Kansas City is one of the country's most segregated cities. Drive around the west of Troost Avenue and there are large houses, their vast porches overlooking equally vast driveways. Properties are anything from $356,000 (£243,000) to $1.2m.
- But you only have to go east to see a very different picture. Abandoned houses and unkempt lawns greet you at most corners. One building I pass is completely boarded up, with piles of rubbish outside, and the words "Stay Out" in spray paint.

- The housing on either side of Troost is very much split down race lines.
- The US government had a hand in this creating this segregation due to practices it instituted back in the 1930s, which prevented many blacks from getting on the property ladder in certain areas.
- When the federal government began underwriting home loans for Americans to help boost the economy as part of the New Deal, strict guidelines were drawn up regarding where mortgages could be issued.
- Areas where minorities lived were seen as risky investments and black families were routinely denied mortgages, locking them out of the housing market.
- The practice was known as redlining because red ink marked out the minority areas. As Kansas City-based historian Bill Worley explained to me, these policies continued right into the 1960s, and excluded American blacks from one of the greatest motors of wealth in the 20th Century - home ownership.
- Redlining is now theoretically outlawed in the United States, and has been since the 1970s, but it's still happening to this day.
- "Banks continue to build and structure their lending operations in a way that avoids or fails to meaningfully serve communities of colour, based on assumptions about the financial risk," Vanita Gupta, the justice department's top civil rights lawyer, said last September, as she pledged more action to stop discriminatory lending.
- Another factor which made access to housing prohibitive were the restrictive racial covenants written into housing contracts.
- Until 1948, it was perfectly legal for a black person to be prevented from buying or living in a house.
- Bill Worley showed me an example of a restrictive racial covenant drawn up in Kansas City by the city's best known property developer during that time, JC Nichols.
- "None of the said lots shall be conveyed to, used, owned nor occupied by Negroes as owner or tenants," it read. Other groups, including Jews, were also written into these kind of contracts.

The covenants created affluent white suburbs for middle- and upper-income families. By World War One, Nichols met developers in other cities who were also doing this. Huge new all-white suburbs sprang up across the country and the migration of white families to the suburbs became known as white flight.

Between redlining, racial covenants, and another practice known as blockbusting - where estate agents specialised in transitioning areas from white to black - segregation continued in the United States. Residential segregation in America peaked in 1970. More black families are moving into the suburbs and back to Southern cities they left after slavery ended, explains economic historian Leah Boustan. "It may seem odd because we have stereotypes of the South, but residential segregation levels are lowest in Southern cities such as Atlanta, Houston and Dallas," she says.

But even though Atlanta is one of the least segregated cities in the United States, challenges persist.

On a visit to the city I met Nicole and Lewis Anderson, two African Americans who work in corporate jobs. They told me they'd been profiled by estate agents, who've only shown them homes in certain "black" areas."When we started out we had a few whites in our area, but within a few years they all moved out," said Lewis Anderson.

"For us African Americans when we see a group of white people move to the neighbourhood we think that's good, we're cool with that. But for many white families that's not the case - they start to get discouraged, they start to worry about the property value and leave."

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that Lewis and Nicole aren't alone in being encouraged to live in so-called "black" areas. Research from the US government shows that minorities looking for housing are shown fewer properties than their white counterparts.

The Fair Housing Act was passed more than 40 years ago to end discrimination in housing, but it's not been properly enforced. Last year President Obama pledged to toughen up this law, with new rules. Now government money can only be given for new housing projects if they're shown to further integration in neighbourhoods, and there'll be penalties for those who don't adhere to this. But it only applies to public housing. Private developers can continue to build without such conditions.

"The Fair Housing Act commanded that communities that received government money do what they can to affirmatively further fair housing," Housing Secretary Julian Castro told me in an interview. "The problem was that for many years that requirement was never adequately defined or enforced."

Mr Castro, who sits in the president's cabinet and is widely tipped as a possible Democratic vice-presidential running mate in this year's election, said one way his department will ensure areas of poverty aren't ignored is by giving towns and cities access to demographic data, so they can plan housing better.
The key challenge remains - decades on from the civil rights movement, many black and white Americans simply don't mix. And as the US contends with race problems, getting to know each other better is one step in understanding and fixing some of those problems.

As Hara Castle was burning in the Shimabara Rebellion, do pardon, Baltimore was alight because the straw broke that broke the camel’s back literally with the severed spinal cord of (yes, exhale) another black guy in police custody and not the teary-eyed oft told tale of persecuted Christian peasants raging for freedom and equality against imperial orders- holding to their faith against all odds before the mighty secular forces for valiantly achieving justice but dying in the end- but of the less appealing incidence of offspring of former slave field hands no longer picking cotton but now tending porches, concrete and asphalt thereby ostracized for their lack of economic and social integration when they have been segregated by generational housing enforcement and rising up frustrated for another untimely death (I went to

university in Baltimore and know just how segregated the city is), Tiger was estranged from this catastrophic American version of Arab-spring like spectacle as a modern American Nero by strumming his Tyrolian lyre lamenting his latest loss of love with Lindsey. Lindsey! A significant half of his genetic composition has been under attack systematically by police yet his life continues loftily unabated by blues and greens. Blue lakes and blue skies, cypress trees, lemons, limes and honeysuckle blossoms with wayward buzzing bees. Tiger has previously made it a point with some God-awful made up word that he is not just black but an amalgamation of the world's bank of chromosomes. So. Shrug. Slavery has a way to do that to people. The vast majority of blacks in the Americas – not just the US – are at varying levels products of miscegenation often without hay loft complicity. I and my siblings are too, to much amusement and surprise! However, in the unlikely event I tried to fool myself, the police and society at large will make it a point that I come back to Earth and know who I am. If I ever somehow became unaware and in the world of commerce, the dumbfounded "white look" as I call it often belies the present thoughts of whom I am meeting face to face. Not all but plenty of white people have given me that look as though what they are thinking is written on classroom blackboard in white: 'I didn't know he was BLACK!' I know the look all too well.

With that discovery even with well-educated persons who do not consider themselves racist in the least, it can still cloud the decision making process if I am indeed trustworthy, reliable, stable, educated and competent. Maybe I am perhaps even violent, dangerous, poor, pernicious and certainly dishonest. Black men are a host of negative stereotypes – which is why it is easier for us to be shot at by police and for why white people to inevitably point fingers, as true as a needle to North, that it was a black man who did it - than any short list of positive attributes.

Washington DC police arrest suspect in quadruple mansion murder case

22 May 2015, BBC

Authorities believe more than one person perpetrated the killing of four people in a Washington DC mansion, a court document says.

Police arrested Daron Wint, 34, late on Thursday and believe he held and tortured members of the wealthy Savopoulos family and their housekeeper before killing them.

Five others were arrested at the same time, but only Mr Wint faces charges.
The arrest, in Washington, followed a week-long manhunt.

Savvas Savopoulos, 46, chief executive of American Iron Works, was found dead in his family's $4.5m (£2.9m) home in Woodley Park, northwest Washington, just blocks away from the home of Vice-President Joe Biden one week ago.

Police discovered his body alongside those of his wife Amy, 47, his 10-year-old son Philip and housekeeper Veralicia Figueroa, a Salvadorian national.
The court document made public on Friday says "the crimes described in this affidavit required the presence and assistance of more than one person".
The document also confirms earlier reports that thousands of dollars were delivered to the home before it was set alight.

Police refused to confirm reports in local media Mr Wint was identified by DNA from the crust of a pizza delivered to the home.

As recently as Wednesday afternoon, police believed that he had fled the Washington area possibly to Brooklyn, a borough of New York City.

Washington DC police arrest man accused of mansion murder

22 May 2015, BBC

Police have arrested a man they believe held hostage and tortured a family and housekeeper in their Washington DC home before killing them.

Daron Dylon Wint, 34, who had previously worked for the victims' family business, was detained late Thursday in the US capital.

He is accused of killing the four victims and setting the house on fire.
Savvas Savopoulos, 46, chief executive of American Iron Works, was found dead in his family's home in Woodley Park, northwest Washington, just blocks away from the home of Vice-President Joe Biden….

Texas man held in shooting death of sheriff's deputy

31 August 2015, BBC

A Texas man is being held without bail after police say he shot and killed a sheriff's deputy as the officer refuelled his patrol car. Police believe Shannon Miles targeted Darren Goforth at a petrol station near Houston because Goforth was in uniform.Houston officials did not disclose a motive, but took issue with recent protests against police officers.

"This rhetoric has gotten out of control," Harris County Sheriff Ron Hickman said on Saturday."We've heard black lives matter, all lives matter. Well, cops' lives matter too," he said. "Why don't we drop the qualifier, and say 'Lives Matter' and take that to the bank?"

Miles, 30, is black and Goforth, who was 47, was white.

The Black Lives Matter movement grew to prominence after a white policeman killed Michael Brown - an unarmed black teenager - in Ferguson, Missouri, last year.

The protest movement has continued to gain strength over the past year after several controversial police-involved deaths of black people including those of Eric Garner, Freddie Gray and Sandra Bland.

"It is time for the silent majority in this country to support law enforcement," said Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson on Saturday. "There are a few bad apples in every profession but that does not mean that there should be open warfare declared on law enforcement. "The vast majority of officers are there to do the right thing, care about community." The Black Lives Matter movement responded to Mr Hickman and Ms Anderson, saying the group promotes peace.

"It is unfortunate that Sheriff Hickman has chosen to politicise this tragedy and to attribute the officer's death to a movement that seeks to end violence," Deray Mckesson, one of the group's leaders, said on Twitter.

Goforth was pumping petrol on Friday night when prosecutors say Miles approached him from behind and shot him 15 times. A surveillance camera filmed the incident. Miles appeared in court on Monday as prosecutors laid out the case against him.

Dallas police shootings: What we know so far
9 July 2016, BBC

What happened

Five police officers were killed in Dallas, Texas when a gunman opened fire at officers during a peaceful protest over fatal police shootings of black men in Louisiana and Minnesota.

Seven more officers and two civilians were wounded by the shooter, who fired from an elevated position in a parking garage. The gunman was 25-year-old Micah Johnson. He died after a long stand-off with police in downtown Dallas.

Three other people were taken in to custody - two men and a woman - but police now say they believe Johnson was the "lone shooter".

Johnson told police during the stand-off that he wanted to kill white people, especially white police officers, and that he was upset over recent police killings of black men. **He died when police sent an explosive device to his position attached to a robot - a first in the US.**

What we know about the attacker

Micah Johnson, 25, was from the Dallas suburb of Mesquite. **He had been a member of the US Army Reserve until April 2015, served in Afghanistan, and had no known criminal history or ties to terrorist groups.**

Bomb-making material, rifles, ammunition and a combat journal were found at his home, police have said.

Heinous crimes such as these are used as reasons to run up the flagpole to stereotype black men as the scourge to be feared by whites. However, most felonious crimes are often done white-on-white which are also less sensational in the media. Though tragic and terrible without rounding any corners, I am not advocating or defending unjust murders in the least, these are rare events in the context of race. Anyone grounded and decent would have compassion for the families and be angered by the alleged atrocities irrespective of race. With the spate of killings of black men from police in America, the Texas shooting most unfortunately is not entirely surprising in retrospect: the mix of a man being mentally unhinged with easy access to guns then systematically salted from endemic Southern racism was a catalyst to ignite the tipping point for shooting in retribution for gross police murders without just cause, is not far from imagination. It was a random event, terrible, but far from any norm statistically. Any rational African-American simply would not condone these acts of murder or mayhem.

What these murders did do was further stoke the fires of white fear for the need to arm more than ever as these crimes are sensational in the context of race thereby galvanizing reasons for an armed defense of an identified enemy to maintain law and order. When acts of murder are committed by a dominant group, it sows the seeds of rebellion by those being trampled to take action. Consider the history of the IRA against the British government with deliberate shootings and orchestrated bombings. The present and past dictate African-Americans are far more inclined to be victims from whites with abuse, torture and murder and not vice versa. Black men have historically been targeted unjustly by police and the one unwarranted murder of an officer, as reprehensible as it is, doesn't negate this dark legacy.

The value of black lives in America can be summed up with an experiment conducted for forty years as though lab animals denied treatment and only stopped by a white whistleblower doctor who somehow got wind something was quite wrong. This has parallels with Japan's Unit 731 in Harbin, China in WWII and Nazi Germany medical experiment implications in which the most vulnerable are used as human guinea pigs with federal government approval. However, this homegrown experiment started well before WWII and ended during the final years of the Vietnam War in the South. I was a boy who could read and write when it was terminated which I find frightening even after Civil Rights legislation passed:

The **Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment** was an infamous clinical study conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service to study the natural progression of untreated syphilis in rural African-American men in Alabama. They were told that they were receiving free health care from the U.S. government. **The Public Health Service started working on this study in 1932 during the Great Depression, in collaboration with Tuskegee University, a historically black college in Alabama.** Investigators enrolled in the study a total of 600 impoverished sharecroppers from Macon County, Alabama. Of these men, 399 had previously contracted syphilis before the study began, and 201 did not have the disease. **The men**

were given free medical care, meals, and free burial insurance for participating in the study. After funding for treatment was lost, the study was continued without informing the men they would never be treated. None of the men infected was ever told he had the disease, nor was anyone treated with penicillin after this antibiotic became proven for treatment of this disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the men were **told they were being treated for "bad blood", a local term for various illnesses that include syphilis, anemia, and fatigue.**

The 40-year study was controversial for reasons related to ethical standards, primarily because researchers knowingly failed to treat patients appropriately after the 1940s validation of penicillin as an effective cure for the disease they were studying. Revelation in 1972 of study failures by a whistleblower led to major changes in U.S. law and regulation on the protection of participants in clinical studies. Now studies require informed consent communication of diagnosis, and accurate reporting of test results.

By 1947, penicillin had become the standard treatment for syphilis. Choices available to the doctors involved in the study might have included treating all syphilitic subjects and closing the study, or splitting off a control group for testing with penicillin. Instead, the Tuskegee scientists continued the study without treating any participants; they withheld penicillin and information about it from the patients. In addition, scientists prevented participants from accessing syphilis treatment programs available to other residents in the area. **The study continued, under numerous US Public Health Service supervisors, until 1972, when a leak to the press resulted in its termination on November 16 of that year.** The victims of the study included numerous men who died of syphilis, 40 wives who contracted the disease, and 19 children born with congenital syphilis.

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, cited as "arguably the most infamous biomedical research study in U.S. history", led to the 1979 Belmont Report and

the establishment of the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).[9] It also led to federal laws and regulations requiring Institutional Review Boards for the protection of human subjects in studies involving them. The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) manages this responsibility within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Medical ethics considerations were limited from the start and rapidly deteriorated**. To ensure that the men would show up for the possibly dangerous, painful, diagnostic, and non-therapeutic spinal taps, the doctors sent the 400 patients a misleading letter titled "Last Chance for Special Free Treatment".** The study also required all participants to undergo an autopsy after death in order to receive funeral benefits. After penicillin was discovered as a cure, researchers continued to deny such treatment to many study participants. **Many patients were lied to and given placebo treatments so that researchers could observe the full, long-term progression of the fatal disease.**

During World War II, 250 of the subject men registered for the draft. These men were consequently diagnosed as having syphilis at military induction centers and ordered to obtain treatment for syphilis before they could be taken into the armed services. **PHS researchers attempted to prevent these men from getting treatment, thus depriving them of chances for a cure.** A PHS representative was quoted at the time saying: "So far, we are keeping the known positive patients from getting treatment." Despite this, 96% of the 90 original test subjects reexamined in 1963 had received either arsenical or penicillin treatments from another health provider.[19]

By 1947 penicillin had become standard therapy for syphilis. The US government sponsored several public health programs to form "rapid treatment centers" to eradicate the disease. **When campaigns to eradicate venereal disease came to Macon County, study researchers prevented their patients from participating.**

By the end of the study in 1972, only 74 of the test subjects were alive. Of the original 399 men, 28 had died of syphilis, 100 were dead of related complications, 40 of their wives had been infected, and 19 of their children were born with congenital syphilis.

Writer James Jones says that physicians were fixated on African American sexuality and, believing that African Americans willingly had sexual relations with those who were infected (although none had been told his diagnosis) resulted in their believing that individuals were solely responsible for contracting the disease. One researcher critiqued how the study was administered and its change in purpose. He said that it was **"the economic exploitation of humans as a natural resource of a disease that could not be cultivated or animals in order to establish and sustain U.S. superiority in patented commercial biotechnology".**

Some commentators say that the Tuskegee study was progressive for its inclusion of minorities in scientific research being funded by the federal government.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Tuskegee Study recruited poor lower-class African Americans, who often could not afford health care, by offering them the chance to join "Miss Rivers' Lodge". Patients were told they would receive free physical examinations at Tuskegee University, free rides to and from the clinic, hot meals on examination days, and free treatment for minor ailments.

Medical ethics considerations were limited from the start and rapidly deteriorated**. To ensure that the men would show up for the possibly dangerous, painful, diagnostic, and non-therapeutic spinal taps, the doctors sent the 400 patients a misleading letter titled "Last Chance for Special Free Treatment".** The study also required all participants to undergo an autopsy after death in order to receive funeral benefits. After penicillin was discovered as a cure, researchers continued to deny such treatment to many study participants. **Many patients were**

lied to and given placebo treatments so that researchers could observe the full, long-term progression of the fatal disease.

-Wikipedia

"In the visions of the night, brothers," I continued, "God spoke to Jacob an' He said, 'I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation.' An' Jacob went down into Egypt an' the peoples of Israel multiplied an' Moses was born. Moses was born in the bulrushers an' he delivered the Jews out of Egpyt an' into the Promised Land. Well, there they had a powerful lot of troubles too. But in the Promised Land them Jewish peoples they could stand up an' live like men. They become a great nation. No more fatback, no more pint of salt, no more peck of corn fo' them Jews; no more overseers, no more auction blocks; no more horn blow at sunrise fo' them mothahs' sons. They had to chicken with pot likker an' spoonbread an' sweet cider to drink in the shade. They done got paid an honest dollar. Them Jews became men. But oh, my brothers, black folk ain't never goin' to be led from bondage without they has *pride*! Black folk ain't goin' to be free, they ain't goin' to have no spoonbread an' sweet cider less'n they studies to love they own *selves*. Only then will the first be last, and the last first. Black folk ain't never goin' to be no great nation until they studies to love they own black skin an' the beauty of that skin an' the beauty of them black hands that toils so hard and black feet that trods so weary on God's earth. And when white men in they hate an' wrath an' meanness fetches blood from that beautiful black skin then, oh then, my brothers, it is time not fo' laughing but fo' weeping an' rage an' lamentation! *Pride!*" I cried after a pause, and let arms descend. "Pride, pride, everlasting pride, pride will make you free!"

- William Styron
  The Confessions of Nat Turner

"Can we have a show of hands for dropout drug-addled mothers with five kids from four different men that abuse the state welfare system wearing faux-designer clothes, put ice cubes in Gallo Merlot with a shot of rotgut vodka, and hoard the bags

of peanuts with hip hop music blaring in Beatz as they kick the seat in front with the bass. Thank you *sweetie*…I knew it all along…get your greasy fat molasses ass up and show us the latest dance in the 'hood but refrain to grind on laps to raise tips, either financially or physically, you nasty urban snatch. Stay in the aisle but keep your hands in the air where we can see them too…can't trust any of you…don't think we don't know…"

Black US doctor's anger at Delta Air Lines 'snub'

14 Oct. 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37655697

A black doctor was left frustrated after her credentials were questioned when she tried to help a patient on an internal US flight.

Dr Tamika Cross, an obstetrician-gynaecologist, said a Delta Air Lines crew member told her: **"Oh no sweetie, put your hand down, we are looking for actual physicians."** Her Facebook post about her treatment has been shared more than 35,000 times. Delta has said it will investigate the incident.

"I'm sure many of my fellow young, corporate America working women of colour can all understand my frustration when I say I'm sick of being disrespected," wrote Dr Cross, a resident physician at the University of Texas Health Science Centre in Houston.

She said she had tried to offer assistance but a flight attendant, who did not believe she was a doctor, rejected her repeated calls to help the patient. "I tried to inform her that I was a physician but I was continually cut off by condescending remarks," she wrote.

"They paged: 'Any physician on board please press your button.' I stare at her as I go to press my button.

"She [attendant] said: 'Oh wow you're an actual physician?' I reply: 'Yes.'" She said: **'Let me see your credentials. What type of doctor are you? Where do you work? Why were you in Detroit?'"**

According to Dr Cross, she was eventually passed over for a white male passenger who said he was a doctor. She ended her post by saying the attendant had later apologised and offered her sky miles - which she refused.

The Artemis Medical Society, an advocacy group for women doctors of colour, has written a letter to the CEO of Delta Air Lines, Ed Bastian, asking him to "investigate and determine if racial and gender bias by crew of Flight 945 led to rejecting the response and offer by Dr Cross to provide emergency medical care to your passenger".

The New York Daily News quoted a Delta Air Lines spokeswoman as saying: "Discrimination of any kind is never acceptable. "We've been in contact with Dr Cross and one of our senior leaders is reaching out to assure her that we're completing a full investigation."

Some police guilty of 'black crime implicit bias'

"I'm a white, middle-class professional woman. I enjoy a great deal of privilege. And I certainly have the black crime implicit bias: I am more likely to see threat in African Americans than I would Caucasians (Without searching, where are the they located? Oh, I thought so...)

"Racial profiling was the number one issue facing police [in the 1990s, and I came to understand two things. Bias in policing was not just a few officers in a few departments; and, overwhelmingly, the police in this country are well-intentioned. I couldn't put those two thoughts together in my head until I was introduced to the science of implicit bias.

"We all have implicit biases whereby we link groups to stereotypes, possibly producing discriminatory behaviour - even in individuals who are totally against prejudice.

- Lorie Fridell is an Associate Professor of criminology at the University of South Florida and was director of research at the Police Executive Research Forum.

…The film also stages an experiment in which three young men, one white, one black and of Moroccan ethnicity, each nonchalantly try to smash a bicycle lock at midday in an Amsterdam park. Passers-by question the black and Arab men and phone the police; **they assume the white man has simply lost his key. Park employees even help him to cut the chain.**

- A Dutch Film by Sunny Bergmann: Our Colonial Hangover
The Economist...Blacked Up... Dec. 6th 2014...pg 66

Maine Governor Paul LePage criticised for 'racist' remarks

27 August 2016, BBC

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37204837

The governor of Maine has said that people of colour were enemies of his state, and appeared to suggest they should be shot.

Speaking about Maine's effort to combat drug crime, Paul LePage said that "the enemy right now... are people of colour or people of Hispanic origin". "When you go to war... and the enemy dresses in red and you dress in blue, then you shoot at red," he said.

Leading Democrats have urged him to resign.

Mr LePage made the comments while seeking to clarify remarks he made earlier in the week which were criticised as racist. The press conference capped a controversial 72 hours for the Republican governor.

WEDNESDAY

Mr LePage was asked about a statement he made in January, in which **he blamed the state's heroin problem on "guys by the name D-Money, Smoothie, Shifty" who "come from Connecticut and New York".**

"They come up here, they sell their heroin, then they go back home. ***Incidentally, half the time they impregnate a young, white girl before they leave*****," he said.**

Speaking on Wednesday, he denied it was racist, but said that since January he had been putting together a binder cataloguing drug arrests in the state, and that "*90-plus per cent of those pictures in my book, and it's a three-ringed binder, are black and Hispanic people*".

Asked by reporters to provide the binder, Mr LePage replied: "Let me tell you something: Black people come up the highway and they kill Mainers. You ought to look into that." He then stormed off, telling the reporters: "You make me so sick."

Maine daily newspaper the Portland Press Herald has reportedly filed a Freedom of Information request for the governor's binder.

THURSDAY

A reporter appeared to suggest to Mr LePage that Democratic state representative Drew Gattine had called him a racist. Mr LePage called Mr Gattine and, when he was unable to reach him, left him an abusive, expletive-laden voice message.

The recording was released by the Portland Press Herald. He later invited reporters from the Press Herald and WMTW TV channel to an interview to explain the voice message, and told them he wished he could shoot Mr Gattine in a duel.

"I'd like him to come up here because, tell you right now, I wish it were 1825," Mr LePage said. "And we would have a duel, that's how angry I am, and I would not put my gun in the air, I guarantee you... I would point it right between his eyes, because he is a snot-nosed little runt and he has not done a damn thing since he's been in this legislature to help move the state forward."

Rights group the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said it had filed a freedom of information request for records related to the arrests of black and Hispanic people in the state.

Its executive director, Alison Beyea, said Maine police were nine times more likely to arrest people of colour for selling drugs than white people, even though white people were just as likely to commit drug offences.

FRIDAY

The Portland Press Herald **published FBI statistics which show that 1,211 people were arrested on charges of drug sales or manufacturing in Maine in 2014. Of those, 170 - *14.1% - were black, and almost all the rest were white.***

At a State House press conference, Mr LePage said he was "enormously angry" at being called a racist, and restated his earlier remarks which cast Maine's drug problem in racial terms.

He said: "When you go to war, if you know the enemy and the enemy dresses in red and you dress in blue, then you shoot at red."

He added: "You shoot at the enemy. You try to identify the enemy and the enemy right now, the overwhelming majority of people coming in, are people of colour or people of Hispanic origin."

Leading Democrat figures are now calling for the governor to step down.

Representative Sara Gideon of Freeport, the assistant House Democratic leader, said: "We strongly and regretfully feel that he is unfit to serve as governor of the state of Maine right now.

"We have real concerns and reservations about how we move forward together as lawmakers as well as Maine people."

Maine governor apologises for 'racist' remarks about drug dealers

08 Jan 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35265246

The governor of the US state of Maine has apologised after he said drug dealers with names like "D-Money" were impregnating "white girls".

Governor Paul LePage, who has a history of making controversial statements, made the remarks **while speaking about the state's heroin epidemic**. The governor's spokesman had initially said Mr LePage, who is white, was not making a statement about race.

But opponents said it was implied and called the remarks "fear mongering". "I was going impromptu and my brain didn't catch up to my mouth," Governor LePage said on Friday. "Instead of Maine women, I said white women ... If you go to Maine, you can see it's 95% white."

Blunt talk

Mr LePage made his controversial comments at a town meeting in Bridgton, describing out-of-state dealers as "guys with the name D-Money, Smoothie, Shifty" and said "half the time they impregnate a young white girl before leaving".

"This is one of the most blatantly racist statements he's ever made," said Lance Dutson, a moderate Republican activist.

States, especially in the north-east, are dealing with a sharp rise in heroin use. How to treat addicts and curb lethal overdoses has become a major issue in the US presidential race. His spokesman, Peter Steele, had earlier said Governor LePage was referring to the effect heroin addiction has on the state, not on issues of race.

"Race is irrelevant," Mr Steele told the Associated Press. "What is relevant is the cost to state taxpayers for welfare and the emotional costs for these kids who are born as a result of involvement with drug traffickers."

Governor LePage is known for his blunt talk. In the past, he has told President Barack Obama "go to hell", and members of a state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to "kiss my butt".

Oh Children of Israel, it's Raining Now…Babylon is Shaking

Everything Israel does is correct so never question their government's intentions. Israel is America's best friend, a devout ally with a healthy democracy that yet doesn't allow a signifcant percentage of its on citizens to vote, amongst other aberrations for a modern engaging enlightended society. If any other country, demonstrated many of the same characteristics in behavior, it would be intolerable

but since it's Israel, that's perfectly fine and acceptable. Israel has an asterisk next to its name to not dare tamper or meddle in its own affairs domestically or internationally but it's free to do so yet quick to condemn those that do. It's not a VIP, it's a VIN: Very Important Nation. Never offer any constructive criticism of the government or condemn military over-reactions to civilian populations by overt disparities in body counts. Never mention that Jews were involved in the slave trade of Africans but continue to do so unabated about Arabs, other Africans complicit in profiting and Europeans powers. To do so means being labeled insensitive to not remember the Holocaust and being accused of being anti-Semitic at your own peril and pro-Palestinian, as opposed to just pro-peace with a twist of common sense decency. No government can argue a need for double-standards better than Israel nor argue as pointedly as why they need to be assured of reliable support on all matters politically and financially. Certainly it is not natural, but patently offensive to suspect emigrated Jews from Europe and the Americas of mischief without reason but, evidently, perfectly natural to suspect African-Jews by Israeli police officials for no rational reason. I don't think Einstein could conceive of contorting time and space to accommodate this line of thinking with all the blackboards and chalk in the world for calcuations to defy logic. If that is enlightening public policy, we wish how the rest of the world can emulate it. Oh, it already does! My bad! Isn't that a comfort we arrived.

These are not Ethiopians *per se*; these are Israeli citizens of Ethiopian descent of the Jewish Disapora. However, that's still fair game like African lions on a safari to be caged or shot, as that line is fine in Israel, which is being entirely in sync with highly selective American law enforcement policies caging and shooting others of the African Disapora. These are not Palestinians, these are Jews intimately involved in the same faith but the bonds of race get in the way. If that doesn't prove an ally in friendly lockstep, I don't know what else! Therefore, welcome folks to Israel via Louisana:

Israel police chief: 'Natural' to suspect Ethiopians of crime

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37229668

31 Aug. 2016

Israel's police commissioner has been criticised for suggesting **it is natural to suspect Israelis of Ethiopian descent of crimes more than others.**

"Ethiopian Jews are Israeli Jews in every way," said Roni Alsheich when asked to address allegations of police violence and racism against them. But, he added, "studies the world over... have shown that immigrants are invariably more involved in crime".

Mr Alsheich nevertheless stressed that he was working to curb "over-policing". Members of Israel's Ethiopian community, who account for about 130,000 of the country's eight million population, called for the commissioner to be sacked.

Last year, thousands took to the streets to protest against alleged police abuses after a video emerged showing two officers beating an Ethiopian-Israeli soldier.

At a meeting of the Israel Bar Association in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, Mr Alsheich was asked why Ethiopian-Israelis appeared to be singled out by his force. "Studies the world over, without exception, have shown that immigrants are invariably more involved in crime than others, and this should not come as a surprise," he responded.

Research had also shown that young people in general were more involved in crime and that "when the two come together, there's a situation in which a given community is more involved than others in crime, statistically speaking", he added.

The commissioner said this had been the case "in all the waves of immigration" to Israel, and "also with regard to [Israeli] Arabs or [Palestinians in] East Jerusalem".

"When a police officer comes across a suspicious person, his brain suspects him more than if he were someone else. It's natural," he continued.

"We know this. We have started to deal with this."

The Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews said the remarks were "intolerable" and reinforced "stereotypes that portray all young people from our community as delinquents and criminals".

The legal advocacy group Tebeka accused Mr Alsheich of "in effect declaring that the whole community was a community of criminals" and giving "justification to the police for their systemic racism and violence toward Ethiopian-Israelis".

"We are not migrant workers, we are Jews who returned to their country after some 2,500 years in exile," Gadi Yibarkan, an activist who was involved in last year's protests, told the Times of Israel.

He added that the commissioner had made it seem "understandable that police officers deal violently with black people and Arabs".

Following the criticism, the police force issued a statement saying that Mr Alsheikh "had no intention of offending Israelis of Ethiopian origin".

It added: "The remarks were said, openly, with the intention of correcting and improving [the force]."

The plight of Ethiopian Jews in Israel

By Prof Yossi Mekelberg, Chatham House

25 May 2015

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32813056

The story of the immigration and absorption of Ethiopian Jews in Israel epitomises the best and the worst of Israeli society.

True to its Zionist dream of being a haven for Jews, the Jewish state embarked on risky and expensive rescue operations in the 1980s and 1990s.

These brought tens of thousands of Jews from remote parts of Ethiopia, who had suffered from religious persecution, famine and civil wars.

Yet, when they arrived in Israel, these distinctive people faced appalling discrimination, racism and a lack of empathy for their hardships in Ethiopia and during their journey to Israel.

Moreover, this was exacerbated by a mixture of bureaucratic insensitivity and incompetence.

The uncharacteristic violence, seen recently during demonstrations by members of the Ethiopian community in Israel, was a direct result of years of accumulated frustration against the state and especially the police.

The unprovoked beating up by policemen of Demas Fekadeh, an Ethiopian Israeli soldier in uniform, could well serve as a much necessary wake-up call for Israeli society to change, quickly and radically, its treatment of the 130,000 Israeli citizens and their descendants who immigrated from Ethiopia.

Who are the Ethiopian Jews?

The main challenge in tracing the origins of a Jewish presence in Ethiopia is the lack of reliable accounts. Consequently there are several versions regarding the origins of the Ethiopian Jews or, as they are historically known, Beta Israel (House of Israel).
One school of thought claims that Ethiopian Jews are descendants of the lost Hebrew Dan tribe.

An alternative explanation asserts that the Beta Israel community may be the descendants of the entourage that accompanied Menelik I, the son of King Solomon and Queen Sheba. Finally, leaders from within the community argue that Ethiopian Jews are descendants of Jews who left the conquered Kingdom of Judah for Egypt following the destruction of the First Temple in 586BC.

For centuries, until the 20th Century, Ethiopian Jews were completely isolated from Jewish communities in other parts of the world. Yet, they adhered to biblical Judaism for many centuries.

How did they arrive in Israel?

It was Prime Minister Menachem Begin, after he came to power in 1977, who first opened the country to Ethiopian Jews.

It was in response to the threat to the community from famine, political unrest and the hostility of the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regime led by Col Mengistu Haile Mariam. Initially the Israeli secret service Mossad organised their immigration through

refugee camps in Sudan. This resulted in the arrival of about 7,000 Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

In later years, Israeli security services embarked on even more daring operations, code-named Operation Moses (1984-1985) and Operation Solomon (1991), which rescued a further 20,000 Jews.

With the end of Mengistu's regime it became easier for Jews to emigrate from Ethiopia and, by the end of the 1990s, about 90,000 of the Beta Israel community had arrived in Israel.

What are the root causes of tensions?

Only 30 years after the arrival of the first Ethiopian Jews to Israel, and following recent violent clashes with the police, there is a broad acknowledgement that the state failed appallingly in absorbing the Jewish Ethiopian community.

To begin with, there was a lack of empathy in Israeli society for the hardships involved in leaving behind homes, relatives and friends who could not make the journey; not to mention the loss of family members and friends on the hazardous journey. Upon their arrival in the Jewish state they met the inherent Israeli paradoxes involved in absorbing Jewish immigrants.

They were welcomed and granted the basic needs of accommodation, healthcare, education and general welfare. However, this was done without sensitivity to their specific conditions and from the outset they faced discrimination and racism from the Israeli establishment.

Many in the religious establishment even dared to question their Judaism. One of the early incidents that exposed this approach was **the revelation in the 1990s that the Israeli national blood bank had routinely destroyed blood donated by Ethiopian**

Israelis for fear of HIV. It sent a message of exclusion from the rest of the Israeli society. The failure to absorb the Ethiopian Jews is the failure to fully and genuinely integrate them into Israeli society.

For instance, while Ethiopian Israeli schoolchildren comprise only 2% of Israeli pupils, most of them study at schools that are predominantly Ethiopian. Worse still, their attainment in school is much poorer than the general population, which blocks their path to academic success.

Many of the Ethiopian Israelis live in the periphery of society that already grapples with issues of unemployment and scarce public resources. This makes it more difficult for them to integrate and causes friction with the more veteran population.

Ethiopian Jews suffer from the highest poverty rate among the Jews in Israel, and suffer much higher levels of police stop-search, arrests and incarceration.

It was the cycle of discrimination, racism, poverty, hopelessness and higher levels of law breaking that led to the recent clashes in the streets of Israeli cities, between Ethiopian Israelis and the police.

This challenges Israel to look in the mirror and correct the way it treats a vulnerable segment of the population within its own society.

Yossi Mekelberg *is professor of international relations at Regent's University London and is also associate fellow, Middle East and North Africa programme, at* Chatham House

It would be remiss to not review presumptions of recent wrongdoings and blatant over reactions with whites of authority with the African Diaspora indiscriminate of continents:

The police recording you need to hear after a black woman 'broke into' her own home

Los Angeles Times
by Michelle Maltais

November 20, 2015

Santa Monica resident Fay Wells recently wrote of how she no longer feels safe at home. Why? About 19 cops showed up at her door, some with guns drawn, **after a neighbor thought she was breaking in. She's black and lives in a predominantly white complex.**

Police Chief Jacqueline A. Seabrooks responded:

"As a Black woman born and raised in South-Central Los Angeles, I empathize with Ms. Fay Wells and how the experience made her feel. On the other hand, as an experienced law enforcement executive, I understand the Police Department's response and the need for that response."

The police department posted a 47-minute recording officers made at the scene, which is embedded below. **Wells is clearly rattled and upset about having had officers approach her with guns and a police dog.**

It's a lot to go through, so we did it for you. Here are eight highlights:

Officers contend it's better safe than sorry

It sounds as if the situation had just deescalated. **Wells is clearly still shaken and upset by having been mistaken — at gunpoint — for a burglar in her own home. She said she had been locked out and hired a locksmith to let her in. A neighbor mistook her for a criminal.**

At 55 seconds in, her emotion builds:

Wells: ***Why are two people pointing guns at me when I come out of my apartment?*** *Two people pointed guns at me when I was walking out of my apartment. … That is NOT OK. I didn't do anything. It's not cool to have two officers point guns at me. I feel completely disrespected.*

They make their way back into the apartment. Her sense of personal violation is audible. She even asks whether the officers truly had the authority to enter and search her apartment though she didn't give consent.

Wells (incredulous): *What are you doing?*

Male officer: *What am I doing? We're searching this side of your apartment.*

Wells: *What are you searching for?*

Male officer: *We got a call from your neighbor that someone broke into your apartment. So we're searching for the person that broke in.*

Wells: *Right, because when I said that no one broke in and I had a locksmith that came by, it was completely like I had to be lying.*

… but she doesn't feel safe.

The officers seemed to be making a concerted effort to help her understand their frame of mind as they entered this unknown scene, with only the information provided by the neighbor who called to report a suspected burglary. At about 12:20 into the audiotape, a female officer tries to allay her anger with a perspective.

Female officer: … *Just understand that you're safe, no one's harmed, and we're just working on information we have at the time. In hindsight, a lot of what we do, it seems bizarre. They wouldn't make television shows out of our job if it wasn't. Right? But the end result is that you're safe.*

Wells: *Honestly, do you think I feel safe right now?*
"...if I was a white person"

Wells: *I really do want to know if I was a white person, would there be 15 cops here.*
Male officer: *Yes.*

A little later in the tape, he goes into more detail:

Male officer: *If you're asking me would these many cops be here if you were white, I can show you right now, yes....I've been doing this job for 28 years….Until we know everything is fine inside, we have to handle things a certain way. Understand? Here's the main thing: No one's gotten hurt, we haven't torn up your house. Our main thing is making sure everyone in here is safe and that nobody is breaking into your home.*

She meets the neighbor who called 911

It's unclear in the audio exactly how their paths cross, but Wells had earlier asked officers to tell her which of her neighbors had called, so she could introduce herself. At 24:14 into the recording, she opens with "I'm Fay, by the way."

Neighbor: *Hi. I've never met you before.* ***I've never seen you before*****.**

Wells: *I've lived there six months. … You should probably recognize me.*

Here's where it gets strange. If you listen to the 911 call, *it sounds as if the neighbor did know Wells lived there,* though he described her as possibly "Latino," but thought she had broken into another resident's home.

As Richard Winton wrote in an earlier story, the caller had told a 911 dispatcher, "the next-door neighbor just broke into an upstairs apartment with two other people with some sort of tools. … I don't think this is some sort of crazy robbery, but I need some cops over here right now."

At the scene, they moved on to why he called the police in the first place.

Neighbor: *There was a guy with a suitcase.*

Wells: *It was the locksmith that I called.*

Neighbor: *There was a weird suitcase that he had, breaking into your apartment.*

Wells: *Have you seen a locksmith's thing before? They have a tool set.*

Neighbor: *It was a suitcase. … Let me tell you something. I've never called 911 in my entire life. So I saw something that was happening, and I called 911 for the first time. And I've lived here for 12 years. And guess what — you're safer for it.*

Not drunk, just a lawyer

Wells assured her neighbor that the experience of having had a couple of guns pointed at her and 19 officers at her door did not, in fact, make her feel safer. At one point, she asks him a question that is unintelligible in the recording, but she later refers to asking whether he'd been drinking. His answer:

Neighbor: *I'm a lawyer. Go "eff" yourself.*
They continue. And in an unmistakable sorry-not sorry tone, he utters the closest he came to an apology during their exchange:

Neighbor: *It's better safe than sorry. … I know I haven't met you, but I'm sorry, I thought somebody was breaking into your apartment.*

What was going through her head

At 27:17 into the recording, Wells wants the officer to understand the gravity of this experience for her, a black woman well aware of how quickly the situation can turn deadly.

Male officer: *I'm sorry you were upset, but …*

Wells: ***I had guns pulled on me, of course I'm upset. And honestly, you live in America, so you know what's going on. So you know what I thought was going to happen, right?***

Male officer: *Well, we thought you were a burglar and you were barricaded inside that apartment.*

A challenge issued

Throughout the 40-plus-minute recording, **Wells continued to question why the officers needed to approach with guns drawn and why they didn't ask to see her ID.**

In the end, a male commanding officer on scene issued a "challenge" to her.

Male officer: *I'm gonna challenge you with something. And you can let me know on Tuesday if you want to do it or not. We have something which is called a "Citizens Academy." I think it's, like, 12 weeks. … For each one of those weeks, you come and you learn about the police department. The academy explains why we do things, why we do it. You don't have to give me an answer now. … If you're interested in it, I'm gonna sign you up for the next one.*

Wells: *Why would I be interested in that?*

The police offer locksmith services

The capper? In the end, the officers told Wells how she could have saved herself $150 and the experience of being mistaken by a neighbor for a burglar at her own home:

Male officer: *In the future, if something like this happens again, feel free, the police department can open the door for you, without a locksmith. … All you have to do is call 911."*

As it turns out, some of them are actually trained to pick locks. Good to know.

UPDATE

12:19 p.m:
This article has been updated with additional information from the audio regarding

Wells' question if she were a white person.

This article was originally published at 11:40 a.m.

Ex-tennis star James Blake tackled by police in video
12 September 2015, BBC

Police have released surveillance video from outside of the New York City hotel where ex-tennis professional James Blake was tackled by police on Wednesday.

Mr Blake was on his way to watch the US Open tennis tournament in the city when plainclothes officer James Frascatore tackled him, thinking he was an identity-theft suspect.

New York Police Commissioner Bill Bratton has apologised to Mr Blake, who has charged that Mr Frascatore used excessive force.

James Blake, ex-tennis pro, gets apology from NY police
10 September 2015, BBC

The New York Police Commissioner has apologised to James Blake after a group of plain-clothed officers tackled and detained the former top tennis player.

"I have concerns about the takedown," Commissioner William Bratton said of the mistaken arrest. Mr Blake has alleged that the officers used improper force when they slammed him to the ground on Wednesday.

The police say an eye witness had identified him as a suspect in a fraudulent mobile phone racket.

Commissioner Bratton said on Thursday police were investigating whether the officers used excessive force and that he would like to speak to Mr Blake.

The officer who tackled him had been put on desk duty amid the inquiry, Commissioner Bratton said.

Mr Blake told the New York Daily News that he was detained and held for 15 minutes as he waited for a car to take him to the US Open.

Once it was determined that police had the wrong man, Mr Blake was released. Commissioner Bratton had said that the arrest was not racially motivated. Mr Blake is mixed race; the officers are white.

"If you take a look at the photograph of the suspect, it looks like the twin brother of Mr Blake," the police commissioner told CNN. And a witness identified Mr Blake as the suspect.

Mr Blake, 35, said he suffered a cut on his arm and bruises on his legs, and wants an apology. He said the officers did not speak to him before they pushed him to the ground. "You'd think they could say: 'Hey, we want to talk to you. We are looking into something'," Mr Blake told the NY Daily News.

Once the fourth-ranked player in the world, Mr Blake was set to make an appearance at the US Open for the Time-Warner Cable company.

He retired following his US Open exit in 2013 after winning 10 singles titles in a career in which he also became the number one US player.

Police said a "co-operating witness" mistakenly identified Mr Blake as being involved in "a ring dealing in fraudulently purchased cell phones".

The department has recently been involved in a number of high-profile cases involving accusations of police brutality.

In the most prominent case, a man selling illegal cigarettes died in July 2014 after being subdued by several police officers. Eric Garner's violent arrest was filmed by a bystander.

A decision not to criminally charge the officers led to widespread protests across the city.

James Blake: NYC police used excessive force in arrest
8 October 2015, BBC

The police officer who mistakenly arrested former tennis star James Blake will face an excessive force charge. Last month, police forced the former tennis star to the ground after mistaking him for a fraud suspect.

Mr Blake's complaint that officers used unnecessary force was upheld by New York's independent agency that deals with police misconduct.This decision opens the door for an administrative trial that could result in disciplinary action or termination.

The two officers were seen on video grabbing Blake by the arm and shoving him to the ground. The review board ruled Officer James Frascatore used excessive force and Detective Daniel Herzog abused his authority.

Officer Frascatore had been named in civil rights lawsuits alleging excessive force in the past and was placed on desk duty follow Mr Blake's arrest.

Blake, once the fourth-ranked tennis player in the world, was in New York to watch the US Open.

The New York Police Commissioner apologised to Blake after the incident.

Ahmed Mohamed: No charges for boy, 14, arrested over clock
16 September 2015, BBC

Texas police have decided not to charge a 14-year-old Muslim boy arrested for bringing a homemade clock to school.

Officials at MacArthur High School in Irving alerted police because they thought the device was a "hoax bomb".

Ahmed Mohamed's arrest has been sharply criticised, and the boy has received an outpouring of support including an invitation to the White House.

Ahmed told reporters it was "very sad" that his teacher thought his clock was a threat. "I built a clock to impress my teacher but when I showed it to her she thought it was a threat to her. I'm very sad that she got the wrong impression of it."

At the same news conference on Wednesday afternoon, Ahmed announced he plans to transfer schools.

Ahmed's father Mohamed Elhassan Mohamed, who is originally from Sudan, praised his son's ingenuity, saying he fixes everything around the house, including his father's phone and computer.

"He's a very smart, brilliant boy and he said he just wanted to show himself to the world," he said.

The police have rejected the claim made by Ahmed's family that he was detained because of his name.

"We have always had an outstanding relationship with the Muslim community," Irving Police Department chief Larry Boyd said on Wednesday. "Incidents like this present challenges. We want to learn how we can move forward and turn this into a positive". The boy was placed in handcuffs and fingerprinted. He was released after it was determined there was no threat.

Video shows violent 'jaywalking' arrest in California
18 September 2015, BBC

Police in California are investigating after a video posted online showed a group of officers tackling a teenager for jaywalking.

Edgar Avendano, who filmed the incident, said the teen was walking in the road on Tuesday when he was stopped by a police officer. A Stockton police spokesman said the boy refused to leave the road and the situation escalated into a scuffle.

"He didn't do nothing wrong," a bystander yells in the video.

Stockton Police Spokesman Joseph Silva told VICE News that the boy reached for the initial officer's baton, which triggered the aggressive response. The officer's body camera was knocked to the ground.

In the video, the white officer hits the boy in the face with a baton and the teenager, who is black, is later seen sobbing.

The officer then attempts to arrest the boy and is joined by a large group of fellow officers, who push the teenager to the ground.

"He didn't have to hit the kid with the baton, [and there was] no need to call about 20 cops," Mr Avendano wrote in a post on Facebook.

The 16-year-old boy was later given a citation and released. His name was not disclosed.

Several high profiles cases, including the fatal shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, by a white police officer, have sparked protests in the US and a national debate about racial bias and the use of force by police.

"Anytime an officer uses force there's an automatic administrative review," Stockton Police Spokesman Joseph Silva told VICE News.

However he said: "the preliminary investigation is showing that the officers were within our policy".

How one black man reacted while being searched by police

19 September 2015, BBC

A video of a man claiming discrimination after being stopped and searched by police in Bogota has captured the attention of millions online, prompting a discussion about racial divisions in Colombia. At 8 a.m. one Monday, Carlos Angulo was walking to work when he says he heard a policeman shout a racial slur at him. The officer ordered him him to stop and submit to a search. He decided he'd had enough. He threw his backpack on the ground and started emptying its contents, throwing them around while screaming and pointing at other people: "Why don't you search them? Because they are white!"

"Why don't you ask them for their papers? Because they are from the capital city and they are not considered dangerous. Hundreds of people pass by and you stop the only two black guys on the street," he screamed. "You think I'm suspicious because I'm going too fast and my boss thinks it suspicious when I'm late." The resulting video of the encounter has been viewed more than 5.4 million times on Facebook.

Angulo, 33, works as a carpenter. Ten years ago he left his hometown on Colombia's Pacific coast for better educational and job opportunities. Colombia's black population - 11% of the country at the last census - is concentrated in the coastal areas, as opposed to inland Bogota which has a smaller Afro-Colombian minority. Angulo told BBC Trending that since moving to the capital, he has been repeatedly stopped and searched by police: "This is not the first time I have had a confrontation with the authorities." But it is the first time someone has filmed him being searched and posted it online. "The girl who uploaded the video told me that she was going to help me," he added.

That person was 19-year-old Maria Alejandra Pulido. "It's about time that someone finally stood up to the authorities," she wrote on her post. "No more discrimination in Colombia! No more abuse of power! Share this and help him have his rights respected."

According to Aurora Vergara, head of the Centre of Studies on the African Diaspora, part of the video's appeal is the recent debate over race and policing in the United States. The Black Lives Matter movement, spread through social media in the US, has had an impact in Colombia too. "It has led people to identify acts against Afro-Colombians as acts of racism and discrimination," she says. Last July, for instance, a video of a woman shouting at a black taxi driver sparked public outrage. Nevertheless, Vergara says that discussion of racism in Colombia is still not part of everyday conversation. "To speak about racism and racial injustice in Colombia is like shouting that the emperor isn't wearing any clothes," she says. In her view, "Colombia has a tradition of racial supremacy in which it is good to be white or to act like white people."

But the video sparked a debate as hundreds of thousands shared it on Facebook.

"Everywhere racism against black people is horrible," said Rosalinda Guillen. "We have to join forces to stop this." But others took a different view. Alvaro Toro said: "I'm not racist but there must be a reason why they stopped him, regardless of his origins."

Angulo now admits that he reacted badly to the police, shouting and swearing. "But the reason I lost control is because of the way the police treated me," he says.

He was released by police, but Angulo has now filed a complaint against the officer who stopped him. Speaking to BBC Mundo, a spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police of Bogota said they were investigating the incident, but that they deny any discrimination towards people of African origin.

Okay. Sure. We can sleep better.

This is interesting especially since Rio de Janeiro is hosting the Olympics in 2016:

Rio de Janeiro: Beguiling, beautiful and brutal

3 October 2015, BBC

Beguiling, beautiful and brutal.

Rio de Janeiro is all of the above. Perhaps it's the physical nature of the "Marvelous City" that everything seems to be so close together - the ugly and the serene, rich and poor, violent and peaceful.

The death of 17-year-old Eduardo Felipe Victor dos Santos might have gone down as one more barely noticed statistic in the long-running war between Rio's military police and the city's many drugs gangs. At Eduardo's funeral in the sprawling Sao Joao Batisita cemetery, just a stone's throw from the upmarket air-conditioned shopping centres and tourist hotspots, mourners had arrived on buses from Providencia favela - or shanty town - where Eduardo lived and died.

The air was heavy with emotion, the dead youth's mother and grandmother inconsolable as they watched his coffin being slid into a small space in the cemetery wall. A family friend made a brief but impassioned speech, saying that had it not been for images taken furtively on a mobile phone, by someone who witnessed Eduardo's death, the shocking truth might never have come out.

The widely shared footage clearly shows a group of armed policemen standing over the youth's heavily bloodstained body.

One of the officers calmly places a gun on the floor and then into Eduardo's hand. The officer then fires the pistol into the air twice, presumably to give the impression that Eduardo had shot at police before being killed.

The five-man police team has since been arrested and Rio's high profile chief of security, Jose Mariano Beltrame, has vowed that any rogue officers will be dismissed and prosecuted.

Trigger happy?

When I recently asked Mr Beltrame if Rio had a problem with officers who "shoot first and ask questions later", his denial was emphatic.

"That's not true. If you look, we have figures that show the number of police killings, and those are falling," the secretary told me in his downtown Rio office. But he added: "Yes, we used to have 'cops who kill', but today you can only say that in a few cases."

Human rights groups like Amnesty International dispute the official explanation. **In a recent report, Amnesty accused Rio's military police of being "trigger happy" and said that more than 1,500 murders in the city over the last five years were committed by on-duty police officers.**

Whether deliberately targeted or killed in crossfire, the fact that hundreds of people die every year at the hands of Rio's police is arguably another sign that the so called "pacification" policy in the city's favelas is fast unravelling. **With more than 50,000 violent deaths every year, Brazil has one of the highest murder rates in the world**.

About half of those killed are young black men and, according to the Institute of Public Security, many cities including Rio have seen a big increase this year in the number of people killed **"as a result of policy activity".**

Many Brazilians say you can't look at what is happening in a huge, diverse country through the prism of one city alone.

All eyes on Rio

That is a fair point, but it's a matter of fact that there's huge international focus on Rio these days because of its international reputation, last year's World Cup and the forthcoming Olympic Games. So, given the recent figures, does Mr Beltrame envisage serious security problems in Rio between now and the Games?

"I obviously don't have a crystal ball, so I can't guess what's going to happen," is his first answer, but then he expands.

"Actually, I think it's the opposite. We're going to have a very peaceful Olympics Games, like many of the events we organised before. But the Olympics are not my main worry. My main concern is the people of Rio that don't want and can't carry on with this amount of guns around."

That last point is significant. Mr Beltrame occupies a powerful and high-profile position, but says he has no political ambitions and so feels free to speak his mind.

He clearly thinks there are too many guns in circulation in the city, fuelling the drugs wars between the numerous gangs (three distinctive "big" gangs identified by him) and police.

"It can't go on like this," says the secretary, who advocates much tougher gun control and a serious debate about the legalisation of drugs.

Police targeted

The focus this week may have been on another troubled young man who died at the hands of police, arguably when he could and should have been detained alive, whether or not he was involved in selling drugs in his favela. But Rio's security forces, too, are frequently the victims of violent crime, retribution and murder.

Earlier this week, a policeman on the outskirts of the city was tortured to death, his body dragged through the streets behind a horse. There have been numerous kidnappings of officers from their cars and homes, and living in the communities where they work is often not an option for policemen and women concerned about their families' safety.

Rio de Janeiro is still one of the world's great cities and, as was the case with the World Cup, it will probably get its act together in time to put on a great Olympic Games. But with less than a year to go before those Games arrive, these stories - of police violence and impunity, of murder committed against the police, and of heavily armed gangs controlling favelas - are not images of a city at peace with itself.

Here are reality checks for those willing to pause and think about events only days from each other conveniently East Coast, South, West Coast and even distant South America for added measure this past September:

People detonate bombs to accomplish their intentions, they do not show them to others with explanations on how it works. Classic case of two negatives working against the young man, both African and Muslim which don't make a positive. If white, he would have been praised and encouraged as an up and coming tech guru. This says volumes that when the student demonstrated that what he has built is indeed the sum of true fears of his teacher and peers, perhaps he is less student and more terrorist as the clock ticks. Now we know why he was so interested in math to finally blow the school to Kingdom Come! To even think of calling the police and putting handcuffs on the boy should have been a crime and reeks of gross ignorance. Then again it was in Texas but, sadly, it could have been anywhere in the US.

James Blake, because he is biracial suffers from the Tiger Woods syndrome. I suppose he thinks officers should recognize his mother is white automatically therefore he shouldn't be suspected of mischief and shouldn't be tackled like a

common black man without identification displayed and subjected to an inquiry first. Sorry, James, you look like a black man and will be treated as such. It is assumed the only racket you swing must be in illicit trades. The only court you should be familiar with should have an expensive white attorney to defend you. Anybody can see you don't know about serving green balls over a net but, instead, getting served behind bars. Damn!

Police forces leave a lot to be desired with the appalling lack of good judgment they exercise. Maybe this is relatively new news to white society but old as salt to those of us of color regardless where we are in the New World or in Europe. The unedited videos on police certainly demonstrate unflattering acumen and its wrath is conveniently focused toward blacks. Surprise! **The cold fact is not all these men and women in uniform are heroes but they prove themselves racist and dull especially with common sense scenarios.** Ironically, anybody can look like a hero under fire or real threat, not with simple pedestrian ordinary circumstances. This is how we can all see just how slow and racist many of the officers are until they can prove themselves otherwise through their conduct.

It is not politically correct which is exactly why I will address the issue as those who well know it, will not put their public careers at risk to say it: the best and brightest of white citizens and, especially from more affluent social strata, don't aspire to being police officers. This is less about white people in general; with a sharper focus, officers allow us a window to examine much more about the *class* of white people drawn into careers in law enforcement. I believe it common knowledge that most whites who aspire to be police officers are not as well-educated with many coming from austere socio-economic backgrounds that, shall we say, are less than privileged. To be frank, some of the officers are legally sanctioned thugs which is why they perform their duties as brutally as they do, they are just opposites of the criminals they pursue - the flip side of the same coin. Generally, the more affluent and better educated citizens are, regardless of race, the far less inclined they are to commit brutal acts upon others. With education, higher

culture is apt to be fostered and grievances are settled with dialog and debate, typically not with fists and weapons to settle disputes. I saw the movie "Black Mass" starring Johnny Depp about the real-world Bulger brothers in Boston- one a livelong criminal and the other a politician who rose to become chancellor of the University of Massachusetts- and it came together how whites from a lower socio-economic class can either have careers in law or as outlaws, with a very thin line between the two paths of choice. Just because a person is in law enforcement, does not equate to them shedding narrow negative values ingrained from their formative years from their hard scrabble native environments. The social focus is often about black criminals conveniently when the focus should be about what are the levels of education and backgrounds of the officers. I'm sure plenty would prefer to not put this into consideration. Those citizens from upper strata are not prone to tackling people on streets, let alone taking pleasure in torturing others for backroom confessions. I suspect these are the same brute personality types utilized in the Spanish Inquisition or the Holy See that ran roughshod over the innocent to pursue their own wicked aims with the cover of authority to root out evil when they themselves conveniently commit patently evil acts with a complete disregard for human dignity.

Uniforms give their lives direction, worth, stability, tangible status and meaning. If your mother is a doctor and your father is a professor, your uncle is a CEO, I fail to see how the children could be groomed for chasing hoodlums, breaking up brawls and delight in handcuffing blacks & Latinos in some perverse pleasure. Who wants to deal with shoplifters and chase drug-dealers when your natural milieu offers a host of directions? Would you prefer to listen to a lecture from Stephen Hawking or Neil deGrasse Tyson or injure your intellect with Jerry Springer or Maury Povich tabloid junk? We are all products of our environments and if power was dictated at a young age by viewing uniforms as symbols of good and if power was not seen or interacted with successful entrepreneurs, executives, professors and professionals, then a person will probably default into what they believe they can achieve. Since whites do not have the racial impediment as we blacks tacitly have in American

society, why would some whites choose a career by dredging around with humanity's dross? What officer wakes up and says to himself, "I hope I don't hurt anybody today but first let me do a regression analysis." I don't think so.

As much as society genuinely does need police and first responders, the hard truth is that the pool of applicants for these positions suffer as they are not academic superstars from more affluent communities that can give them life's so-called abundant choices in career pursuits. This is also why many take personal umbrage with us of color with nice homes, living in nicer neighborhoods with comfortable cars. This class are keenly aware that we have not allowed color to deter us. Why apply to the local police academy and learn how to use batons and handcuffs if you can gain admission to Stanford, Cal, Princeton, Yale, Harvard and MIT? Who will have a brighter, rewarding future? When things go wrong for police, they wrap themselves in the sanctity of the flag as defenders of the law to avoid necessary constructive criticism- which is far too often tied into the untidy factor of race profiling. The *wrap* works so that's why they always do it. Many of these are scrappy individuals from necessity, far more akin to public pugilists than campus professors who wear badges on the streets which is why they focus on those of color; however, they are sensitively aware to not pursue whites of upscale echelons as they know there can be a severe blowback to their careers. Those whites of education and property can make high placed phone calls quickly and jeopardize careers and possible pensions. They are smart enough, however, to know who to not tangle with and who they can, under the guise of protecting the law equitably. **They are selective on who to attack and whom to leave alone.**

Another important point for us to ponder is that police officers consider themselves to be professionals- inclusive- *all.* Men can tap into their testosterone to give added gravity of bass to their voices about the men and women who so serve us so admirably and *professionally*. Some do but let's have the courage to recognize that many don't too. As much as police forces are needed, being a patrol office is blue collar employment. Just because a prep cook works in a big city kitchen, does not

make him or her automatically a Michelin star chef. **Professionals, as I consider it, have post-graduate educations and years of training.** I will consider my dentist, my medical doctor, my attorneys as professionals. University professors are professional academicians with Phds, not just college graduates after four years. I will accept airline transport pilots as professionals as they are highly rated and trained beyond just being only qualified commercially rated pilots with proven thousands of hours obtained honing their skills in real time. That is why they can sit in a machine that carries over 300 lives. Airlines now require they have accredited college degrees and not from some diploma mills. **It is requisite for military officers in the United States to have university degrees otherwise you are deemed enlisted personnel. No paper, no officer.** Notice that what makes a professional are concepts of competencies and sharpened decision making abilities by higher academic achievement to deal with complex problem solving with a wider range of latitudes of research, cases studies and experiences at one's command to draw upon for reaching optimal solutions- especially under pressure.

Be bold enough to compare how police overrate their credentials. Police officers are typically are less educated- often without college educations - yet, ironically, given the weight of the state to perform their tasks with firearms. It is oxymoronic to label *all* police officers as professionals from top to bottom. **Professional is elastically stretched to be liberally inclusive of police officers when it would not apply to other occupations.** Maybe some should carry batons only until they achieve higher educations. Consider colonels went to college; privates, corporals and sergeants did not. Police officers on the street are not professionals, and sadly even professionals make abhorrent errors in judgments, as so often demonstrated, as all humans are prone to error. In every professional milieu, some are champions and some are marginal at best. Some have no business doing what they do, which is why a false sense of security is at odds with their titles. However, we expect professionals are tested for higher aptitudes in what they do because the complexity of situations they encounter and their ramifications have much greater consequences for success and failure. What are the recognized academic achievements between bank security

guards and typical patrol officers? Being well-intentioned but yet incompetent in any profession is simply not good enough and that applies to police, most unfortunately. Would we purchase tickets to sit in jets with incompetent or marginal pilots going over the Pacific but are well-intentioned? I'll take a slow boat vomiting seasick all the way to China if that's the case. If you are an attorney, you had to dedicate years in law school after undergraduate studies with high marks and then still hopefully pass state bar exams. If you want to carry a firearm for the city, county or state, what exactly were those qualifications and were they at the same rigorous standards commiserate with other post-graduate professionals? I do not believe so. We are not dealing with Phds, let alone master's degrees from patrol officers when we are stopped, cooperate and comply to their requests. Recognize the dichotomy of real professionals, the chasm, between whom those we call doctors in their subjective fields and those we obsequiously elevate in basic law enforcement to the same stratosphere of professional standards & competency when they simply are not. Police academy sans university education should not qualify as a professional qualification as we too often afford these individuals. That's why some people get shot innocently and disproportionately especially if you are of color.

I am a pilot but I am not a professional. If there was another MH370 emergency and I got into the flight deck, I would just be first to watch the crash enfold even if I could gather what the instruments were saying. The power of the aircraft is beyond me. I have no skills and training for a 777. I would immediately holler for any airline or military trained officers to take control. They are professionals who have demonstrated a proven aptitude; I am only an amateur. That's the bottom line.

I suspect as myself, far and away most African-Americans are not anti-police but tired of ignorant, racially- skewed motivated policing patrolled by amateurs, thinly cloaked as professionals of marginal educations, who transmogrify the loftier

concept of the word professional for their own ends. They banter the word professional in policing to underscore their vital value to society. I would never put the moniker of professional and attaching it to bus drivers unless that profession required the composite of testing and post-graduate academic achievement to sit behind wheel. We can be grateful for anybody gainfully employed and serving the communities and country in any of spectrum of capabilities, but let us also be more discerning in recognizing the import of those that are truly professionals and decline to be so readily and wholly inclusive for patrol officers when we would never be so for employment outside of law enforcement.

"Where he done went to? How I know 'bout dat? You says on account of you'd like to find him! Law, chile, ain't nobody goin' to find dat black man after all dese many years. What you say? Didn' he say nothin', nothin' at all? Why sho' he did, chile. An ev'time I thinks of it my heart is near 'bout broke in two. Said he couldn' stand to be hit in de face by nobody. Not nobody! Oh yes, dat black man had pride, awright, warn't many black mens aroun' like him! And lucky too, why, he must had him a whole bag full of rabbit foots! Ain't many nigger run off dat day don' soon cotch someways. But I don't know. Said he was goin' run off to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and make lots of money an' den come back an buy me an' you into freedom. But Lawd, chile! Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, dey say dat's a misery long ways off from here an' I don' know where yo' daddy ever went."

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

US police kill more than two people a day, report suggests

31 May 2015, BBC

Data collected by the Washington Post newspaper suggests that the number of people shot by US police is twice as high as official figures claim.

The paper said that during the first five months of this year, 385 people - more than two a day - were killed.

The number of black people was disproportionately high among the victims, especially unarmed ones.

Official statistics rely on self-reported figures from law enforcement agencies.

They suggest about 400 people have been killed each year since 2008.

The US has seen a number of controversial cases where unarmed black people have been killed by white police officers.

Police are allowed to use deadly force when they fear for their lives or the lives of others, however there is currently no reliable way of tracking police shooting deaths.

Instead, the government relies on self-reported figures from the nation's 17,000 law enforcement agencies. The figures exclude killings deemed not to have been justified.

The Washington Post says it logged every fatal shooting in 2015 by police in the line of duty using interviews, police reports, local media reports and other sources.

It found a homicide rate of almost 2.6 per day so far this year - more than double the average 1.1 deaths per day reported in FBI records over the past decade.

"These shootings are grossly under-reported," former police chief Jim Bueermann told the newspaper. "We are never going to reduce the number of police shootings if we don't begin to accurately track this information."

Among the report's other findings:

Black people were killed at three times the rate of whites or other minorities when adjusted for local population.

Most were armed, but one in six was unarmed or carried a toy weapon 365 men and 20 women were killed.

Most (118) were aged 25-34, while 94 were 35-44. Eight were children younger than 18.

In all three 2015 cases in which charges were subsequently filed against police officers, videos had emerged showing officers shooting a suspect during or after a chase on foot.

Why do US police keep killing unarmed black men?
26 May 2015, BBC

Recent high-profile cases of unarmed black men dying at the hands of the US police have sparked protests and civil unrest in several American cities. The deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray are - some claim - evidence of long-standing problems with police racism and excessive violence.

Four expert witnesses talk to the BBC World Service Inquiry programme, including the head of President Obama's taskforce on police reform, Charles Ramsey

Sam Sinyangwe: **These are not isolated incidents**

Sam Sinyangwe is a researcher and activist who started the Mapping Police Violence project.

"I'm 24 years old. I'm a black man. It's incredibly depressing to see people just like me who have been killed.

"I started the project to provide answers in the wake of the shooting of Mike Brown. It's very heavy to read these stories, and yet it feels like the right work to do. It's important.

"There are statistics on all kinds of violent crimes. And yet, when it comes to people being killed by police officers, there's no data on that. So a light bulb went off in my head. I looked at two crowd-sourcing databases which collected all of the names. I then went through the media reports listing each of those people who were killed."
He counted 1,149 people of all ethnic groups killed by the police in 2014.

"I identified whether they were armed or unarmed. I identified them by race by looking at if there was an obituary or another picture of them online.

"In the aftermath of Ferguson [where the unarmed teenager Michael Brown was killed], there was this big question 'Is this a pattern, is this an isolated incident?' What [my data] shows is that Ferguson is everywhere. All over the country you're seeing black people being killed by police."

The youngest recorded was 12, the oldest 65. More than 100 were unarmed.

"Black people are three times more likely to be killed by police in the United States than white people. More unarmed black people were killed by police than unarmed white people last year. And that's taking into account the fact that black people are only 14% of the population here.

"It goes back to this question of how do they perceive young black men? There's something in the US called **Vision Zero**, a commitment by mayors to achieve zero traffic fatalities in a specified timeframe.

"We haven't seen mayors step up and make clear commitments to eliminate the level of police violence in their communities. I think that says a lot about the relative value that they place on those constituents' lives."

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30 years of torturing blacks: pray what class of individuals – a detective unit - can do this as standard protocol for a generation? A medieval auto de fe in Chicago:

Chicago in $5.5m police torture payout

6 May 2015, BBC

A $5.5m (£3.6m) reparations package to the victims of police torture in Chicago has been agreed by the council.

As many as 80 victims of an infamous detective unit that abused suspects over three decades could be in line for a share of the award. The city council also issued a formal apology and vowed to teach schoolchildren about the abuses.

Former commander Jon Burge was jailed for four years after being convicted of lying about the torture scandal.

Many of the victims were African American. Some could receive as much as $100,000.

The terms of the award were announced last month by city officials and Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

"This stain cannot be removed from our city's history but it can be used as a lesson of what not do," the mayor said.

The names of more than a dozen torture victims and survivors were read aloud and the city council gave them a standing ovation. The council then voted 42-0 in favour of the award.

Walter Scott shooting: Family agrees $6.5m settlement
9 October 2015, BBC

A city in the US state of South Carolina has reached a $6.5m (£4.2m) settlement with the family of an unarmed black man shot dead by a white police officer in April. North Charleston City Council approved the deal in a unanimous vote. Walter Scott, 50, was shot in April by officer Michael Slager while running from a routine traffic stop.

It was one of several cases across the US in which unarmed black men died during encounters with police officers. Michael Slager was charged with murder and dismissed from the police force. A police dashboard camera caught the moment Mr Scott ran from his car, while footage from a bystander's mobile phone showed the officer firing eight shots at him as he fled.

"This is a very difficult period for the Scott family. I know they are glad to have this part behind them so their healing process can continue," said North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey in a statement quoted by the Washington Post.

"As a result of this tragedy, important issues have been discussed, not only in North Charleston, but around the country. Citizens have become engaged in this process and government officials are listening."

In July, New York City agreed to pay $5.9m (£3.8m) to the family of Eric Garner, who died after allegedly being put in a chokehold by a police officer.

And in September, the City of Baltimore agreed to pay $6.4m (£4.2m) to the family of Freddie Gray, who died of a critical spine injury while in the back of a prisoner transport van in April.

Mr Slager has been detained in solitary confinement pending his trial. If convicted, he faces from 30 years to life in prison without parole.

Minneapolis protests: Police arrest 51 after man shot
17 November 2015, BBC

Plice in Minneapolis arrested 51 people on Monday night following a second day of protests over **the police shooting of a black man**. The 43 adults and eight juveniles were part of a group that blocked a major highway for two and a half hours. Police have released little detail about the shooting of 24-year-old Jamar Clark, an assault suspect, who remains on life support in hospital. Some witnesses have said that Mr Clark was handcuffed when he was shot.

A number of high-profile police shootings of black people have sparked protests nationwide about the police use of excessive force against African Americans. The latest round of protests in Minneapolis came on the heels of the mayor's decision to ask the federal government to launch a civil rights investigation.

Mayor Betsy Hodges said she was asking for the investigation in the "interest of transparency and community confidence". While a state agency has already launched a criminal investigation, the mayor said that the city needs "all the tools we have available to us".

Two officers involved in the shooting are on paid leave - which is standard procedure after incidents such as this. The police chief has said that the officers were not wearing body cameras, but would not say whether the squad car or other surveillance video captured the incident.

Protesters have welcomed the federal investigation, but have vowed to continue demonstrating until any video of the situation is released and the officers involved are identified. The protests began on Sunday and included an overnight encampment at a Minneapolis police station near the scene of the shooting. At least eight tents were seen at the campsite on Monday, and a few protesters were sitting inside the glass doors of the station - including one who was knitting. "We're still not moving until we get that footage," said Michael McDowell, a demonstrator with the Black Lives Matter movement.

According to police, the incident began at around 00:45 local time (06:45 GMT) on Sunday when police were called to north Minneapolis following the report of an assault. Upon arriving at the scene, police found Mr Clark interfering with paramedics who were attempting to help the victim. They attempted to calm him, which resulted in a struggle and a shot being fired.

Mr Clark has not been formally identified by police, but was named by family members. **His father told the Associated Press news agency that his son suffered a single gunshot wound over his left eye.**

Man at centre of Minneapolis race protests dies
17 November 2015, BBC

A black man shot by police in an incident that sparked large protests in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has died. Jamar Clark, 24, had been on life support in hospital since the shooting on Sunday morning.

Police say that he was the suspect in an assault case and was interfering with medics who were working on the victim when he was he was shot.Protesters have camped outside the police station for two days, and blocked a major highway on Monday.

That demonstration led to the arrest of 51 protesters on Monday night.

Police have released few details about the shooting of Clark - who some say was handcuffed when he was shot. Police have denied that claim. Monday night's demonstrations came after the mayor's decision to ask the federal government to launch a civil rights investigation. Mayor Betsy Hodges said she was asking for the investigation in the "interest of transparency and community confidence".
While a state agency has already launched a criminal investigation, the mayor said that the city needs "all the tools we have available to us".

Two officers involved in the shooting are on paid leave - which is standard procedure after incidents such as this….

Jamar Clark: Five people shot at Minneapolis police protests
24 November 2015, BBC

The shooting on Monday has prompted Clark's brother to call for an end to the protests "out of imminent concern for the safety of the occupiers".

Black Lives Matter, the movement organising the protest, had planned to announce "next steps" in their protest strategy. It is not clear if the announcement will happen in light of the shooting.

Police said that Clark was the suspect in an assault case, and was shot during a struggle with police that followed him trying to interfere with paramedics tending to the assault victim.

Protesters have alleged that Clark was handcuffed when he was shot - a claim that police deny. A federal investigation is also being conducted to determine whether police intentionally violated Clark's civil rights during the incident.

Three white men wearing masks have shot five people protesting about the fatal police shooting of a black man in Minneapolis, say witnesses.

None of the victims suffered life-threatening injuries in the incident on Monday night, and police on Tuesday said they had arrested one man.

Regular protests have taken place since Jamar Clark was shot by police10 days ago. Police deny he was handcuffed. Police use of force against African Americans has been an ongoing issue.

Protests have been held nationwide for more than a year after a series of incidents, some of them fatal.

The shooting of the five protesters happened about a block from a Minneapolis police station that has been the site of demonstrations for about a week. A witness told the Associated Press news agency that three mask-clad people, who "weren't supposed to be there", showed up at the protest site. They soon left and were followed by a few protesters to a street corner, where the masked men began firing.

The wheels of justice do turn slowly. A first degree murder charge for a white police officer takes one year and it takes 30 years to release black men incarcerated on false convictions. That gives us comfort that the wheels spin slowly for *all:*

Murder charge for Chicago officer who shot teenager

24 November 2015, BBC

A white Chicago police officer who shot a black teenager 16 times *last year* has been charged with first-degree murder, state lawyers have said. It comes a day ahead of the expected release of a police car dashcam video showing Jason Van Dyke shooting 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. Mr Van Dyke turned himself in on Tuesday morning in Chicago.

Police use of excessive force against African Americans has been the subject of protests for more than a year.

In Minneapolis on Monday night, one of those protests was marred by violence when three white men opened fire at a rally, injuring five people.

In the Chicago case, a post-mortem showed that McDonald was shot at least twice in the back.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has said the officer was not justified in killing the teenager, calling his actions "hideous".

"At every point, he violated what we entrust," Mr Emanuel said on Monday. Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner has said the video is "very troubling" and he expects a strong public reaction, though he hopes it will be "thoughtful and peaceful".

The police union in Chicago has opposed the release of the video and said it would taint a trial jury. The officer, through his lawyer and the police union, has said he feared for his life because McDonald was holding a knife.

Laquan McDonald case: Obama 'disturbed' by dashcam video
26 November 2015, BBC

President Barack Obama has said he is "deeply disturbed" by a police video that shows a white officer shooting a black teenager 16 times in Chicago.

Officer Jason Van Dyke is charged with the first-degree murder of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, who was stopped by police after slashing car tyres.

In a Thanksgiving message on Facebook, the president paid tribute to Chicago protesters for keeping the peace. Four people were arrested overnight as demonstrators marched through the city.

The protests were not as widespread or as tense as Tuesday night, which began moments after police released the dashcam video showing the incident.

Mr Obama said on Facebook: "Like many Americans, I was deeply disturbed by the footage of the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald.

"This Thanksgiving, I ask everybody to keep those who've suffered tragic loss in our thoughts and prayers, and to be thankful for the overwhelming majority of men and women in uniform who protect our communities with honour."

McDonald was stopped by police in October 2014 after reports that he had been walking in the road and slashing car tyres.

The video shows him holding a knife when the police cars arrive and Mr Van Dyke emerges from his car. Within seconds, he shoots the teenager.

(Note: The police report has the teenager lunging at officers with a knife contrary to the video recording of events)

The officer's lawyer said he feared for his life but prosecutors said there was no justification for his actions.

According to court documents seen by the Associated Press, Mr Van Dyke was the subject of 18 civilian complaints over 14 years, including allegations that he used racial slurs and excessive force.

The death of Laquan McDonald has become the latest flashpoint in a long-running debate over police violence against black men.

Protesters said they were organising a Black Friday event which will try to shut down a major shopping area in Chicago on one of the busiest retail days of the year.

Michael Brown: Police shot the unarmed teenager (above) in Ferguson last year, setting off huge protests and unrest nationwide

Eric Garner: Choked to death while under restraint by police in New York

Tamir Rice: Police shot and killed the 12-year-old in Cleveland as he brandished a toy gun

Walter Scott: A South Carolina police officer shot Scott numerous times in the back as he was running away

Freddie Gray: The 25-year-old died after sustaining a severe spinal cord injury while in the custody of police in Baltimore

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10 years on duty and the "professional" suddenly demonstrates less than perfect public deportment. That stretches my imagination and certainly others:

Police Officer Accused of Biting Man's Testicles On Cinco De Mayo (Fifth of May)
7 May 2015, CNN

A police officer is accused of drinking too much on Cinqo de Mayo and then biting another man's testicles after an argument over a woman, according to Maryland court charging documents.

Michael Flaig, a 10 year veteran of the Anne Arundel County Police Department, has been charged with second degree assault and public intoxication.

A unidentified man called police to say he'd been assaulted by two men in an alley behind Looney's Pub and one of the men bit his testicles. A witness to the assault told officers the sharp toothed suspect went into nearby Claddagh Pub. Officers found Michael Flaig seated at the bar wearing a shirt with blood on it. "Mr. Flaig had blood shot eyes, slurred words, and s strong odor of alcohol coming from his person", according to the charging documents.

The victim was treated on the scene for injuries to his testicle area, elbow, knees, and lip but refused to go to the hospital.

Officers discovered the assault occurred after Flaig was told to stop rubbing another woman's butt, according to charging documents.

Flaig's police powers have been suspended and he has been placed on paid administrative duties, according to statement from Anne Arundel County Police Department

"These charges are disturbing and we have an obligation as police officers to conduct ourselves in a professional manner on and off-duty," said Anne Arundel County Chief of Police Timothy J. Altomare.

"We will cooperate fully with the Baltimore Police Department as they conduct their investigation. At this time, we cannot comment further because for our agency, this is a confidential personnel matter."

Once in a fender-bender near the Bay Bridge in San Francisco- not some country backwoods town - the officer asked me if I had my seatbelt on as I was tapped, in which I replied, I'm a pilot so absolutely. I only meant my reply to indicate I am safety conscious always with vehicles in motion; he froze dumfounded which is the only reason why I remember it. If I was white and said the same reply, I am sure it would have been not even given a shrug: the weird double standard of expectations by race. Later, I figured, he made the assumption I was coming from San Francisco International, after flying a jet. Wrong.

A large percentage of the population have the value ingrained to not question the intentions or motivations of the police because if you're white, you are unaffected to truly ponder and weigh the gravity of your white privilege which just may get you down, therefore, you don't. This double-standard works well in your favor. The police work for you. Isn't it wonderful that white immigrants to America feel more entitled to the American dream of prosperity than Americans who have contributed to America from the very beginning long before the Declaration of Independence? America would not be what is now- today- without an African contribution in sacrifices made on the battlefields and in cotton and tobacco fields and factories. A book on the subject has been published**, *The Half That's Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*** by Edward Baptist. Being a great nation with a major bipolar disorder concerning race, that only planned on blacks tending fields singing spirituals and

not considering blacks walking city streets when the Constitution was drafted, it therefore has instituted economic and judicial policies systematically inclined to put where millions are safely out of sight in human warehouses, called penitentiaries. Americans were brainwashed into believing other countries are police states and we are free when the truth of the matter is we are too- some Americans enjoy liberties more than others and garner more protection with laws in the books. We like to point fingers about ruthless Siberian gulags when we have variations on a theme here at home. The percentages of men of color in America's prisons compared to white inmates rings alarms less about the crimes of the men and more about the narrowness of economic opportunities blacks and Latinos have and the brazenly unethical judicial systems in America which operate dragnets on identified ethnic groups. There are no arbitrary stop and frisk round-ups on Irish, Italians, Poles, Spanish, Scandinavians, French, British, German-Americans and those of the Jewish Diaspora. There would be a swift and lethal legal blowback if that started so the game is played to go after the most culturally and economically vulnerable in American society which is us of color, much like bullies go after those they can overwhelm and not those who can adequately defend themselves with staggering repercussions.

Why is death rate rising for white, middle-aged Americans?

Ashley Gold BBC News, Washington
4 November 2015

Middle-aged white Americans are seeing rising death rates that have shocked researchers. Why is this happening? While non-whites, younger people and people in other countries are seeing falling death rates, a new study shows the reverse is happening for **white men and women in the US aged 45-54.** Covering the period from 1999 to 2013, the study by Princeton University researchers says it is particularly acute for those without a college education.

"This change reversed decades of progress in mortality and was unique to the United States; no other rich country saw a similar turnaround," the authors wrote of their study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

So what's believed to be behind it?

Suicide

National data sets from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention used in the study show that middle-aged whites are committing suicide at an unrivalled rate.
Suicide rates were reported to be higher in the Southern and Western regions of the US than in the Midwest or the Northeast, where people around them tend to be more highly educated and employed.

"[Increased mortality rates] really do show a growth disparity in health that reflects a growing disparity in wealth," Joshua Sharfstein, a professor of public health at Johns Hopkins University, told the BBC. "It's more than a collection of anecdotes."
But why are whites so much more likely to commit suicide than other demographic groups? Researchers say the answer is complicated - and has a lot to do with culture.
"It is striking that suicide rates are highest in white females and white males. That is a complicated social and cultural phenomenon," Pat Remington, a professor of population health sciences at the University of Wisconsin, told the BBC. "It has to do with a mix of risk factors."

Mr Remington also pointed to the widespread availability of guns and prescription drugs that enable suicide.

"This is not an urban, African-American issue as much as it is a poor, rural, white male issue… Culture comes to play, a culture of not necessarily

treating depression," said Mr Remington. "The rural culture - if it's not broken, don't fix it."

Drug and alcohol abuse

Prescriptions for opioid drugs for pain control in the US have increased greatly since the 1990s. When opioids became harder to obtain through regulations, some people turned to heroin as the US saw rising quality and falling prices for the illicit drug.

"There are no single reasons for this, but the typical cascade is - an individual will obtain a narcotic through a prescription, transition to lower cost drugs like heroin, then eventually have health problems, then have an early death," said Mr Remington.

The New York Times reports that 90% of people who tried heroin in the last decade were white.

Drug addiction in black communities ultimately resulted in mass incarceration, while heroin and prescription drug abuse has been met with a more sympathetic approach, possibly because its victims are white.

The increase in alcohol abuse can be connected to an "underlying epidemic of pain," too, the researchers write.

"The US is suffering a major epidemic of opioids and use disorders," said Mr Sharfstein. "It has obviously gotten to the point where it's affecting overall population health statistics."

"People realise that it's affecting many, many families and all of that adds up. It's the reason why this is such a serious crisis."

Declining mental and physical health

In the study, researchers found increased numbers of declining self-reported health, mental health and ability to work. **Middle-aged whites reported problems with walking a quarter of a mile, climbing 10 steps, standing or sitting for two hours, shopping and socialising - some of which are risk factors for suicide**. People may be working blue-collar jobs which keep them inactive, working odd hours or doing hard physical labour which is taking a toll. Mr Remington said that for much of the study's time period, people were uninsured.

"Forty-five to 54 is an age range where people can struggle. They may be in mid-life, they may not have the means, or health insurance or access to primary care," said Mr Remington. The pattern of mortality decline slowdown is troublingly similar to what happened in the US during the height of the Aids epidemic, the researchers point out.

Financial stress

Financial insecurity weighs heavily on US workers, the researchers point out.
This particular group, without university degrees, is struggling with economic insecurity and lack of sufficient retirement funds, contributing to anxiety and overall loss of well-being.

Growth in earnings has been slow, the researchers note, and unlike Europe, where defined-benefit pensions are common, US pension plans carry stock market risk. Many have not contributed enough to their retirement plans. As the researchers point out, economic productivity slowdown happens in many European countries, but they are not seeing the same drastically increasing mortality rates.

"With the culture in rural communities, when economic conditions [worsen] during recessions, we see almost like clockwork, rates of suicide and self-destructive behaviours going up," said Mr Remington.

Death of US policeman that sparked manhunt ruled suicide
4 November 2015, BBC

The death of an Illinois police officer that set off a massive manhunt in September has been ruled a suicide.

Lt Charles Gliniewicz radioed to say he was chasing three suspects and was later found struck by two gunshots**. Authorities now say that this was a ploy, staged by the officer who had been stealing money from the department's youth programme for years**. Officers from about 50 Chicago-area police departments scoured the area for the three men for days to no avail.

Gliniewicz, a US Army veteran who often went by the nickname "GI Joe", radioed dispatchers to say that he was in a running chase after three suspicious men. When other officers arrived, he was found dead about 50 yards (46m) from his patrol car.

In the wake of the incident, he was heralded as a hero who died while on the job - fuelling debate about the use of force by police.

In October, investigators said that **the 52-year-old officer** had been killed with his own weapon. They arrested three men captured on a home security video system, but all were released.

Gliniewicz was hit by two bullets. The first hit his bullet-proof vest with what an official said was the force of a "sledgehammer". The other punctured his upper chest.

The lead investigator in the matter said that Gliniewicz had been stealing and laundering money from the police department's youth development programme, which he lead. **The investigator said that the stolen money was used for mortgage payments, travel, personal purchases and more.**

The officer's family has dismissed the suggestion of suicide. One of his four children, DJ, said his dad "never once" thought of taking his own life, and noted that his dad was excited for retirement.

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Mass incarceration, like Jim Crow, was born of racial opportunism- an effort by white elites to exploit the racial hostilities resentments, and insecurities of poor and working-class whites. Moreover, racial hostility and racial violence have not altogether disappeared, given that complaints or racial slurs and brutality by the police and prison guards are fairly common. Some scholars and commentators have pointed out that the racial violence once associated with brutal slave masters or the Ku Klux Klan has been replaced, to some extent, by violence perpetrated by the state. Racial violence has been rationalized, legitimated, and channeled through our criminal justice system; it is expressed as police brutality, solitary confinement and the discriminatory and arbitrary imposition of the death penalty.

- Michelle Alexander
  The New Jim Crow

About 6,000 US inmates to be released early
7 October 2015, BBC

Roughly 6,000 federal inmates will be released in the coming weeks in an effort to ease prison crowding and lessen harsh penalties for non-violent offenders, US media report.
The release is the biggest of its kind in US history, the Washington Post reported.
The inmates being released early were all convicted of drug-related charges.
An additional 8,500 inmates will be eligible for release starting in November.

The US Sentencing Commission unanimously approved the reductions to the jail terms of inmates last year. **Up to 46,000 of the nation's about 100,000 drug offenders could qualify for early release under the commission recommendations.**

These 6,000 prisoners are the first wave of early releases. Most of the those released will see about two years trimmed from their original prison terms. "Even with the Sentencing Commission's reductions, drug offenders will have served substantial prison sentences," Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates told the Post.

About one-third of the inmates up for release are foreign citizens. They will be quickly deported, officials said. President Barack Obama's administration has been working to tackle what he sees as a lack of fairness in the system.

The planned releases continue a drive that started in 2013 when US Attorney General Eric Holder dropped mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenders. Many leading Democrats and Republicans now believe that mandatory prison sentences that led to mass incarceration in the US have not been effective**. The US has almost a quarter of the world's prison population - one in every 99 Americans is behind bars.**

"Far too many people have lost years of their lives to draconian sentencing laws born of the failed drug war," Jesselyn McCurdy, a senior legislative counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union told the New York Times. "We are overjoyed that some of the people so wronged will get their freedom back."

However, others are concerned that such a large prisoner release could lead to an uptick in crime in the US. Many US cities have seen homicide rates in increase over the past year and some law enforcement officials worry a surge of ex-convicts could exacerbate that trend.

How maths can get you locked up

By Simon Maybin BBC News
17 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37658374

Criminals in the US can be given computer-generated "risk scores" that may affect their sentences. But are the secret algorithms behind them really making justice fairer?

If you've seen the hit Netflix documentary series Making A Murderer, you'll know the US state of Wisconsin has had its problems delivering fair justice.

Now there's another Wisconsin case that's raised questions about how the US justice system works.
In the early hours of Monday 11 February 2013, two shots were fired at a house in La Crosse, a small city in the state.

A witness said the shots came from a car, which police tracked down and chased through the streets of La Crosse until it ended up in a snow bank. The two people inside ran off on foot, but were found and arrested.
One of them was Eric Loomis, who admitted to driving the car but denied involvement in the shooting.

In court, he was sentenced to six years in prison - and this is where the maths comes in.
In deciding to lock Loomis up, the court noted that he had been identified as an "individual who is at high risk to the community" by something called a Compas assessment.

The acronym - which stands for Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions - is very familiar to Julia Angwin of ProPublica, an independent investigative journalism organisation in the US.

"Compas is basically a questionnaire that is given to criminals when they're arrested," she says. "And they ask a bunch of questions and come up with an assessment of whether you're likely to commit a future crime. And that assessment is given in a score of one to 10."

Angwin says the questions include things like: "Your criminal history, and whether anyone in your family has ever been arrested; whether you live in a crime-ridden neighbourhood; if you have friends who are in a gang; what your work history is; your school history. And then some questions about what is called criminal thinking, so if you agree or disagree with statements like 'it's okay for a hungry person to steal'."

A risk score might be used to decide if someone can be given bail, if they should be sent to prison or given some other kind of sentence, or - once they're in prison - if they should be given parole.

Compas and software like it is used across the US. The thinking is that if you use an algorithm that draws on lots of information about the defendant it will help make decisions less subjective - less liable to human error and bias or racism. For example, the questionnaire doesn't ask about the defendant's race, so that in theory means no decisions influenced by racism.

But how the algorithm gets from the answers to the score out of 10 is kept secret."We don't really know how the score is created out of those questions because the algorithm itself is proprietary," says Angwin. "It's a trade secret. The company doesn't share it."

And she says that makes it difficult for a defendant to dispute their risk score: **"How do you go in and say I'm really an eight or I'm a seven when you can't really tell how it was calculated?"**

It was partly on that basis that Loomis challenged the use of the Compas risk score in his sentencing. But in July the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that if Compas is used properly, it doesn't violate a defendant's rights.

Bad news for Eric Loomis. However, the court also ruled that future use of the risk score should come with a health warning explaining its limitations - for example, that the algorithm behind it is kept secret and that the risk score is based on how people with certain traits tend to behave in general, rather than on the particular person being considered.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court also warned that Compas may give ethnic-minority offenders disproportionately high risk scores - a pretty serious weakness if true, especially given current tensions around policing and race in the US.

The court based this concern partly on an investigation by Angwin and her colleagues at ProPublica into how accurate Compas scores turned out to be in practice. They looked at the risk scores of 7,000 people arrested in one area of Florida over two years and came up with a shocking finding.

"If you look at a black and a white defendant who have the same history, they're both the same age, the same gender, same criminal history and same future history - meaning after they were scored they either went on to do four crimes or two crimes or no crimes, the black defendant is 45% more likely to get a high risk score than the white defendant," says Angwin.

How could the algorithm throw-up racially-biased results if it never asks about race? Angwin says**: "The algorithm asks a lot of questions that can be considered proxies for race."**

For instance: Has anyone in your family been arrested? How many times have you been arrested? "These types of things, **we know because there's so much over-policing of minority communities, are more likely to be true for minorities than for whites.**"

ProPublica's findings - unsurprisingly - have generated lots of debate in the US about the use of risk scores.

Some have disputed ProPublica's analysis. The company behind Compas issued a detailed response in which it unequivocally rejected ProPublica's conclusion that the algorithm results in racial bias.

And three researchers unconnected to Compas have also written a draft paper questioning ProPublica's methods. The lead author was Anthony Flores, an assistant professor in the criminal justice department at California State University, Bakersfield.
He says algorithms are proven to be better predictors of reoffending than judges and that ProPublica misinterpreted what the data showed.

"We found no bias of any kind when we re-analysed their data," Flores says. **He argues ProPublica is guilty of "data torturing" - essentially trying lots of different ways to measure something until they got the finding they wanted. "We didn't necessarily disagree with their findings, we just disagreed with their conclusion.**"

The BBC spoke to a number of statisticians who aren't involved in the row and they broadly agree there are other - arguably more logical - ways of looking at the same data that don't suggest racial bias.

But all sides in this statistical showdown do seem to agree on one thing. If black people in general are more likely to reoffend, then a black defendant is more likely to be given a higher risk score.

So while the algorithm itself may not be racially biased, it is reflecting racial biases in the criminal justice system and society more widely.

Angwin says that's something that deserves deep thought.

"If we're talking about people's freedom, then we have an obligation to get it right," she says.

"I think it's really important to remember that we're looking at math, which is very adjustable. And so we could change it to make sure that it has the outcomes we want it to have. "Do we want to over-penalise black defendants for living in poor neighbourhoods and having what look like to this algorithm higher risk attributes, despite the fact that they themselves might not be risky people? Or are we willing to live with that over-scoring because we think it gives everyone this sense of fair treatment?"

To my utter dismay in the world of commerce, I have met Asian immigrants in my own state who believed that I, a native Californian, could not be competent and successful even with a proven track record of sterling commercial performance. I defied stereotypes. I was managing volumes of trade of what could only be perceived as what whites and Asians could perform, but I was black. Something was weird, if not plain wrong. I was therefore an anomaly to all the programming received that we- African-Americans- are the ones to somehow look out for and should be disparaged, viewed with a jaundiced eye regardless to how smooth transactions were maintained. There are many American whites and whitewashed Asians that find it uncomfortable that blacks may attain higher stratas of prosperity than themselves without taking into consideration all the work and hurdles it required to attain levels of responsibility and success. An education is the cornerstone to achieve prosperity combined with true grit and determination. Unfortunately, too many Asian immigrants arrive in America and bite the bait fed to them that the prosperous face of success must look and reflect white, as this is the

programmed ideal of what looks right; a Dr. Dre rapper looks patently wrong. Being white clearly has a multitude of advantages not just from whites but also from those of color so pleased to assimilate at any cost, compromising thereby subjugating their own rich cultural heritages. The blind pursuit of gaining white acceptance often comes with an asterisk that they steer clear to not painfully acknowledge the quick pricking of the dreamy bubble: "I'm sorry, Ms. Lee, your surname is spelled the same as Robert E., the Confederate general, but you simply are not white when push comes to shove, my dear. Try as you may with all your charm to get along, your long hours, higher education and voiceless muted grievances, you hit the ceiling for promotion. Thank you and please go sit down. Have a bowl of noodles and feel better. If you were white, I would offer you a slice of cake."

Perhaps we can gain a handle on why Asian immigrants are so quick to get snared into America's race traps, quickly choosing sides as if a game is played, and to be so keen to assimilate with our dubious North American values by bleaching themselves so rapidly:

…First of all, we have our conscious attitudes. This is what we choose to believe. These are our stated values, which we use to direct our behaviour deliberately. The apartheid policies of South Africa or the law in the American South (Jim Crow) that made it difficult for African Americans to vote are manifestations of conscious discrimination, and we talk about racism or the fight for civil rights, this is the kind of discrimination that we usually refer to. But the Implicit Association Test (IAT) measures something else. It measures our second level of attitude, our racial attitude on an unconscious level – the immediate, automatic associations that tumble out before we've even had time to think. We don't deliberately choose our unconscious attitudes….we may not even be aware of them. The giant computer that is our unconscious silently crunches all the data it can from the experiences we had, the people we've met, the lessons we've learned, the books we read, the movies we've seen, and so on, and it forms an opinion. That is what is coming out in the IAT.

The disturbing thing about the test is that it shows that our unconscious attitudes may be utterly incompatible with our stated conscious values. As it turns out, for example, of the fifty thousand African Americans who take the Race IAT so far, about half of them, like me, have stronger associations with whites than with blacks. How could we not? We live in North America, where we are surrounded every day by cultural messages linking white with good. "You don't choose to make positive associations with the dominant group," says Mahzarin Banaji, who teaches psychology at Harvard University and is one of the leaders in IAT research. "But you are required to. All around you, that group is being paired with good things. You open the newspaper and you turn on the television, and you can't escape it."

The IAT is more than just as abstract measure of attitudes. It's also a powerful predictor of how we act in certain kinds of spontaneous situations**. If you have a strongly pro-white pattern of associations, for example, there is evidence that will effect the way you behave in the presence of a black person**. It's not going to affect what you'll choose to say or feel or do. In all likelihood you won't be aware that you're behaving any differently than you would around a white person….

- Malcolm Gladwell
  Blink

I encourage readers to make their own personal pros and cons laundry lists by race and to be unswervingly honest. I commend the courage of Starbuck's management this year to take a real risk to start discussions on race in America. I really can't imagine what other global corporate entity would be so bold to do it. Corporations with their shareholders have an eagle eye on profits and people take a bumpy backseat far too often. If there is any care, it comes with a purchase for after sales support, not before. In retrospect it was unsurprising that the race campaign was dealt with a swift backlash primarily because we don't discuss race in America with other races, we just act upon it. We default to what we already know and, conspicuously, wish to not know better. Between caring about the homes of celebrities and moguls that are far beyond financial reach, as compared to caring

about the concerns of fellow humans, the estates always win. Race is not a single can of worms to open up but endless pressurized cargo tanks spewing their contents - who wants to clean that mess up! Give me the latte and save the lecture, Starbucks, thank you! Just keep the djinn in the bottle! You can shred the paper but know what is tucked up in your head. No conversation with a barista is needed but open it up to yourself. See if what you believe is really true and examine if it has been programmed by the constructs of society. You may not like it but be aware of it. 2015 has proven to be railcar in a train wreck coupled with 2014 tragically.

Japan's opposition chooses female, half-Taiwanese leader Renho

By Mariko Oi, BBC News
15 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37315148

When Renho was elected the first female leader for Japan's main opposition Democratic Party on Thursday, she also broke another glass ceiling. She is the first person of mixed descent to hold the position.

Her late father was from Taiwan and her mother is Japanese. In Japan, where only 2%-3% of newborn babies are mixed-race, that is significant. But Renho's appointment has not been without controversy, as she was accused of lying about whether she still had Taiwanese citizenship.

Dual nationality is not allowed in Japan, and anyone born to parents of different nationalities must choose one by the age of 22. She has said she thought her father officially gave up her Taiwanese citizenship on her behalf when she was 17.

She says the process happened at the Taiwanese representative office in Japan and was in Mandarin, which she didn't understand so there was no way for her to confirm it had gone through. It turns out it didn't - the official record in Taiwan has since confirmed that she still has citizenship.

She has since apologised and asked for her Taiwanese citizenship to be revoked, but the controversy is likely to follow her throughout her political career.Her critics say the problem is that she lied about her nationality.

Renho - who goes by only one name - insists it was a mistake not a lie.
But the row has raised the question over whether Japan is ready to contemplate a mixed race leader.

Walking on thin ice

Being mixed-race is still a rarity in Japan with only 3.4% of children born in 2014 having a non-Japanese ethnicity parent.

The "exotic" looks of the "hafu" - the Japanese term for a bi-racial person - are embraced by the entertainment industry, but almost solely if their foreign parent was Caucasian.

"Japanese society and media fetishise half-white complexions," says Morley Robertson, a half-Japanese half-American journalist.

"I definitely have received better treatment over my life than those mixed with non-white parentage."

My own daughter is mixed race, and I have seen her getting compliments about her big eyes and long eyelashes - features she gets from her father, not me. As a teenager growing up in Tokyo, I confess I desperately wanted them too.
But Mr Robertson says having a Western look will only get you so far.
"That adoration can instantly turn into violent prejudice if social codes are violated," he says.

"If you act too Western in a company setting, asserting your views at a meeting when not asked to do so, you can end up being ostracised."
"Those of mixed-race background who 'have it easy' are always walking on thin ice. I have fallen through that ice many times myself," he adds.

Racial order

And if your non-Japanese parent is darker skinned, you are likely to face an even tougher time.

The first mixed-race person to win Miss Universe Japan in 2015, Ariana Miyamoto, remembers being bullied for having darker skin than other children as her father is African American.

This year's Miss World Japan who is half-Indian Priyanka Yoshikawa remembers being treated like "a germ".

"I am almost certain that reactions would have been different, had they both been half-white," says Mr Robertson.

He speculates there is "an ingrained 'racial order' inherited from older generations in Japan, with whites at the top of the pyramid and blacks at the bottom".

While the younger generations are much less biased, stereotypes linger.
"According to this urban mythology, whites are more beautiful and creative, East Asians are second-best looking while proficient in math and science, while blacks are good at athletics and music," he adds.

Japan supremacists?

One ethnic group which tends to receive hatred, especially online, is Korean-Japanese people, most of whom came during Japan's colonial rule, and their descendants.
They have faced discrimination for decades partly because of what their detractors call "special privileges" such as the right to vote and claim benefits without taking on Japanese citizenship.

Many hide their real ethnic backgrounds by using adopted Japanese family names.
Calling a Japanese person "Korean-Japanese" is an insult often flung online, including at myself, especially those seen as overly critical of Japan, or not sufficiently loyal.
"There just aren't enough foreigners or mixed race people in the everyday life of most Japanese," says Mr Robertson, who doesn't believe there is malice in the racial stereotyping.

As for Renho, as the controversy over her citizenship raged on she insisted: "As a politician, I have never acted in a way other than being a Japanese citizen."

'Racist' Thailand skin-whitening advert is withdrawn

08 Jan 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35261748

A Thai cosmetics firm has withdrawn its video advertising a skin-whitening product after it was attacked on social media for being racist.

The advert for 'Snowz' features famous Thai actress Cris Horwang attributing her success to fairer skin. The company behind the product, Seoul Secret, issued a "heartfelt apology", saying it had not meant to offend.

The incident has reignited the debate about attitudes to skin colour in Thailand. Comments about the shade of a person's skin have been commonplace in a country with an abundance of skin-whitening products, although many younger Thais now refuse to accept the stereotypes associated with skin colour.

'Heartfelt apology'

"In my world there is tough competition. If I don't take care of myself, everything I have built, the whiteness I have invested in, could be gone," Cris Horwang warns in the video advert.At that point her skin turns almost black, and a young, and very white, rival appears by her side. She looks down in dismay at her dark complexion and muses "if I was white, I would win".

The advert stirred up a storm of debate online, with many Twitter users critical of the advert itself as well as the decision to withdraw it. One person wrote on a Thai-language forum Pantip.com: "I'm perfectly fine being dark-skinned and now you're saying I've lost? Hello? What?" "Suggesting people with dark skin are losers is definitely racist," wrote another.

Seoul Secret quickly withdrew the advert, although it could still be seen on YouTube on Friday, and offered a swift apology. "What we intended to convey was that self-improvement in terms of personality, appearance, skills, and professionalism is crucial," the firm said.

The BBC's Jonathan Head in Bangkok says that as an advertising slogan it could not have been blunter - ending as it does with "Eternally white, I'm confident".
The abundance of skin-whitening products available in Thailand, and the efforts many Thai women go to shelter from the sun, highlights the obsession with pale skin, our correspondent says.

Two years ago, when Nonthawan "Maeya" Thongleng won the 2014 Miss Thailand World beauty contest, **much comment centred on how dark her skin was compared to typical contestants.** At the time she said she wanted to encourage all other women who felt insecure because of their darker skin. **Darker skin is often associated in Thailand with manual, outdoor labour, and therefore with being "lower class".**

Also much of the urban elite are of ethnic Chinese origin, who tend to have lighter skin than the indigenous people of the Thai countryside. **"This is not a problem that is unique to Thailand. It's a problem that exists all over the world,"** says social critic Lakkana Punwichai.

"The issue also underlines the issue of class in Thailand, where those with darker skin are viewed as the poor from the rural north-east. **We look down on them, on Cambodians, and Indians with darker complexions.**

"However, attitudes are changing as Thai elites start to look down on women who long to be white, the same way some westerners look down on "blonde bimbos"," she said.

What's behind China's 'racist' whitewashing advert?

27 May 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-36394917

A Chinese laundry detergent advertisement is causing widespread outrage online and is being dubbed the most racist commercial to be screened. But racist advertising has form, and not just in China.

A black man walks in and gets 'washed' a different colour

The scene: a young Chinese woman is doing her laundry. In walks a black man, with some paint stains on his face. They look at each other suggestively. She puts a tab of detergent into his mouth....

...and then shoves him into the washing machine.

Hey presto! He emerges a fair-skinned Chinese man.

The lady doing laundry is apparently delighted by this development.

Although the story was not covered widely by Chinese media, there were hundreds of comments on Chinese social media, with some calling the advert "awkward".

One user, @YY_CodingBear, said: "My lord. Do Chinese marketing people not have any racial education?" However, another user said they did not see any problem with the advert.

The owner of the detergent has also commented

"I don't know much about the advertisement," the owner of Qiaobi laundry detergent, who identified himself as Mr Xia, told BBC Chinese's Grace Tsoi. He said he did not realise it was racist until it was pointed out to him: "To be honest, I didn't really pay that much attention to the advertisement." It mirrors an Italian advert for detergent, equally fraught with ethical issues, that does just the opposite - by washing a white man to black to advertise "coloured" laundry powder.

It's not the first time we have seen awkward advertising in China

The Darlie brand of toothpaste is called "black man toothpaste" in China.

Darlie toothpaste used to be known as "Darkie" toothpaste, until it was rebranded. The significance of the name change was lost on many, analysts say. And recently in Hong Kong, an insurance advert showed a man dressed up like a Filipina domestic helper, with a blacked up face. It did not amuse Hong Kong audiences.

Chinese attitudes to race are complicated

A few years ago a well-known Chinese beer brand, Harbin, invited basketball star Shaquille O'Neal to endorse the beverage, presumably to expand into the global market. The US NBA competition is massive in China, and stars like Kobe Bryant are hugely popular, so it shouldn't have been a controversial move.

But on Tianya, one of China's most popular forums, some netizens weren't happy, with some posting overtly racist and discriminatory comments.

Certain posts called for a boycott because it was endorsed by "a black man". Some of the comments touched upon Aids and described Africans as orangutans. However, experts say, that does not mean that Chinese think of themselves as the most superior, **with some saying Caucasians enjoy a higher status in certain quarters. There is a history of cultural bias against people of dark skin.**

But we cannot dismiss it as just a racist place

Barry Sautman, a political scientist at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, believes it shows the particular problems China has dealing with portrayals of race. "It is not a question of Chinese not having anti-racist consciousness. They do."

In 2008, a World Public Opinion poll about government action to prevent racial discrimination interviewed people from 16 countries. China came second - 90% of Chinese respondents said racial equality is important.

The small number of Africans living in China does not help. According to the latest census, only 600,000 foreigners are living in China, a small portion of them black. So the vast majority of the 1.3bn population has no experience interacting with black people.

China's government is trying to change attitudes towards Africans. State media have promoted several stories about warming China-Africa relations, and lauded African people who have successfully learned Chinese.

The 'white ideal' is also a pan-Asian phenomenon

Controversial whitening adverts are part of the beauty scene right across Asia.
In the Philippines, once colonised by Spain, white skin is associated with mixed ancestry. Annual beauty polls are conducted to rank the best whitening soaps, treatments and lotions.

In Thailand a "racist" skin-whitening ad was withdrawn earlier this year after being condemned as racist.

And racist advertising has a long and global pedigree

Of course overtly racist advertising has been found in Britain and the US as well British and US advertisements for Pears Soap dating from the early 19th Century pushed the racist stereotype of black skin as dirty and white as somehow pure and desirable.

Reporting by the BBC's Grace Tsoi, Vincent Ni, Heather Chen and Kerry Allen.

Years ago when I started in wine sales after my career in chips, I was employed part-time with a wine promotions contractor to do in-store sales. This was completely foreign to everything I used to do which was refreshing yet also outside of my milieu, I admit. However, I was better with it than I could have imagined, do in large part, by reducing client anxiety about world wines and their best pairings with dishes. The twist was I could sell but also have some fun too. I applied myself with learning about wine and was pleased to pass the information along. I never had any pretense to be a sommelier but to focus on what I prefer which is less ambitious and intriguing: loading containers successfully to the benefit of all parties on both sides

of the ocean. With my retail learning curve, I wanted to know first-hand how the public makes their purchasing decisions: labels, price points, countries; gender, age and race. I naturally developed my own style to initiate conversations to get prospective clients interested in the promoted wines and to get an idea of what motivated them to purchase exactly what wines. Usually if you can get a laugh or a giggle from somebody they are perhaps more at ease and willing to engage you in a conversation which leads them to being amenable to trying new wines. Informative, assertive yet friendly in a Mr. Rodger's Halifax Cardigan sweater is a lot better than Staten Island pin-striped double-breasted Fedora Tommy Gun up-against-the-wall gangster coercion. Admittedly not as much drama involved either. It's not a good strategy, I deduced, to selling wine to the public like it was as serious or demanding as tacitly scratching temple for tax calculations as though that act of civic humility would somehow reduce exposure.

I also figured out the average person could relate to wine at their own experiences in the real world. They did not want to hear about green pepper, anise, cat's pee, rum-soaked tobacco, petrol and orange rind, Patagonian pine needles or, of course, burnt Latvian blackberry jam nor Westphalian lemon curd infused with ripe Kolkata peppercorns. A rap like that reeks of snobbery and impedes the function of the moment: to sell. This was not an exercise to land a part in some pretentious British novella. Therefore, I would put the wines into associated categories that the purchasing public could understand: Tercel, Corolla, Camry, Lexus; minesweeper, frigate, destroyer, cruiser, battleship, aircraft carrier. Your husband driving you crazy – this; tired of the other women gossiping at work- that; just trying to keep your sanity through the week – this; finally the weekend arrived and you deserve it – that.; that's good for Sunday but do better since it will be your anniversary- this; your mother-in-law deplores you (and the holes in your favorite T-shirt from high school riding high and exposing your cobwebbed navel) and you have to go her house this Sunday with your salty fingered big bag Fritos munching & belching wife who you bought Dr. Phil's latest diet book that went unopened and dusty since her birthday because it proved convenient to place Diet Coke cans on top AND her other

son-in-law is a Sr. VP at Oracle that shoots a 76 at Pebble Beach who married your wife's sister that formerly modeled bikinis in Sports Illustrated that earned a masters in psychology at Santa Barbara and now occupies herself with yoga and meditation classes with her cut abs and honeyed tanned complexion with bright blossoming teenage nieces as compared to that grungy grunting bottle breaking mischievous paragon of pre-incarceration of a son I see - this, you sorry curmudgeon. Oh, your wife filed papers last week – none…. because you need a brandy, a double at that.

Cases upon cases were sold and few knew how I could sell so much so quickly without a single sample taste. Often at a later date, people I simply could not remember just as much as people at an airport security line, I would be told that the event was a success and they appreciated my recommendations. I realized that clients needed to be relieved that someone could hold the lamp to show the way and let them not be burdened. For active retail sales, the power of suggestion is not to be disparaged. Therefore, to initiate the dialog I would brazenly hold a bottle to my face with a contrived happy face (to the chagrin of my family and friends when I demonstrated my antics for my own traveling weekend wine floor show) that would always illicit a response. A response: most often positive but not always, children. So listen and do so well.

Mixing it up, I would stand like a stone next to the display table and to my utter selfish amusement delight in watching how people would just naturally come closer assuming I must be a mannequin next to the wine display table then rock the bottle I was holding a la San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. Sometimes they would jolt and then rear back their heads and laugh because they knew it was their false perception that I was a display and what a shock! I was in their view the entire time as they were strolling with cart in hand and they believed what they wanted to believe. Professor Fridell's confession is refreshing because of the X-Y axis fix she admits – W&W - for those that would go to management in the front and lodge a sincere and heartfelt complaint which, as it were, they were unknowingly always

ticking the same boxes. Each whistle blower believed they must be the first and only to ring the bell of the menace: 55+, women and white. Younger white women would laugh, all males of all ages and flavors, all women of color regardless of age. Speaking Spanish I would sell to many Latinos who were put at ease that myself as a non-Hispanic could approach them in their native tongue respectfully. I was never rude, impolite, insolent, none of the above, ever. Yes guilty, however, of being black and unorthodox in sales methodology for the venue. The implicit bias of middle-aged white women was clearly identified and the general manager, with a telling grin and thin smirk, would walk over to advise me by protocol even though they all knew who I was and there were no secrets to my actions whenever I was on the floor, would advise that a client complained. Oh, dear! No dessert tonight!

The underlying fun was I and the managers knew without any words between us, as it would have been politically incorrect and in poor form to breach the ugly subject of race in that sacred bastion of commerce, that after a few times we all knew exactly what similar characteristics were of the persons who were not pleased and pulled out the yellow warning card. The graying-haired white women were doing their duty to tell management of a recognized problem on the floor which needed to be abated immediately! This was not just a change-of-age post-menopausal anxiety concern, this alarm had a distinctive *blackmen-o-pausal* ring to it. This was just the general eastside-crazy-impoverished-aging high school dropout-Nat Turner's revenge-swinging-a-bottle-in-hand-unhinged-in-Aisle-4- with a kettle weight alert. Danger Will Robinson! Danger! That kind of alarm warrants attention, a bit too much, as we shall see.

My research suggests that, although many people remain unprejudiced throughout their lives, older adults have a tendency to be more prejudiced than their younger counterparts.

Psychologists used to believe that greater prejudice among older adults was due to the fact that older people grew up in less egalitarian times. In contrast to this view, we have

gathered evidence that normal changes to the brain in late adulthood can lead to greater prejudice among older adults.

The frontal lobes are the last part of the brain to develop as we progress through childhood and adolescence, and the first part of the brain to atrophy as we age. Atrophy of the frontal lobes does not diminish intelligence, but it degrades brain areas responsible for inhibiting irrelevant or inappropriate thoughts. Research suggests that this is why older adults have greater difficulty finding the word they're looking for - and why there is a greater likelihood of them voicing ideas they would have previously suppressed.

Famous people are at a disadvantage when their frontal lobes start to shrink, as many of their utterances are part of the public record. But disinhibition is also costly for people outside the public eye. When I was teaching at Williams College in Massachusetts, an African-American student told me how her white grandfather had recently started referring to her as his "little nigger grandchild". She was shocked and hurt by this, and couldn't understand why her grandfather would say such a thing when she knew he loved her and was still mentally alert. The consequences of his disinhibited words were substantial, although he was creating friction only with family and friends.

In our research we have found evidence of a variety of problems of this kind. For example, older adults in our experiments are more likely than younger adults to rely on stereotypes and they have more difficulty than younger adults suppressing their stereotypic thoughts. But it doesn't stop there - we find that older adults are more likely to be socially insensitive across a variety of domains. Furthermore, all of these effects only emerge among older adults who show signs of poor frontal lobe functioning.

There are two ways of interpreting the disinhibited expressions of older adults. Perhaps such statements reveal people's true personality, finally emerging now that they can no longer suppress their beliefs? In other words, strip away the political correctness enabled by the frontal lobes, and you learn what my student's grandfather had really been thinking all these years.

…. Our research indicates that older adults simply have greater difficulty suppressing prejudices than younger adults do…people who find themselves becoming less tolerant or more prejudiced can be quite unsettled by the shift in their own attitudes - a change that can affect friendships and their position in society.

- William von Hippel is Professor of Psychology
University of Queensland, Australia.

There were no "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" or "I Can't Breathe" from Tiger. He earned the distinction of having one of the foulest mouths while playing his game but can't find the gumption to rattle off any circumspect opinions about the legacy of racism which has been a part of the world of legendary country club discriminatory golf in parallel to the chaos in the streets or with wicked police killings a week after Rome burning on April 28th:

The 14-time major champion, 39, does get more airtime than any other golfer, but that is no excuse as far as another disgruntled complainant is concerned, who wrote: "When watching a sports program we should be free from vile, insulting assaults."

These three days have been brutal on me. It's tough," said Woods, 39. "It's tough. Obviously it does affect me. On top of that, this three-day window from 3-5 May is always really hard. I haven't slept."

Did somebody hopefully get Tiger a cinnamon and clove scented alpaca-stuffed teddy bear to cuddle with? Did he get an Estonian cut glass filled with warmed organic milk sourced from a Sonoma seaside farm friend of Alice Waters of Chez Panisse fame, with homemade gingerbread and soursop cookies flown in from the Blue Mountains of Jamaica? I hope so because champions need their rest for the right reasons. He didn't lose any rest over the constant barrage of white men with

badges killing black men indiscriminately which red lined the pressure gauges in the volcano which erupted the magma in Baltimore, the trigger being a severed spine. Illegal choke-holding. Eight shots in the back while you are running away then placing a Taser next to the body then claiming you were threatened and needed to use fatal force. The riots were not about just one single event but a chain of events that marched by increasing the heat in the US. That's American justice and that's their problem, not his. Tiger's problem was the pretense of not sleeping but figuring out what who could be his best cold blond comeback. Riotous smoke is something you fly over in your jet and distance yourself quickly to have lunch on your yacht. It's inconvenient and easy to turn off and pretend you're so different.

Sorry Tiger, your definition of brutal is at odds with black men regardless of how many European or Asian chromosomes are in your DNA. I'm tolerant but even I have to draw a line and I am taking you to task. I hope you never break Jack Nicklaus' record of most majors won- you don't deserve it, you spineless always wishing-to-be-accepted hardwood lump charcoal BBQ n' fermented Squid Brand fish sauce remora! You're both a champion and sucker! The only way you could redeem yourself is play your game and say nothing but write some heavy checks to legitimate organizations that actually have dedicated attorneys to fight for real justice. Brutal is getting your backside shot at, held down and beaten without any mercy by a legally sanctioned corrupted discriminatory economic and legal system designed to isolate and disenfranchise your kind and then remark with solemn disingenuous dismay that all of you can't be trusted nor understood to have so much malice and contempt for the system. The concept is akin to a warden and guards providing the condemned a truckload of rot gut booze next to a dribbling corroded water tap with one bent tin cup and then pointing fingers as proof of why the incarcerated deserve more austerity and ill-treatment because they are treated fairly with open choices as they fight and maim each other in the corral, the fishbowl of observation. If there is integrity of any institution, public or private, then only can the doors open for respect of those institutions to not only blossom but to become

rooted. Respect is earned and law enforcement has proven to be reckless, dangerous and predatory not from testimony but from video recordings.

Serena Williams vows: 'I won't be silent' on police violence

28 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37491889

Serena Williams has voiced her fears about police violence, writing on Facebook: "I won't be silent."

The US tennis star posted that she found herself feeling wary of law enforcement during a recent journey with her teenage nephew. Williams said that when they drove by a patrol car she remembered a woman whose boyfriend was fatally shot by police.

She is the latest athlete to speak out about friction between law enforcement and the black community in the US.

(Tiger…Tiger…no growl….WHERE ARE YOU?.....Tiger…Cat got your tongue?)

In Tuesday's Facebook post, Williams, 35, wrote that she had asked her 18-year-old nephew to drive her somewhere so she could work during the journey.
She said that when she saw a police car she "remembered that horrible video of the woman in the car when a cop shot her boyfriend". "All of this went through my mind in a matter of seconds," she added Williams was apparently referring to the 6 July fatal shooting of Philando Castile, whose girlfriend live-streamed the confrontation with police in St Paul, Minnesota.

The Grand Slam champ said she checked her nephew was not speeding so they would not get pulled over, and then regretted not having driven herself.

"I would never forgive myself if something happened to my nephew," Williams wrote. "He's so innocent. So were all 'the others.'"

"I am a total believer that not 'everyone' is bad. It is just the ones that are ignorant, afraid, uneducated, and insensitive that is affecting millions and millions of lives." Williams quoted Martin Luther King Jr, writing: "There comes a time when silence is betrayal."

She added: "I Won't Be Silent".

Williams spoke out amid a wave of anti-police brutality sporting protests in the US, triggered after San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the national anthem.

Some 214 black people have been killed by US police this year out of a total of 821 people, according to Black Lives Matter monitoring group, Mapping Police Violence.

June 6th 2015 was a blue sky spring Saturday with life in all its forms enjoying the warmth and the sunshine. Good news happened on this day, and as they say, when it rains it pours:

Serena Williams won a dramatic French Open final against Czech 13th seed Lucie Safarova to claim her 20th Grand Slam title…The 33-year-old becomes the third player - male or female - to win 20 major singles titles…Victory at Wimbledon in July would see Williams hold all four major titles at once, having managed the feat already in 2003.

American Pharoah has become the first horse to win the US Triple Crown since 1978. The three-year-old added Saturday's Belmont Stakes in New York to earlier wins in the

Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes, emulating a feat last achieved by Affirmed 37 years ago.

Cleopatra's mother was 'African'
16 March 2009, BBC

Cleopatra, the last Egyptian Pharaoh, renowned for her beauty, was part African, says a BBC team which believes it has found her sister's tomb.

Queen Cleopatra was a descendant of Ptolemy, the Macedonian general who ruled Egypt after Alexander the Great. But remains of the queen's sister Princess Arsinoe, found in Ephesus, Turkey, indicate that her mother had an "African" skeleton.

Experts have described the results as "a real sensation." The discovery was made by Hilke Thuer of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

"It is unique in the life of an archaeologist to find the tomb and the skeleton of a member of Ptolemaic dynasty," she said. "That Arsinoe had an African mother is a real sensation which leads to a new insight on Cleopatra's family and the relationship of the sisters Cleopatra and Arsinoe."

They lived at a turbulent time when the Roman Empire was extending its power across the Mediterranean.

Cleopatra established alliances with the Roman leader Julius Caesar and, after his assassination, with his political supporter, General Mark Antony, to whom she was married.

"Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony - they are all iconic figures from history," said archaeologist Neil Oliver who presents the BBC documentary…..

Cleopatra VII was the last ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty, ruling Egypt from 51 BC - 30 BC. She is celebrated for her beauty and her love affairs with the Roman warlords Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. .."That Arsinoe had an African mother is a real sensation which leads to a new insight on Cleopatra's family and the relationship of the sisters Cleopatra and Arsinoe.

Scientists identify skeleton of Cleopatra's murdered sister for BBC One
21 June 2014, BBC

Combining state-of-the-art facial reconstruction and forensic techniques with anthropological and architectural analysis of the tomb, experts are now convinced that this is the skeleton of Cleopatra's sister Princess Arsinoe, murdered by her Roman lover Mark Antony on Cleopatra's orders.

For 2,000 years the story of Cleopatra's murderous commands have been the subject of endless speculation. By comparing the writings of Roman historian Cassius Dio and today's forensic evidence, the team now believes that the story is indeed true – and they have the skeleton to prove it.

Until now, many historians have dismissed Cassius Dio's claims as Roman propaganda. The teams behind the discovery believe they can now prove this version of events beyond reasonable doubt.

Furthermore, studies of the shape of her reconstructed skull also point to African lineage which would mean, as her sister, Cleopatra was also part-African. Until now, the royal Ptolemaic family lineage was thought to be of Greek/Caucasian extraction.

Before the arrival of Alexander the Great & Co.. with the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Pharoahs could not have had the European ideal of beauty and fair complexion as sold in the movies with Elizabeth Taylor. For many centuries Pharoahs were undeniably of East African descent therefore I was rooting for

American Pharoah simply by the amalgamated name of American & a ruling African. I could relate to the horse by being a product of both continents genetically and geographically. Cleopatra is now widely believed to have had a darker complexion than long assumed, which incidentally, with an African mother and not Greek, makes plain sense.

What is a point to ponder is how steadfast Europeans for centuries were to categorically believe Cleopatra must have been of only Greek ancestry and bent on cherry-picking facts and disparaging others about Cleopatra from Cassius Dio, but gratefully indebted through posterity on his many other accounts of the Roman Empire unchallenged:

Dio attempted to emulate Thucydides in his writing style. Dio's style, where there appears to be no corruption of the text, is generally clear though full of Latinisms. **Dio's writing was underpinned by a set of personal circumstances whereby he was able to observe significant events of the Empire in the first person, or had direct contact with the key figures who were involved.**

Dio published a history of Rome in 80 volumes, beginning with the legendary arrival of Aeneas in Italy; the volumes then documented the subsequent founding of Rome (753 BC), the formation of the Republic (509 BC), and the creation of the Empire (31 BC), up until AD 229. The entire period covered by Dio's work is approximately 1,400 years. **Of the 80 books, written over 22 years, many survive into the modern age, intact, or as fragments, providing modern scholars with a detailed perspective on Roman history.**

-Wikipedia

A jury in Los Angeles has convicted a female police officer of assault for repeatedly kicking a handcuffed woman who died soon afterwards… The case centred on a video recording, showing O'Callaghan hitting 35-year-old Alesia Thomas in the throat, abdomen and groin during the arrest in 2012… The incident was caught on video by a dashboard camera in a police car… The paper said that during the first five months of this year, 385 people - more than two a day - were killed… The number of black people was disproportionately high among the victims, especially unarmed ones.

Former world number one Tiger Woods suffered his worst professional round with a 13-over-par 85 on day three of the Memorial Tournament in Ohio…Woods has spent a record 683 combined weeks as world number one and was still top of the rankings as recently as May last year…Needing a par at the last to avoid his worst professional round, Woods drove into the water, saw a chip for his fourth shot roll back further away than when he started and his fifth was miscued into a greenside bunker.

Dollars should not be the impetus to shut Tiger up according to his financial advisors. I didn't expect him to be Malcolm X but there he was in his selfish way lamenting as though we malt vinegar & Sriracha fish-and-chips commoners should honestly care about his lack of sleep over the loss of Lindsey. I have a candid disregard for anyone of African heritage who flirts with or jumps deeply in the paint can to be whitewashed when our forefathers and current brothers suffer indelibly the consequences of systemic racism in its multiplicity of applications with employment, housing, economic opportunity and legal double-standards. Tiger can miss the damned putt and let the chalk white guy sink it who has no concept of experiencing discrimination and terminal disenfranchisement win. Let the Augusta country club type who foments inequality win. He is the honest-to-his-class white guy that I both deplore and admire like the Koch brothers for being true to themselves. Honesty is the best policy and he doesn't have a pretense to wear a face of camaraderie with us all.

"Yondah, massah," Hark said. He pointed to the shed several yards away, directly at the side of the shop, where the cider barrels lay in a moist and dusty rank in the shadows past the open door. "Red bar'l, massah. Dat's de bar'l fo' a gennleman, massah." When the desire to play the obsequious coon came over him, Hark's voice became so plump and sweet that is was downtright unctuous. "Marse Joe, he save dat red bar'l for de fines' gennlemens."

"Bother the cider," Cobb said, "where's the brandy?"

" Brandy in de bottles on de shelf," said Hark. He began to scramble to his feet. "I fix de brandy fo' you, massah." But again Cobb motioned him back with a brisk wave of his hand. "Go on, go on," he said. The voice was not pleasant, neither was it unkindly; it had remained rather a distant, abstracted quality, yet somehow it remained tinged with pain as if the mind which controlled it struggled with a preoccupying disquiet. He was abrupt, aloof, but there was nothing one might call arrogant about him. Nontheless, something about the man offended me, filled me with the sharpest displeasure, and it wasn't until he limped unsteadily past us through the crackling brown patch of weeds toward the cider press, saying not another word, that I realized that it wasn't the man himself who annoyed me so much as it was Hark's manner in his presence- the unspeakable bootlicking Sambo, all giggles and smirks and oily, sniveling servility. Hark had slit open a rabbit. The body was still warm (on Saturdays I often collected my game in the afternoon), and Hark was holding it aloft by the ears to catch the blood, which we saved to bind stews. I can recall my sudden fury as we crouched there, as I looked up at Hark, at the bland, serene glistening black face with its wide brow and the grave, beautiful prominence of its cheekbones. With dumb absorption he was gazing at the stream of crimson blood flowing into the pan he held below. He had the face one might imagine to be the face of an African chieftain- soldierly, fearless, scary, and resplendent in its bold symmetry- yet there was something wrong with the eyes, and the eyes, or at least the expression they often took on, as now, reduced the face to a kind of harmless, dull, malleable docility. They were the eyes of a child, trustful and dependent, soft doe's eyes mossed over with a kind of furtive, fearful glaze, and as I looked at them now- the

womanish eyes in the massive, sovereign face mooning dumbly at the rabbit's blood- I was seized by rage. I heard Cobb fumbling around in the cider press, clinking and clattering. We were out of earshot. "Black toadeater," I said. "Snivelin' black toadeatin' white man's bootlickin' scum! You Hark! Black scum!"

Hark's soft eyes rolled toward me, trusting yet fearful. "How come.." began in an abrupt startled voice.

"Hush your face, man!" I said;. I was furious. I wanted to let him have the back of my hand flush in the mouth. "Just hush, man!" I began to mimic him, hoarsely, beneath my breath. " 'Red bar'l, massah! Dat's de bar'l wid de gennlemen's cidah! I fix de brandy fo' you, massah!' How come you make with that kind of talk, bootlickin' nigger suckup? It was enough to make me plain ordinary sick!"

Hark's expression grew hurt, downcast; he moped disconsolately at the ground, saying nothing but moving his lips in a moist, muttering, abstracted way as if filled with hopeless self-recrimination. "Can't you see, miserable nigger?" I persisted, boring in hard. "Can't you see the difference? The difference between betwixt plain politeness and bootlickin'? He didn't even say, 'Get me a drink.' He said just, 'Where the press?' A question, that's all. And there you is, already: scramblin' and scroungin' like a bitch pup, massah this and massah that! You enough to make a man chuck up his dinner!" Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Ashamed suddenly, I calmed myself. Hark was a vision of dejection. More gently I said: "You just got to learn, man. You got to learn the difference. I don't mean you got to risk a beatin'. I don't mean you got to be uppity and smart. But they is some kind of limit. And you ain't a man when you act like that. You ain't a man, you is a fool! And you do this all the time, over and over again,with Travis and Miss Maria and Lord help you even with them two kids. You don't learn nothin.' You a fool! As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. You a fool, Hark. How'm I goin' to teach you?"

Hark made no reply, only crouched there muttering in his hurt and dejection. I was seldom angry at Hark, but my anger when it had the power to grieve him. Loving him as I did, I often reproved myself for my outbursts and for the misery they caused him, but in certain ways he was like a splendid dog, a young, beautiful, heedless, spirited dog who had, nonetheless, to be trained to behave with dignity.

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

Former world number one Tiger Woods carded his best round of the year with a four-under-par 66 on the first day of The Greenbrier Classic.

The 39-year-old has also recorded three scores in the 80s in his last six tournaments and last month shot the worst round of his professional career with a 13-over-par 85 at the Memorial Tournament in Ohio.

But on Thursday, Woods broke 70 for just the third time his year and the first time since the third round of the Masters in April.

"I felt like I wasn't that far away," said Woods. "I know people think I'm crazy for saying that, but I just felt like I wasn't that far. I just had to make a couple little tweaks, and I felt like I pulled that off."

Boo! BOO! BOO!

Funny, but I instinctively believe that King James and I wouldn't mix well socially nor would he even care or lose sleep; at least LeBron can meet the Crown Prince and Duchess with a T-shirt as large as a Yankee clipper tobacco n' rum sailing ship and not cower to the demands of being polite or causing royal offense. I admired him and other players both black and even white who addressed the issue and not pretend that everything is okay whilst smoldering black smoke rises, confirms it is

not. We sorely need reconciliation between the races and law enforcement with especially blacks. America has and continues to have a sickening legacy with race.

If Africans were so bad why invest and import our ancestors in the millions as objects of commerce for a few hundred years? Dummies only needed a few short years to figure out that eventually this commercial experiment needed to be iced. It wasn't as though importing African slaves was like a momentary fad that failed after a few years like the idiocy of America's dalliance with Prohibition which made gangsters wealthy or China's Cultural Revolution where millions died as perhaps all the Africans imported to America over the span of approximately ten years from state sponsored vandalism, overwork and famines. This was China's illegitimate war on its own citizens which was and today remains the most populated on the planet. I don't believe you can hardly find any former members of the Red Guard as they are now aged and dying and have a collective amnesia to their past.

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Cambodians are naturally attracted to extremes (which is no doubt why Kropotkin's dictum, **that the French Revolution should not have stopped halfway, influenced Pol in his student days in Paris**). Even Mao had faltered, by Khmer Rouge standards, by allowing the need for wages, for knowledge and family life. The Cambodian communists would go where none had gone before. **'Zero for him, zero for you – that is communism,'** Khieu Samphan had said. The idea that property is baneful is rooted in Buddhist creation myth, which depicts a golden age, when rice grew in abundance and men ate as they wished, before greed for private possessions perverted the primeval commonwealth. When the French introduced land rights, a century earlier, Prince Yukanthor commented: 'You have established property, and you have created the poor.'

The Standing Committee had decreed one free day in each ten-day week – a system copied from the French Revolution – and up to fifteen days' holiday a year. 'There's not enough food for people to work all the time,' Pol explained. 'If a person doesn't rest, he

gets ill. It is a strategic objective to increase the strength of the people. Therefore, leisure should be considered fundamental.' But in practice the weekly day off, when granted, was devoted to political meetings and the proposed annual holiday was never implemented.

By the winter of 1975, if not sooner, the mass of Cambodian population had become, in the eyes of the leadership, digits on a national balance sheet. It was implicit in the menacing couplet which the cadres used when a person was about to be killed; 'To keep you is no profit, to destroy you is no loss.' A villager remembered it as a time when 'a person's worth was measured in how many cubic yards he could move'. Like they oxen they were supposed to emulate, people were a commodity to be fed, watered, housed and worked. When they were executed, their clothes were removed by the soldiers and hand on to others to wear; their corpses were often buried beside fields, in the belief that the rotting flesh would fertilize the soil. Those who died in village clinics were cremated and the bone ash used for phosphate. As in death, so also in birth: when women still menstruated, cadres noted the dates of their periods so that their husbands might be brought to sleep with them at the time they were most likely to be fecund, to swell the population.

In practice, local cadres sometimes simplified their own lives by singling out such people for punishment, not because of anything they had done but because they were seen as more likely than other to deviate from Khmer Rouge norms, in the same way as anyone wearing spectacles was regarded as bourgeois or an intellectual or both and hence untrustworthy. The Issarak, twenty-five years earlier, had acted in much the same way. They too had killed people who wore glasses. It was the right to difference that was at stake. The Chinese suffered disproportionately because they found it harder than other to adjust to peasant life.

Drear and joyless it was, certainly. But that was what its leaders intended. Theravada Buddhism taught that nirvana, the realm of selflessness, could be attained only when the 'thirst for existence', made up of worldly and emotional attachments, had been totally extinguished. Under Pol's rule, love, sorrow, anger, passion and all the other feelings that make up everyday life were seen as emanations of individualism to be banished for the

collective good. In some parts of the country, it was forbidden even to laugh or sing. In pursuit of illumination, the people had to suffer.

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

With a culture so refined and as rich in the arts as China, it hard to imagine all these years later, who would defend the abysmal theatrical productions from the Cultural Revolution. It's like massive displays of bad theatre that was spared no expense which in essence is comical because it was taken so seriously. All the flags, waving banners and slogans, i.e. "Lions in Peace, Deer in War," with capped women soldiers singing with bayoneted rifles, capitalists and landlords throwing money on the ground to buy their way out of trouble with the masses- when they would now cause riots for people diving to pick the bills up- it was all a Potemkin village of pulp fiction fronting as art when it nothing more than state sponsored propaganda. With the emergence of Deng slogans changed to be more pragmatic perhaps with: "Less red flags, more food; Money buys red wine and spoonfuls of golden honey."

At the end of his long life, the Chairman was lucid enough to realize that the new world the Cambodians dreamed of would prove to be a mirage. China had tried that route already. It too had considered doing without money, but rejected the idea as impractical. The temporary closing of schools and universities during the Cultural Revolution had brought as many problems as it had solved. **Even Mao himself now accepted that the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s – a Utopian mass movement which was intended to allow China to overtake Britain and America in economic output and proceed directly to communism, but instead resulted in 20 million deaths from starvation- had been a disaster.** Yet when later a frail Zhou Enlai, in hospital suffering from cancer, tried to caution Khieu Samphan that the road to socialism was long and Cambodia should not repeat China's errors, he drew only a non-committal smile.

From then on, the two Parties rarely discussed ideological matters, and when they did they failed to agree.

Foreign assistance was not completely ruled out, but it was seen as intrinsically pernicious. **Already as a student in Paris, Pol had written that '(he) who seeks aid from France will have to pay tribute to France'**. Sihanouk (Cambodia's monarch) experience with the Americans had confirmed that belief. 'If we go out and beg for help we would certainly obtain some,' he told the Standing Committee, 'but this would affect our political line.'

In the end it was *realpolitik*, far more than ideological affinity, which brought China and Cambodia together.

The relationship was pragmatic. China offered Cambodia large-scale economic aid, technical training, military supplies and a market for its meager exports; **Cambodia provided a secure forward base for China's strategy to contain Vietnam.**

Since 1965, China had viewed its relationship with Vietnam through the prism of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Beijing was still Hanoi's biggest source of military aid. But Mao had reacted sharply against Le Duan's decision, apparently taken without Ho Chi Minh's knowledge, to open peace talks in Paris, seeing it as a step towards a US-Soviet condominium. Vietnam already dominated Laos. In Zhou Enlai's judgment, a pro-American regime in Phnom Penh – especially one led by Lon Nol, whom he had met and instinctively distrusted- would sooner or later collapse, opening the way for Vietnamese, and in a worst case, Soviet, hegemony over the whole of Indochina.

This is not to downplay the importance of the beliefs they shared: the primacy of men over machines; the exaltation of the human will (in China) and the 'revolutionary consciousness' (in Cambodia); the pre-eminence of ideology over learning (being 'red' rather than 'expert'); the strategy of using the countryside to surround the city and the

need to eliminate the differences between them; the concern to bridge the gulf between mental and manual labor; and the view that revisionism, in the shape of bourgeois thought, grew spontaneously within the communist movement itself.

Mao was entranced by Pol's boldness in emptying the cities. That autumn he asked Le Duan whether Vietnam could do the same. When the Vietnamese leader shook his head, Mao paused for a moment and then agreed: 'No. We couldn't do it either."

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

We can find empathy for the Nixon's that they had to sit through smiling and admiring that sludge when it was patently painful to endure the entertainment when they came to Beijing to break Cold War ice. I think I would have used jet lag as an excuse to fall asleep to escape the spectacle somehow. Pardon me. Pat was prayin' under her breath to see Oklahoma! one more time that night with a juicy cheeseburger with Idaho-grown fries. Just like war criminals, I suspect- and I could be wrong but I will trust my intuition- that those that participated with red on their hands have long ago washed it off and claim now in their advanced years it was so long ago and to forget the past, the same past in which futures are built upon.

Long after being kicked out the White House by the liberal media who unrightfully and unpatriotically were attacking her well-meaning husband, who correlated that raising bombing rates in Southeast Asia puffed-up poll numbers at home in his favor, did she have a single bite of a sickly sweet-n-sour sauce dripping greasy spring roll in a lemon chiffon and orange trimmed muumuu in Honolulu. She had the commiserate pleasure to remind the host it was almost as good as she had back in Red China, to remind the guests she is the First Lady and knew more than just Newport Beach and La Jolla whilst her husband was writing his memoirs in New York, grumbling about being treated by the press so unfairly.

A fortuitous decision Chairman Mao made was to eternally elect to visit that Summer Palace in the sky in '76 so those under his long shadow would be rounded up and ostracized to give birth and eventually rise with Deng to a refreshing change of course with market incentives, with daunting ramifications of China's power in the present, could be made while preserving the awe of the victorious people's choice in perpetuity and most importantly, the reigning hypocrisy of a political body bereft of true equality in unabashed disharmony with its own propaganda that could be saved- not fall and collapse into a corpse to buried and vomited upon with cascading waves of ill-repute. Contrary to public opinion in the West, Mao's heralded victory of '49 had less to do with gold nuggets being discovered at Sutter's Mill in Sacramento in Northern California in '49, but about shrewd tenacious generalship stretching the adversary's supply lines with far less firepower just as much in juxtaposition to the grander and arrogant incompetence in the field and endemic corruption under the Generallisimo Chiang Kai-shek who was handsomely supplied with Western/ American artillery and trucks amongst other exigencies. Proof is he was routed and captured in battle to be later humbly returned in his less than illustrious re-written career to his illustrious Wellesley educated wife, coincidentally the same alma mater as H. R. Clinton. She was smarter than him as is often the case with big men. If performance is of value, I consider that he is no 'mo: he should have lost the suffix 'mo with the general title. He wasn't exactly the shadow of Napoleon or Mehmed II the Conqueror like he thought he was. However, many of the best preservations of art in China are now located in Taiwan because he and his cunning avaricious wife knew that the finer things are worth looting, just like the Bank of China, when you need to pick up a few dusty furnishings from the Tang dynasty and find a new home on a safe haven of your very own.

In China the people's plight hardly changed after the proclamation of the Republic by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1911. His high minded but softly-softly approach to the eradication of opium achieved nothing. By the 1930s his successor, Chiang Kai-shek, used opium taxes to bankroll his corrupt regime. Chiang himself and his wife* loathed the drug and perhaps he had little choice; but the country's state of health was no secret from its

neighbours. European observers, by contrast, watched with disbelief the collapse of the once0-mighty empire under the Japanese onslaught of 1937. The Second World War saved China from total defeat; but lavish American aid could not save the Kuomintang from being routed by the Communist armies of Mao Zedong. Was it faith in Marx, Lenin and Mao which made Mao's armies invincible? Or their strict outlawing of opium?

* Madame Chiang Kai-Sheck was from an influential and wealthy family who attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, the same as Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In 1950 the new Communist government forbade the cultivation, use and sale of all narcotics; and this time the ban was deadly. Traders and dealers in opium were executed- tens of thousand by any account- or sent to starve in Chinas Gulags. Users expressing a wish to reform were treated more humanely- detoxification clinics anticipated those of the United States – but hopeless or unwilling cases and relapses (which were the majority) were exterminated.

The fate through these convulsions of Wan Jung, wife of the last emperor, Puyi, was symbolic. She had begun to smoke opium when she was 16 and eventually needed two ounces a day, enough to kill a beginner. After her husband collaborated with the Japanese by becoming puppet emperor of Manchuria (renamed Manchukuo) the Japanese encouraged her addiction. Her story was widely publicized in Europe and the United States, illustrating the moral decay of China. But her next captors, the Communists, had different ideas. **In 1946 she and her husband were separated and her last days were spent in a cage. Descending into the hell of sudden withdrawal, she became an educational exhibit.** Classes of schoolchildren were dragooned past her. A film crew recorded her sufferings. These were spectacular. She sobbed and screamed until other prisoners pleaded for her execution. **Then she lapsed into violent delusions, imagining that she back in her palace in Peking (Beijing), ordering servants and courtiers about.** Guards eventually refused to enter the stench and filth. In 1987 Bernardo Bertolucci, Marxist-inclined director of the film, The

Last Emperor, was persuaded to cut the last scenes. No faint hearted European audience, he was told, could bear to watch them.

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

Ironically, perhaps greed is good because Take 'Mo could have saved some of the very best art from destruction from the aforementioned red-book Philistines drunk in the tide of the Cultural Revolution whom were bent on destroying the culture of their heritage as though the entire country was a Summer Palace. They finished off what the European powers started with an ironic defiant build-the-future-by-destruction-of-the-past campaign. It is painful in considering the loss of arts and architecture from this frenzied political whirlwind stewed by demagoguery and propaganda. Mao's legacy was safe as the apogee embodiment of the revolution's aims but those who implemented this pernicious policy were abandoned by the party's leadership after his death. Politics, indeed, is a bloody business, ill suited to the meek.

America in all it greed and glory was one of the final nations on the planet to begrudgingly finally stop the importation of slaves from Africa. It was such a damn good commercial thing it was hard to let it go so the young nation needed a Civil War to set matters right! The British Empire abolished the sin in 1833. Brazil in 1888 was the last to import in the Americas which suggests that imports may be finally stopped but the institutions themselves did not automatically dissolve because of legislation. Slavery technically ended but that doesn't equate to real equality when racism and abuse are rampant even to the present day. White men don't worry about the police shooting them unarmed. I don't believe any corporations had board meetings about if they should drop Lebron for stating his mind tangibly for a pertinent and present problem than a heartfelt single loss of a love. Lindsey can ski her glutes off and she slalomed away from Tiger's enslaving cage of more fame and fortune than hers. I root for Lindsey to go find a real man, in

fact not some dinted pretend black-Asian man, but a real man who can appreciate her innate qualities and not just as a gimmick blond trophy to be seen with in Vail or at a patio table at the 19th hole. I certainly didn't care but it seemed like a contrived couple from this vantage point. It seems artificial like Kayne and Kim and it was doomed to die from the outset.

The American Civil War was a catastrophe on a different scale. More than 620,000 were killed in the fighting, ten times more than in the Crimea; and 50,000 survivors returned home as amputees. Nor was the the theater of war some remote peninsula. It was the American homeland, and families suffered as much as the fighting men. It was also the first war in which morphine became a fixture on the battlefield. **Garden patches of white poppies sprang up in both Confederate and Union territories, Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Georgia becoming the main early providers. Without expertise the yield of opium was low but few tried to make a profit on it.** As soon tablets and injectable morphine were available, at first imported from England but increasingly manufactured in small workshops on both sides of the political divide. So were cheap syringes with fixed needles, difficult to clean and often blunt but bulletproof. By the end of the first year of the fighting morphine was administered on a massive scale in both armies, the supreme calmer of shattered nerves and broken bodies. Surgeon Major Nathan Mayer did not bother to dismount to dispense the liquid: he poured out the 'required dose' into his palm and let the wounded slurp it up. Or he dished out the tablets when available by the fistful. Exhausted, he kept the last ones for himself. Over 10 million pills of morphine and 2 million ounces of opiates as tinctures and powders were used to the Union Army; and the amounts consumed by the Confederates side were probably not much smaller. As would happen after later conflicts, the effect of the practice would outlast the war. Tens of thousand of veterans returned home with lingering gastrointestinal disorders of which the only remedy was morphine. In 1868 Horace Day wrote in *The Opium Habit:*

Maimed and shattered survivors from a hundred battlefields, diseased and disabled soldiers released from hostile prisons, anguished and hopeless wives and mothers made so

by the slaughter of those who were dearest to them, found, many of them, that temporary relief, the only relief, from their suffering is morphine.

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

In April 1975, popular disgust with Lon Nol's republic was at its zenith and majority of the urban population was ready and willing to support virtually any policy the new regime chose to introduce. Different leaders, with a different ideology, might have chosen a policy of national reconciliation. Pol decided otherwise. To him, the city-dwellers and the peasants who had fled to join them in the dying months of the war were ipso facto collaborators and had to be dealt with as such. Only when they had been subjected to a regenerative power of manual labor and the rude battering of peasant life would the survivors emerge from purgatory, just as the Khmer Rouge themselves had emerged, toughened and purified, from their own years in the maquis….Suffering and death were an essential part of this process…War and revolution are by definition heartless, no matter where they are made. The only distinction that can be drawn is quantitative. As Cambodians were discovering, some revolutions are crueler and more unforgiving than others.

The overriding, if unstated, objective of Khmer Rouge policy from 1972 on was to refashion the whole of Cambodian society in the image of this authentic, autochthonous peasantry, unsullied by the outside world.

But there was another purpose too, too. Both Khmer and communist, underlying the Party's emphasis on social and economic leveling to force everyone into the same poor-peasant mould: the eternal Buddhist goal of demolishing the individual, but his time in new garb – not as a path to nirvana ('nothingness'), but to remove what was seen as the biggest obstacle to the establishment of a collectivized state: the innate essential egoism which characterizes Khmer behavior. Whatever shortcomings attach to such cultural

generalizations, that was the way Cambodians saw themselves. Sihanouk called individualism 'a national failing'. Ith Sarin came back from nine months in the Special Zone convinced that it was 'the fundament of Khmer personality' and therefore communist policies could not succeed. Years later, a prominent Khmer businessman argued that the reason there are few Cambodian restaurants in Paris but innumerable Khmer taxi-drivers and pharmacists is that the latter occupations are suitable for a single man or a couple; to start a restaurant, several Khmer families have to pool their resources and the venture inevitably founders amid recriminations and jealousy.

The corollary of this visceral desire to avoid confrontation at all costs is that debate and argument do not function as a means of resolving differences. Between the extremes of acquiescence and violence there is no middle ground. The French archaeologist Bernard-Philippe Groslier, who spent his life studying Angkor, wrote of Cambodia that '**beneath a carefree surface there slumber savage forces and disconcerting cruelties which may blaze up in outbreaks of passionate brutality'**. Sihanouk himself acknowledged that 'the Khmers can be violent, their gentleness and good fellowship can hide terrible explosions'. The one is the inescapable complement of the other. When the strains and pressures of existence reach a point where there is no longer the possibility of a graceful withdrawal, when the smiling façade cracks, violence – 'running amok', as Sihanouk put it – become the only alternative. It is not an aberration. It is an intrinsic part of Khmer behavior – the same reflex that leads a kindly middle-aged woman to pour nitric acid over the body of a teenager girl who has become a rival for her husband's affections or a villager to tear out another man's liver. **In normal times, the *line* of fracture remains hidden. Once crossed, it is the signal for appalling acts of inhumanity undertaken without remorse.**

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When it was learnt that Hou Yuon had also vanished, most people assumed that Lon Nol and, in the background, the Prince himself, were responsible. Grisly rumors began to circulate about the way their bodies had been disposed of, later confirmed by one of the Prince's longtime advisers. He told guests at a private dinner party hosted by a cabinet minister that he knew precisely how the two MPs had been killed. 'He said one was burnt

alive by sulphuric acid,' one of them recalled. 'The other was crushed by a bulldozer.' There was a thoughtful silence, he remembered, as the Cambodians present looked at their plates. 'Everyone knew that was exactly the way Sihanouk would have behaved.' In fact the rumours were false.

…After three months in a village house the two men were moved to a makeshift wooden cabin deeper in the forest….

The organization of life in Khmer villages reinforces that perception. Where Vietnamese and Chinese villagers live cheek by jowl, animating a communal existence by means of countless associations and benevolent institutions, each Khmer family is an island, living on its own land, united only by membership of the *wat* (Buddhist monastery or temple) and a shared belief in Buddhism. If Khmer Rouge attempts to set up village associations failed, it was precisely because of the absence of a co-operative tradition in Cambodia.

All these elements – self-reliance; showing humility; being close to the masses; combining mental and manual labor; mobilizing the nation for development- were incorporated in the Khmer Rouge approach.

But to Pol, manual labor had another, more important purpose. It was a means of forging 'proletarian consciousness', that immaterial, indefinable quality that, contrary to all Marxist principles, Pol had viewed since the last 1960s as the touchstone of virtue. This 'theory of proletarianisation', as it was called, held that through manual labor, anyone, whatever his class origin, could acquire 'the materialist discipline of the factory worker…the idea of respecting the rhythm of discipline, the tempo of work, the rhythm of life' that characterized the working class. Those considered most apt for this transformation were the poor peasants, the backbone and model of CPK (Communist Part of Kampuchea) support. Others, including intellectuals, could in theory reforge themselves, but it was inherently more difficult.

Manual labor under the Khmer Rouge had another purpose, too more far-reaching than in China or Vietnam.

The cadres goal was not to become merely 'close to the people' but indistinguishable from them – not merely to work but 'to speak, sleep, walk, stand, sit, eat, smoke, play, laugh…like the people'. Eating in a revolutionary manner meant eating meagerly, out of respect for the peasants' poverty, even if plenty of food were available. Dressing in a revolutionary manner meant that everyone without exception, including Pol himself, should wear black peasant clothes, with a red-and-white checkered krama around the neck and sandals cut from car tires. Men wore Chinese-style peaked caps, and women had their hair severely bobbed…' They told us if was safer like that, because you couldn't be seen from the air. If you lay on the ground, the spotter planes thought you were a burnt log,' she recalled. 'So we all became crow-people.'

What Pol and his colleagues approved that spring was a slave state, the first in modern times.

The term is emotive and requires definition. Stalin, Hitler and a plethora of Third World despots enslaved their peoples metaphorically by depriving them of basic rights and freedoms. Pol enslaved the Cambodian people literally, by incarcerating them within a social and political structure, a 'prison without walls,' as refugees would later call it, where they were required to execute without payment whatever work was assigned to them for as long as the cadres ordered it, failing which they risked punishment ranging from the withholding of rations to death. Food and clothing were, in theory, provided by the state. But there were no wages. In the Soviet Union during the period of 'War Communism' in the early 1920s, in the Yan'an period in China decade later, or even in contemporary North Korea, workers were paid at least a pittance. No matter how paltry the sum, it meant they had some measure of choice, even if it amounted to no more than whether to buy a packet of cigarettes or a tablet of soap once a month. There was minuscule space for the exercise of free will. In Khmer Rouge Cambodia, there as none – which marks a qualitative difference that only those who have experienced it can

comprehend. Not only were there no wages, there were no markets. With time, as the system grew more rigid, even barter was discouraged. **Like true slaves, the inhabitants of Pol's Cambodia were deprived of all control over their own destinies - unable to decide what to eat, when to sleep, where to live or even whom to marry.**

The Khmer Rouge leaders, Pol first and foremost, would have objected to that description. And it is true that, in some speeches, he called on local cadres 'boldly to encourage democracy'. But by that he meant merely that 'the masses' should be urged to give the regime active support, rather than 'simply performing their tasks like machines'. It is also true that the way the new system was interpreted varied hugely from zone to zone, region to region and even village to village. In some areas, cadres were lenient; in others, harsh. But in both cases the people – the slaves – had no say in the matter. They merely endured whatever degree of leniency or harshness the 'upper levels' decided to mete out.

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

I modeled my enterprise as "California's Finest Wine Exporter," and to the chagrin of hardly anybody, has proven true. We have exported undeniably some of the very best wines produced in California. When our wine goes under the Golden Gate Bridge, the ball has hit the cup for a birdie or eagle silently under an overcast sky. It appears as just another rocking box of steel going under a span of red steel that crosses the line for a goal. No tourists at Pier 39 in San Francisco, whilst the gusts are relentlessly blowing in March, are cheering and taking selfies as the container ship is lining itself up on a great circle course of cutting through continental-born bobbing plastic sea debris offshore into a wavy world so foreign to what is known on dry land.

Each bottle arriving in Asia is its own ambassador that California does indeed count, is relevant and that what we produce in our home state is truly world class and, indeed, competitive. This can be done respectfully without the degradation or debasing of other wine producing nations but can be perceived as California justly asserting its dominance of quality with wine. I mention this already known fact because I never aspired to modeling focused exports with the auspicious title as "California's Blackest Wine Exporter," with complimentary fried chicken, cornbread, collard greens, candied-yams in the final case on board with Zinfandel for your barbecue party. Let's not forget the disk set of BB King's greatest hits. Geography, quality, selections, price and competency should be important, not race. Nobody in their right mind would say that Italian-Americans are incompetent but the French-Americans are. Both families are driving down the same roads under the same California sun with mostly toiling Mexicans harvesting their grapes. The common denominator is we are all Californians and the same Californian can look very much like someone in Guangzhou, Seoul, Nagoya, Singapore, Milan, Mexico City or Accra.

Black Pitmasters Left Out of Barbeque Boom
24 Aug 2015, BBC

The US is undisputedly in the midst of a barbecue boom - there are currently more than 14,000 barbecue restaurants in the country - but African American restaurateurs and pitmasters may be getting left in the dust. Thanks to television and professional barbecue competitions, barbecue chefs have become celebrities with cult followings, but those celebrity faces are largely white.

"National press is infatuated with white, male hipster BBQ," writes Robb Walsh on the blog First We Feast. **"Believe it or not, blacks, Latinos, and women are involved in the barbecue biz too."**

The trend continues when it comes to new restaurants opening around the country.

"New barbecue joints generally are run by white men. That just seems to be the trend," says Daniel Vaughn, barbecue editor for Texas Monthly. "The movement that gets troubling is the, 'I'm a chef, I'm bored, I want to find my soul, so I'm going to go into barbecue now. That's going to be my culinary fling.'"

White ownership is, of course, not in and of itself troubling. But the assumption that the faces on television reflect the totality of successful pitmasters does trouble John T Edge, author and director of the Southern Foodways Alliance. That point came into sharp relief after a recent article was published on the Fox News website, entitled "America's most influential BBQ pitmasters and personalities." **Of the dozen named chefs and writers, not a single one was African American.**

"This shows no historical awareness of the central role that African American people and other people of colour have played in the most primal of American foods," he says. "I'm not saying it is a racist act. By way of its omission it is racist."

In some of its earliest days in America, barbecue was plantation feast food. Whole hogs were cooked in wood burning pits to celebrate the end of the summer growing season. While white plantation owners may have partaken, it was the black slaves who were in the pits working.

"Barbecue is long, hard, hot dirty work. When given an option, particularly in the south, that's not the work white people did," says Lolis Eric Elie, author of the classic barbecue tome Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country.

When the enslaved African Americans got pigs of their own, necessity inspired nose-to-tail consumption, as well as the ingenuity to create dishes to make the pig's least pleasant parts edible. Those culinary skills were vital after the end of slavery, when black men and women needed to go into business for themselves.

"An African-American man - or woman, but less often women - could literally dig a hole in the ground on the side of the road, lay on some bed springs, shovel in coals and start a business," says Edge. "Barbecue was a food with low cost of entry. It was the food truck of the 19th century."

"African Americans have a tremendous cultural attachment to barbecue, as if we were Italians who came in and introduced pasta to our country," he says. Part of the erasure of African American pitmasters from popular culture may have to do with rising barriers to entry. Competition barbecue events - often the ticket to fame in this culinary world - have expensive entry fees, and leaving the restaurant may not be an option for chefs of lesser means. Mitchell also points to the pricey modern barbecuing equipment, like smokers that go for tens of thousands of dollars, that are ever more popular and in some cases necessary in order to comply with modern fire codes." What we had were old barrels, or we dug a hole," he says.

And - as Daryle Brantley experienced - black-owned businesses have always received fewer federal loan dollars. That is especially true after the most recent recession. A Wall Street Journal assessment found that pre-recession, black business owners received 8.2% of Small Business Administration loans from the federal government. Post-recession, that figure was down to 1.2%, compared to 4.7% for Hispanic business owners and 20% for Asians.

Rodney Scott, another extremely well-regarded pitmaster of Scott's Bar-B-Q in Hemingway, South Carolina, remembers the day that a banker told him he would never make enough money to buy a home. He intentionally saved the man's business card.

"I put it on my refrigerator. I used it as inspiration every time I passed that refrigerator, I thought, 'I'm going to show you.' I built my house, I still have his business card," says Scott. **"It's hard for a black business to gain or move up."**

At least in Texas, there is evidence that there is a shift happening in barbecue restaurant ownership. Using data from the research firm CHD Expert, Vaughn wrote in a recent blog post that among independent establishments, the number of sit-down restaurants with servers, is growing.

"Overall, barbecue is much more popular than it was five years ago," he says. "But if you look at the number of independent-owner, counter-style - the traditional barbecue joint - there are actually fewer of them now than five years ago."

Full-service restaurants are far more expensive to open. And as barbecue grows more popular, so do the expenses. Even cuts of meat like brisket are rising in cost.

Elie agrees that the ranks of the tiny, black-owned operations may be eroding.

"What we find then as integration becomes reality, many of these black restaurants who were successful are telling their kids to go into other fields, to get an education and out of the hot, dirty work of the kitchen," he says.

That's what Ryan Mitchell, Ed Mitchell's son, says he experienced first hand. He was helping in his father's restaurant from an early age, but then left for college on a football scholarship and then pursued a career in banking after that. **He says his initial reluctance to get into the family business had everything to do with painful history. He remembers listening to his grandmother's stories about working on a plantation**.

"Growing up working in the restaurant, a lot of our customers were people that she had formerly worked for. It was still that resentment that I'm serving people who didn't necessarily like my family," he recalls. "So relating that to the actual restaurant business, it felt like I was doing the same thing. I was serving people even though we were entrepreneurs."

The word Creole, which means mixed heritage, can be used to describe any of the African-inspired cooking styles in the Americas. For this chapter, in keeping with the word's geographical usage in the United States, Creole refer to African-American home cooking in Louisiana.

When African slaves were installed in the kitchens of French and Spanish immigrants in Louisiana, they arguably created the world's most refined example of Creole cooking. The blend of African, French, Spanish, Caribbean, and Native American ingredients and techniques in typified by such tantalizing everyday fare as pots of bumbling gumbo, iron skillets of jambalaya, tubs of crawfish, and lumpy rounds of sweet pralines.

The development of Creole cooking in Louisiana began in the 1700s, when the French settled their landholdings in continental North America. During the Spanish era, 1769-1803, large number of slaves were imported to Louisiana (New Orleans primary port of arrival). The slaves labored in the cotton fields, rice fields, sugarcane fields, and in domestic service. Those in the kitchens developed Creole cooking from the blend of cultures that became uniquely Louisianan.

With the French came butter, green peas, eggplant, celery, and rice. They contributed the technique of thickening soups and stews with a roux. This blend of butter or oil and flour cooked together became a Creole staple that begins many definitive dishes such as gumbo. Name of many dishes, like oysters en brochette and bouillabaisse de bayou, reflect their French derivatives.

With the Spanish came olive oil, cows, and pigs. A significant contribution here as elsewhere was their one-pot rice dishes that combined grains, meat, and seafood. The Jollof rice of Senegal and the paella of Spain were translated into Louisiana's jambalaya. Gumbo, which takes its name from an African word for okra, loosely defines a variety of soupy stews over rice.

Here, as in other parts of the Americas, Native Americans introduced and shared their knowledge on the uses of corn. The Choctaws of Louisiana also shared file, the ground leaves of the indigenous sassafras plant. File became one of the distinguishing seasonings in Creole gumbos. Added at the end of cooking, it thickens and bestows a distinctive greenish depth. Pecans were another Louisiana contribution to the Creole table.

Chilies and green peppers for seasoning and spicing Creole sauces came from the Carribean. Black pepper, which had long seasoned pots in Africa and Europe was carried by traders from around the world (we know originally from India by Arabs going west often with Turks and Venetians; Napoleon sold off France's claim to a very young nation to fund his wars in Europe with the Louisiana Purchase which effectively allowed the United States to then double in size with a stroke of a pen, then leaning on former Spanish territories, now Mexican, in the West).

The thirty-thousand year old practice of cooking over an open fire continues to be an integral part of Africa's culinary heritage…Coming to America in the 17th and 18th centuries, African cooks were obliged and then encouraged to continue this age old technique. ..

In the United States, as nowhere else, barbeque has evolved into a popular form of entertaining. With the same resourcefulness that created a cuisine out of scraps, African Americans took one of their hardships and turned it from cooking in the fireplace ashed to something in custom-built brick-framed pits.

Originally, the "pit" was a hold dug in the ground and lined with rocks. The fire was built inside the pit and the meat, fish, or vegetables went on grates over the fire, or were set on the coals and covered with dirt. Hickory and oak logs and chips burned for hours to infuse smoky tenderness into tough, economical cuts of pork and beef.

Commercial African-American barbeque got started after the Civil War. When segregation forced the creation of parallel businesses and services in black communities, enterprising cooks who made great barbecue rented storefronts from which to sell meats smoked in brick or oil-drum "pits" in the back. Mobile pits were built to set up at fairs and picnics and to take into the cotton fields to feed the laborers.

After the World Wars, in the 1920's and 1940's, when a steady migration of Southern blacks moved north, west and east to cities, barbecue joints opened in Kansas City, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and, Oakland.

- Heidi Haughy Cusick
Soul & Spice

Golden State Warriors, in Oakland, not far at all from the port, won it all (2015). Forty years later not just get into the playoffs but to actually win. I was a schoolboy last time they won and thought it was going to be too good to be true. The Bay Area and Northern California are genuinely blessed in so many ways including athletics, beyond our economic and technological prowess. Those are cold incontrovertible facts.

2016. Exceptional season. Championship lamentations.

New Zealand could replace 'racist' place names

23 October 2015, BBC

Three racially offensive place names in New Zealand could be replaced under proposals put to the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB).

NZGB said a member of the public suggested changing the "discriminatory and derogatory" names of the places, all of which feature a racist term. All three are in North

Canterbury, in the Southern Alps on South Island. The public will have three months to give their views on changing the titles of the remote areas.

"These proposals were made by a member of the public who was concerned that these particular names did not show New Zealand in a good light, being in poor taste and causing offence," NZGB Secretary Wendy Shaw told the BBC.

If accepted, Niggerhead would become Tawhai Hill and Nigger Hill would become Kanuka Hills - both named after native trees. Nigger Stream would become Steelhead Stream - named after a local trout species.

The proposed new names were put forward by the same person that requested the current names be dropped. The person is not thought to be local to the area, although as it is extremely remote, very few people are.

The places are all uninhabited geographical features, not towns NZGB said that while they had not been able to pin down exactly how or when the places got their names, two have appeared on maps since the 1860s, and the third from the 1910s.

They said the word may have come from a colloquial name for a type of tussock known as makura, or pukio in te reo in the Maori language.

NZGB is seeking opinions on several other name changes too, including altering the spelling of South Otago's Tokomairiro river to Tokomairaro - which it says is the correct Maori spelling - and changing the name of Rainbow Mountain to Maunga Kakaramea. The consultations will not take the form of a vote. Instead, the NZGB's board will base its decisions primarily on the views it receives from the public.

Although the changes may strike many as long overdue, reports in 2010 quoted government officials saying that they were not aware of complaints about the names, nor of plans to change them.

It is not the only place in New Zealand, to have a seemingly offensive name. There are several places with "Darkies" in their title on the west coast of South Island. **They are seemingly references to a 19th Century African American gold prospector known as 'Darkie' Addison, according to Radio New Zealand.**

A woman for the new $ 10 bill? That's a refreshing change. Who will it be? I started to run ideas in my own head and came up with a couple of good old school selections: Betsy Ross and Dolly Madison. Both women were products of their time. Betsy was sewing the flag because she didn't have color TV nor radio and was confined to a tiny house in mid-winter without library access. Her dress was long because she had swollen chafed ankles the size of cow hoofs and sat so long in the rocking chair that we suspect she had low circulation and needed to get some air and exercise. Betsy was all-American but perhaps a little too old school for us.

Next, Dolly Madison, society limelight and all. Dolly had game but probably a bit too superficial for many to rally around. Women are better educated these days thankfully and demand more substance of themselves than cold water biscuit recipes and a smile.

I thought briefly of Joan Rivers but I supposed initially entertainers couldn't cut the mustard. Carol Channing, naw, she doesn't do it either but she was from San Francisco and black but passing as white to further her career. If people knew the truth, many doors in her day would not have opened. Republican candidate Jeb Bush said Margaret Thatcher in the second debate which is categorically dumb. That makes as much sense as the British putting an American president on their currency. I think the Brits aren't yet at a dearth of prospects to select from before needing to borrow from recalcitrant colonists.

The media short listed woman of color like Harriet Tubman or Ida B. Wells. Fannie Lou Hamer is worth a nod but I like Bessy Smith because the blues was born in America which spawned Jazz, Soul and Rock-n-Roll. Josephine Baker, sultry and sexy, a real groundbreaker before her time uniting America and France as a cultural ambassador. However, I think more Americans could relate to smilin' Aunt Jemima with a good wholesome pancake breakfast a bit easier. Aunt J knew her place around the Big House. She never had aspirations to think of others beyond a good hearty meal and was comfortable with plantation life unlike Harriet with the underground railroad smuggling slaves guided by the North Star. She made sure the first family ate first as it was, after all, God's good will in His Own Time and Grace. Unfortunately, Aunt J is a fictional character from long dead minstrel shows so we can't use her. She's a cartoon character to sell pancake mix. Aunt and Uncle were terms of endearment reserved for older slaves.

Then I thought momentarily of Shirley Hemphill with a pencil deep in her afro, sassy attitude and kitchen order pad from '70s sit-com "What's Happening!!," who seemed not to care about voting but more about flavors of bags of potato chips and bus fare. A big woman portrayed who was patently not a threat intellectually or sensually, familiar with social services, cockroaches and cornbread; getting up in the morning to make a new day, to hold her own. Thank you, but no. I found the Truth:

Sojourner Truth (born Isabella ("Bell") Baumfree; c. 1797 – November 26, 1883) was an **African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist**. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, Ulster County, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. After going to court to recover her son, in 1828 she became the first black woman to win such a case against a white man.

She gave herself the name Sojourner Truth in 1843. Her best-known speech was delivered extemporaneously, in 1851, at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. The speech became widely known during the Civil War by the title "Ain't I a

Woman?," a variation of the original speech re-written by someone else using a stereotypical Southern dialect; whereas Sojourner Truth was from New York and grew up speaking Dutch as her first language. **During the Civil War, Truth helped recruit black troops for the Union Army; after the war, she tried unsuccessfully to secure land grants from the federal government for former slaves**

In 2014, Truth was included in Smithsonian magazine's list of the "**100 Most Significant Americans of All Time.**

- Wikipedia

Then, Dolly. Somethin' about that name just kept ringin'. Sounds like Della, like Della in ancient black-n-white Perry Mason detective television shows in which she demurely had a bit more game in her that adults could see, that went perhaps unnoticed over the heads of Lorna Doon shortbread crumbling naïve kids. She would not have had a problem getting a light for a cigarette. Then my mind moseyed over to Della Reese singin' at the Riviera in Las Vegas. That's it! Dolly Parton! If that is not the quintessential ideal of American womanhood then I just don't know! How many women back in the day were upset that a country down-home woman was getting all that undue attention singing with loose blouses bouncin' around with that simple Southern charm. Hillary tries to be down home, out of her milieu, and the spectacle wears thin when she tries to be. Hillary comes with a first-class education paired with limitless ambition; dear Dolly from a smile over Nashville dry-rub ribs and wet coleslaw. At a young age, Hillary was inquisitive and knew the difference between Camembert, Pecorino and Brie. Dolly knew about Kraft Mac-n-Cheese dinner on sale at Winn-Dixie supermarkets on Saturday. Dolly, she never had any pretense of a fine education or refined table manners. How many men would pour a Tennessee whisky straight, light unfiltered Pall Mall and think to themselves why they were not so fortunate to have a Dolly in their lives after a quarrel over something foolish with their social climbing wives whilst driving home half-drunk from an office associate's house party? Dolly was just a good ol' country beauty that

could wear red, white and blue like nobody else's business complete with cut-off Daisy Dukes with a stark white felt cowboy hat complete with a shiny silver-plated tin star. Lonesome Betsy could sit there all night rockin' and could sew the flag but Dolly, well now pilgrim, she knew how to wear it with gusto and pride! You could lose Danang and be down to your last copper penny at the Riviera wearing Budweiser foam dappled Hush Puppies but at least, you knew, that God did love America because that gushing blond buxom wide-smile goodness could only come from the Land of the Free with milk and honey.

We need a woman on that bill who is patently unattractive and unappealing. A woman that could make you queasy if you met her, and you do know the kind. Somebody other women will dislike yet could envy for their brains, unbridled drive and checks in her purse. I'm married. I don't want to hear chide remarks of why I am looking at the $10 so much like playoff football scores on my phone. We need someone who will not excite the fancy of men such as Lana Turner, Veronica Lake, Dorothy Dandridge or Rita Hayworth and let them be grateful for the wholesome goodness of their own expanding wives with our own expanding waistlines. Someone urbane and ice cold, sub-zero purity in frigidity in fact. Somebody Hillary-ish but without the contrived homemaker-in-apron crumbling Sebastopol goat cheese over drizzled Balsamic vinegar pecan-wood grilled tomatoes veneer to pander for a Whole Foods shopper's vote. A half our before she was pointing fingers at China's hacking capacity in a pin-striped pantsuit and giving excuse No. 27 about e-mails her own personal server. Hillary's game is to portray her tightrope balance of secular intellectual savviness yet still adhering to carrot cake and coffee conforming simplicity wears us thin because of her quest for ultimate political power.

Hill is a tough sell and she is mostly tolerated. She's not entirely embraceable and nor bad, but it's easier to be just politely cordial at best I suppose. She is an expensive attorney and will use whatever stratagem is convenient as the end justifies the means. Don't let the smile game you. She seems like a fair weather

friend who couldn't be found if clouds started to come rolling in. She is not totally authentic as you get the sense she is always micro-managing and taking temperatures with wind checks to guide her on which way to go. She reminds me of a mast's weather vane: she points the way, but in actuality, the way is pointed to her by the winds of change. One can be deluded that because they can see her pointing in the current direction that she is leading the way. The honest perspective is she is signaling like a meteorologist the current state of affairs; however, one can be fooled that she has been directing the weather herself. She will compromise principles it appears to stay current in the political mainstream. She is no Joan of Arc and is skilled enough to not allow herself to be burnt alive at the stake, but to live to fight on another day with lemon wedges and hummus on the side.

Republicans who were bent of skewering her over the deaths of Americans in Libya she made fools of ultimately in eleven hours of grilling in October, as they learned a hard lesson in middle age in trying to distinguish themselves with their peers, that amateurs best not deal with the pros. Baking cookies at home and baking Hillary in public are very different concepts that a couple of self-important Republican congresswomen found out the hard way at the politically partial Benghazi hearing. It was a pretense to go after Hillary and not really trying to find the truth; it was all a very insincere exercise which is what petty people take pride in doing. They looked like high-school girls on a debate team so desperate to score points that they got shot down in flames by trying to duel with her one-on-one by imprudently exposing themselves. Hillary can do chandelles, steep spirals, barrel rolls, turns-about-a-point in a gale, Dutch rolls and tail slides with a smile; she is a grandmaster at loops as a Yale educated attorney always surveying for the moment to activate unforeseen loopholes to get out of a bind.

Hill, for offense measures, is armed too with Sidewinder missiles and keeps the .50 caliber machine gun oiled and polished; Lord Kitchener in the Sudan would have paused momentarily with his sandalwood aftershave splashed face, in lifting his Ceylon tea cup with a splendid signet ruby ring gifted from the Maharaja of Jodhpur,

in an understated British admiration to observe her cool easy command of the critical situation to exacerbate casualty counts, if needed by Jove, in the crux of battle then heartily sip and relish the comforting taste of sweet victory as though it were never in doubt from slaughtering marching armies entirely with an exhale of sublime and complete satisfaction. Her advance warning systems are second to none and she knows how to rigorously respond. The Republican congresswomen sadly fooled themselves with their playground popguns duct taped onto trainer Cessnas with whitebread bologna-n-cheese simple slogans taped inside like "Freedom isn't Free" with flags to promote their sacrificial farcical demise with flasks of gin tucked into flight jacket pockets, to find a spot of Dutch courage for the heat of the face off. The women ended the grilling in their leather chairs as hunters turned prey, blackened and smoldering with their attire and esteem in tatters whilst Hill went on her way with nary a scratch.

In retrospect, the women didn't have a chance from the beginning and bit dust. They were flying but not for very long, about as long as it takes to cool a tray of chocolate chip cookies, burnt at that! The appeal of Bernie Sanders, who is not electable for fast food consumers who prefer to not think for a multitude of reasons, is not giving a damn and being true to his brown bread Pumpernickel & stone-ground mustard beliefs. He is who he is, when in fashion and when not. Hillary seems to be a resume queen always re-packaging herself for market. She is damn smart but there is a piece that doesn't fit perfectly in the puzzle which drags her. When all is said done, however, the lady does have staying power where others would have been written off long ago, dismantled and sold for scrap.

Black Lives Matter activists disrupt Clinton campaign rally
30 October 2015, BBC

Black Lives Matter activists have interrupted Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton in Atlanta, Georgia as she began a speech about reforming the criminal justice system. Mrs Clinton spoke over the shouting, saying if elected she would carry on the

work on President Barack Obama. The group of 10 Black Lives Matter protesters were quickly escorted away.

They have interrupted campaign events to highlight police brutality, racism and mass incarceration. The activists have mostly targeted Democrats - including Mrs Clinton and her chief rival Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders.

Mrs Clinton and Mr Sanders have responded to the protests with policy proposals, meeting activists and talking about racial issues on the campaign trail.

The Black Lives Matter movement was originally formed after George Zimmerman, a Hispanic man in Florida, was acquitted of the shooting death of black teenager Trayvon Martin. It grew to greater prominence after a white policeman killed Michael Brown - an unarmed black teenager - in Ferguson, Missouri, last year.

The protest movement has continued to gain strength over the past year after several controversial police-involved deaths of black people including those of Freddie Gray and Sandra Bland.

'Let her talk'

Friday's rally was entitled "African Americans for Hillary". Guests included pop singer Usher and civil rights activist and Congressman John Lewis.

The crowd of about 2,000 chanted "Let her talk!" and Mr Lewis asked them to stop."I'm sorry they didn't listen, because some of what they demanded I am offering and intend to fight for as president," Mrs Clinton said. "We have to come together as a nation."

In 1994 Mrs Clinton lobbied for one of the largest crime bills in US history, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which provided billions for prisons. The law also introduced the "three strikes" policy,

which called for mandatory life imprisonment without parole for federal offenders with three or more felony or drug trafficking convictions.

(Hillary did received a JD from Yale Law School; not a BS in Home Economics. The "three strikes" is from American baseball which shows just how patently simplistic the law was passed as though the judicial system should be played as some ball-n-bat street game with cheap hot dogs and French's yellow mustard. The "three strikes" unfortunately have been abused against men of color unsurprisingly with less than competent attorneys for defense. A real defense requires real money. White men and women offenders have by wide margins been less affected by the laws as the judicial system has been reluctant except in extreme cases, to drop the weight for the full gravity of their crimes. There are cases that have been dropped against whites so they would not receive the wrath of three strikes when black and Latino men were whisked away to the human warehouses, out of mind, out of sight. Billions of dollars were spent on prisons and American prisons are grossly populated by men of color far out of proportion to all offenders.)

Mrs Clinton has changed her position since she has been on the campaign trail, calling for the end of mass incarceration and expressing her concern over police violence and black people. On Friday, she also proposed a legal ban on racial profiling by police.

The policy would forbid federal, state and local officers from "relying on a person's race when conducting routine or spontaneous investigatory activities," unless they have information linking a suspect to a crime.

And she said she supported the "ban the box" movement, an effort to prevent job applicants from being disqualified because of their criminal history.

Yes, we need a woman self-made who was certifiably corrupt and who knew the value and power of equity. A woman who would have taken a cue, throwing her

head back and laughing loudly from some wicked pit in her bacteria laden gut holding a glass of Cava when alone, but with a regal Gran Cru Champagne on ice in public, about the time Stalin who having orchestrated a sumptuous banquet for Chairman Mao and comrades in Moscow when they came asking for economic assistance and swaying in the spirit of the Internationale, offer the Chairman a shined silver engraved tray with an enveloped invoice, at the completion of an evening of many toastings, for over 9,000 roubles to pay for their warm heartfelt Russian hospitality. This ice cold slap in the face of the Chairman should have been a rude awakening to who he was dealing with and, more importantly, the consequences of this dimming path which would prove far less luminous and far darker than the propaganda and all the candlelight Cavendish pipe puffing intellectual musings. God, son, rules heaven and money rules Earth, always. This is how the game is played in this solar system.

The woman has to be someone that was detested yet forced to be respected even with her ingrained insecurities as those who come from less have, when they do attain higher strata, by hopefully hook or many times, by crook. She needs to be someone who could tell the Prince of Monaco to pass the sugar and to be quick about it. Tell Princess Margaret horses wear better lipstick at Coney Island and she should consider trading her royal title for plastic surgery. It has to be a woman who would take photos in a $ 25,000 sweater and have it burned the next day in an incinerator so that she would never be seen in another photo with it on again after a contribution to a hapless Libertarian-Federalist candidate as nobody else would be deserving to wear it. She has to be somebody who knew that taxes were for hoi-polloi and were a concept in her stratosphere. We need to look near and far for who could understand the simple pleasure of tins of caviar, plates of the very best cheeses whilst bathing in tubs of Chenin Blanc to keep her skin taunt and vibrant. She would enjoy reflexology and tossing green tea at therapists with acidic petty complaints about too much pressure and poor technique because the session would simply not be complete without doing so, whilst speaking with the very best facelift

superficial false friends of immense robber baron capital in capitals around the world.

This was a cold concrete poured over rebar of melted-down ship hulls New Yorker. You would arrive to the Big Apple wide-eyed and full of optimism and she, with a cadre of others of her ilk, would cut out your core, crush mercilessly the seeds of your future dreams and leave you to depart ultimately on a smoke belching Bronx bus to Atlantic City's Boardwalk waving at street signs and white bread sandwich billboards 'cause the peanut butter n' jelly kids wink and wave back at you. Your backwoods pedigree she would put in your place in a moment's notice even if the 'woods were from let's say Chicago, Boston or Philadelphia. She would be candid and cutting enough to tell Imelda Marcos that she may own thousands of shoes but she was ultimately an outhouse squatting barefoot coconut and palm tree country girl of a phony propped-up dictator with a palm wine mistress sporting US Navy boxers dancing around high in stolen snakeskin Albuquerque cowboy boots who had no concept of class. She would then say that her mops used for the grand entrances of her properties had better tailoring than the carnival prize haggard hand-stitched silk Makati dress she was wearing. This is America's best choice for the new $ 10 bill, the renowned, emulated but never quite duplicated, The Queen of Mean: Leona Helmsley.

I'm sorry I'm the one to tell you but I had to break you in on this. I have no option, I didn't want to! Forgive, I had to! This is for grown ups and we have to deal with the world. Now be quiet –ssshhh- go ahead down the hall and tip toe, silently hold your breath, then see the little hole in the wall, and when you get there first look left- then right- make sure nobody else sees us, then slowly raise up and peep this with a bag of hot buttered popcorn trembling in your hand: Leona was frostier than a Bering Sea crab trap hung on a trawler whilst the railing is ringed with rime ice! She had no reservations of trying to care about the less fortunate and all the other contrived nonsense of compassion although she herself came from humble beginnings. She was motivated by distancing herself from her paltry past. By force of character, she

improved herself socially and financially. You either had it or you didn't. She wasn't pandering for your modest approval or dare pretend to have empathy about your soft-story cause. Leona was a force to be reckoned with and she was ruthless, as money so often is. Notice early before marriage, she legally changed her name from a common hot Brooklyn-bagel Lena Rosenthal to a cooling mint-sprigged Long Island ice tea pretentious Leona Roberts, then later in her boundless giddiness taking on the distinguished towering Saxon name of Helmsley later. This is a yellow flag of caution if she had no intentions of being in movies. For those who are open to a woman of color, I encourage them to be fair, to consider others from the full ethnic spectrum of the fairer sex. Leona embodies the shrewd tact, adaptation, brains and drive that all can make it in America by believing in your self and kicking the ladder over so nobody else can dare follow you over the wall to blue skies and the close cut green grass of success. I do encourage all Americans to write your congressional representatives and offer support for this very sage and wise choice of change for the $10 bill.

James Clavell's novel, King Rat, of Allied POWs in Singapore was about a shrewd and commercially cunning enlisted sargent who earned the title King Rat by force of his being that included holding court over pandering Allied officers. He wore white pants with a crease and clean starched shirts without holes as others put the tute in destitute. With short haircut without lice, clean shaven from fresh razors and scented aftershave, he could light a Navy Cut cigarette and throw half on the ground so others would jump to finish the extreme luxury and delight. Leona, if mired in the same given austere circumstances, would have been the Queen Bee with all the honey. Can you dig? Give me five!

Harriet Tubman, anti-slavery activist, to be on new US $20 bill

21 April 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/business-36096151

Anti-slavery activist Harriet Tubman will be the first woman to appear on a US banknote for more than a century. Tubman, who was born a slave around 1820 and helped hundreds of others escape, will feature on the new $20 bill, the US Treasury announced.

She will replace former President Andrew Jackson, a slave owner.

The Treasury has dropped plans to remove the image of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founders of the US financial system, from the $10 bill. It had faced a backlash over the plan. While Ms Tubman will feature on the front of the $20 bill, President Jackson's image will move to the back.

US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew said that Harriet Tubman was "**not just a historical figure but a role model for leadership and participation in our democracy.**"

"Her incredible story of courage and commitment to equality embodies the ideals of democracy that our nation celebrates," he added. Leaders from the women's rights movement - Lucretia Mott, **Sojourner Truth**, Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Alice Paul - will be pictured on the back of the $10 bill.

The back of the $5 bill - which depicts Abraham Lincoln on the front - will show prominent leaders from US history including singer Marian Anderson, former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights leader Martin Luther King. The women last depicted on US notes were former first lady Martha Washington, on the $1 silver certificate from 1891 to 1896, and Native American Pocahontas , in a group photo on the $20 bill from 1865 to 1869.

Alexander Hamilton staying on the $10 bill was due in part to the popularity of Broadway musical "Hamilton". Cast members visited the White House and spoke to Treasury Secretary Jack Lew in March.

After the meeting, Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the Broadway show, tweeted that Mr Lew told him he would be "very happy" after they announced changes to the US notes. The Treasury Department also put out a statement after the meeting that reiterated Mr Lew's "commitment to continue to honour Alexander Hamilton on the $10 bill".

James Cook, BBC News, North America correspondent

Harriet Tubman is best known in the United States for her role in smuggling slaves to safety via the Underground Railroad.But her role in the US civil war was just as remarkable.

She operated as a scout for the Union forces, often behind enemy lines, most notably guiding the dramatic armed raid at Combahee Ferry in South Carolina in which three gunboats evaded Confederate positions and liberated more than 700 slaves.

"I nebber see such a sight," said Ms Tubman later, describing how slaves laden with children, pigs and chickens had rushed from the fields towards the boats. "We laughed, an' laughed, an' laughed," she recalled.

In 1863 this was an extraordinary military role for any woman, let alone for an escaped slave. As for Andrew Jackson, his enduring numismatic role is ironic not only because the slave-trading president has been pushed to the back of the $20 bill by a freed slave but also because he regarded the very existence of paper money as a "deep-seated evil."

Harriet Tubman: Former slave who risked all to save others

Harriett Tubman was born into slavery in the 1820s. After suffering a serious head injury, she escaped and helped to free more than 70 slaves through the "Underground Railroad", a network of anti-slavery activists and safe houses.

Ms Tubman was the winner of an online poll run by campaign group Women On 20s.

Its executive director, Susan Ades Stone, told the BBC that the "freedom fighter" was "a fantastic choice.""She is really quite remarkable," she said, noting the irony of moving Andrew Jackson to the back of a bill which would feature a freed slave on the front. "It's not what we envisioned but I think that it will make for an interesting narrative and it will keep alive a lot of the history lessons that we can learn from his actions and his policies," said Ms Ades Stone.

Other potential candidates for the spot included Eleanor Roosevelt, civil rights activist Rosa Parks and leader of the Cherokee nation Wilma Mankiller.

New York, New York. Donald Trump hit bump, or did he?

‘Earlier this month, he accused Mexicans of adding drugs and crime to the US as he announced he was seeking the Republican presidential nomination.

"They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people, but I speak to border guards, and they tell us what we are getting," he said in his speech on 16 June.

He also pledged to build a "great wall" on the US border with Mexico and insisted it would be paid for by Mexicans.’

For a clown who prides himself on being so shrewd and gifted, this was about as dumb as wrapping a chain around your neck, throwing the anchor overboard, and believing you could swim your way to victory. What he did do was galvanize the Latino population, less white Cubans, into voting for the other side. Certainly he thought of that dynamic in advance in some Mussolini sized office to accommodate his ego and fading haircut so perhaps, with all his acumen and wealth, he does know something the rest of don’t know. Perhaps. The deportee that killed a woman ruthlessly in San Francisco for no reason but at random chills the blood and gave

Trump, a foothold to run up the flagpole what he was talking about. Trump should count his lucky stars and deranged convicts that unknowingly aid his cause.

Students at a Trump Rally Become Part of a Venomous Politics Lesson

New York Times by Jason Horowitz

26 November 2015

…Depending on which side of the Thanksgiving table one sits on, Mr. Trump's run for the Republican presidential nomination is either the most refreshingly apolitical candidacy in ages or a steepening descent into unvarnished demagoguery.

And while Mr. Trump's heated language on surveillance of Muslims, accepting Syrian refugees and illegal immigration is firing up his crowds, it is also drawing more protesters, resulting in physical clashes.

At recent Trump rallies, supporters have spit in protester's faces, tackled demonstrators in Miami, and shoved and punched a Black Lives Matter activist in Alabama **("Maybe he should have been roughed up," Mr. Trump said after the episode**.) Mostly, he has embraced the scuffles as a new and action-packed dimension of the Donald Trump experience.

"Isn't a Trump rally much more exciting than these other ones?," Mr. Trump asked as the police ejected a protester shouting "Trump's a racist" from a rally in Worchester, Massachusetts last week. "The kind of stuff only adds to the excitement."

...When Mr. Trump said he would **bring back water boarding as an interrogation tactic** against terrorism suspects, and added, "If it doesn't work, they deserve it anyway," and older couple behind the group of teenagers threw back their heads in utter delight.

…On the high school girls said afterward that as they exited, people in the crowd had asked them, "If you don't love America, why don't you just leave?" and that a man had told her that if she had not been filming on her phone, we would have slapped her. **She and another student said they heard an epithet for black people hurled their way.**

After Mr. Trump wrapped up his speech and "We're Not Gonna Take It" blasted on the speakers, Mr. Hopkins rushed to the stage to get a picture of Mr. Trump.

Asked what he thought of the rally, he said: "Its like a movement! And he's a man of action."

And the protesters? "Very rude."

It was not just a totalitarian phenomenon. **Democratic governments also have gone down that road. The French army in Algeria set up torture centres where conscripts martyrised suspected fedayeen and then killed them 'to maintain secrecy', exactly the same justification as was used in Democratic Kampuchea.** Five thousand Algerian prisoners were killed in this way in one interrogation centre alone. In the country as a whole, the number of such deaths probably exceeded the 15-20,000 who died in S-21. The factors that led young, Roman Catholic Frenchmen to violate every principle of justice and humanity they had learnt since childhood were not essentially different from those that governed the conduct of S-21 guards. Both were told, in the Khmer phrase, to 'cut off your heart' – an injunction which, to a greater or lesser extent, applies to soldiers everywhere. Both were under pressure from peers. The French conscripts faced court-martial if they refused to carry out order; the S-21 guards faced torture and death.

It may be argued that for Khmers if was easier; their religion cultivates indifference. However, the S-21 had French carceral antecedents. Th shackles used in its cells

were inherited from French colonial times. **The torture that the Khmer Rouges called 'stuffing prisoners with water' had been introduced to Indochina by the French army, which called it 'la baignoire' ('the bathtub') and used it on Viet Minh in the early 1950s.** If the French connection is easy to draw – Cambodia was, after all, a former French protectorate – other Western countries have little cause to crow. Experiments carried out in American universities suggest that a majority of human beings, American, British, German, or any other nationality, will agree, under suitable conditions, to inflict torture on others. At a conservative estimate, more than half of all UN member states, or have had in the recent past, prisons resembling S-21. Democratic Kampuchea was not a fatal exception in an otherwise kindly world.

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Who are Donald Trump's loyal supporters?

10 December 2015, BBC

Despite a string of controversial statements, New York billionaire Donald Trump continues to lead the Republican presidential field. So who are these die-hard supporters who are standing by their man, through thick and thin?

In campaign stop after campaign stop, thousands come to catch a glimpse of the candidate who has turned the Republican presidential contest on its head. They wear buttons, hold up homemade signs and clutch glossy photos of the celebrity billionaire in the hope of garnering an autograph.

Ask them why they support their candidate, and almost to a person they say it's because he's a proven winner who is not beholden to the interests or influences of a political establishment that they feel has abandoned them.

"He's not a politician, he's just a man," says Mary Faulk, who attended a Trump rally at the fairgrounds of her home town of Manassas, Virginia. "He's a man that came up,

worked his way up, and I think that's what we need. I'm 66 years old, our country is in trouble, and we need to do something."

They view his lack of experience in politics not as a flaw, but an asset.

"In the bigger picture he does have a lot to learn, but we all know he's an excellent manager and very, very bright," said Kathy Baker, another of the thousand-plus who attended Mr Trump's Virginia event. "I have faith that he will learn and develop the policies that will make America the superpower that we want it to be."

But what of Mr Trump's controversial statements and the ensuing media firestorms they create? His supporters largely view the New Yorker's brash pronouncements as evidence that he won't be cowed when faced with adversity and that his opinions are his own, and not something crafted by political handlers that he will abandon once he gets elected.

"Unlike most of the other people, he speaks what he thinks and he doesn't hold back," says Nicholas Poucher, a 16-year-old Trump supporter from Lakeland, Florida, who came to see Mr Trump give a speech at a Republican Party presidential forum in Orlando. "You get what he really believes in, even if everything that he says isn't what is the right thing exactly."

And while there was speculation that Mr Trump's call to close the US border to Muslims had, at last, crossed a moral and ethical line - a new poll shows that his view is shared by nearly two-thirds of likely Republican primary voters. Mr Trump may be controversial, but he's smack in the middle of the mainstream for the conservative voters who will pick their party's presidential nominee.

In September David Brady and Douglas Rivers of the Hoover Institution took a closer look at the demographics of Mr Trump's enduring coalition. **They painted a picture of Trump supporters as largely older, less wealthy and less educated.**

They found that more than half of Trump-backers are female. About a third are over the age of 65. Only 2% are younger than 30. Half of his voters have a high-school diploma, but just 19% have a college degree. Just over a third earn less than $50,000, while 11% make six figures or more.

Ideologically, Mr Trump's people are all over the board, with 20% identifying as moderate, 65% as conservative and 13% as very conservative. When the New Yorker entered the race, he pulled support from nearly every candidate in the field.

In the ensuing months, even as Mr Trump made controversial remark after controversial remark, and various other candidates surged and subsided, these numbers have stayed remarkably consistent.

A focus group of Trump supporters conducted by pollster Frank Luntz earlier this week revealed that, by and large, **Trump's backers are pessimistic about the future of the country and passionately hate President Barack Obama and the mainstream media.** They're wary of Muslims and steadfast in their support of their candidate, even to the point of being willing to follow him in an independent presidential bid if he leaves the Republican Party.

And, if anything, the candidate's anti-Muslim pronouncements this week and the subsequent denunciations have only solidified their views of the man. Of the 29 panel participants, only one said he is now less likely to vote for the billionaire.

All of this raises what the Washington Post's Max Ehrenfreund calls a "fundamental, universal and uncomfortable" truth about Donald Trump and his now more than four-month run as the man to beat in the Republican primary.

He spoke to a number of psychologists and came up with three key sources of Mr Trump's appeal.

"We like people who talk big," he writes. "We like people who tell us that our problems are simple and easy to solve, even when they aren't. And we don't like people who don't look like us."

There's still just under two months before the presidential nomination process begins in Iowa, New Hampshire and then in a series of states across the nation - and until the votes start being counted and convention delegates apportioned, there's no way to know for certain if Mr Trump's support is really, truly solid. Some polls have found that Mr Trump's fans, while devoted, may be less likely to actually show up at the polling stations on election day.

In addition, the New Yorker's band of backers may be loyal, but they may also be unlikely to swell much beyond the 30-35% of the Republican electorate now registering in surveys thanks to the candidate's higher negative ratings among party faithful due to his brash demeanor and incendiary rhetoric. While that's good enough to win when the field is fragmented, it will not carry the day as unsuccessful candidates drop out. Mr Trump may start strong, but fade down the stretch.

This, at least, is what establishment Republicans likely are telling themselves right now to help them sleep at night.

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Had the other candidates taken him down immediately after his "rapist" comments, they could have helped transform the Republican brand. Instead, figures like Jeb Bush hesitated.

It took the former Florida governor, who is married to a Mexican, two weeks to come up with a strong rebuttal, calling Trump's remarks "extraordinarily ugly".

Jeb. Two weeks and not just a population is under racist attack but also your wife and kids by lineage. This is not close to home but inside the home. You let that trash slide? Why say anything at all after two weeks? You can't even defend your own family and you even speak Spanish. We understand you were too busy to hear about the slur whilst pandering for campaign contributions. Thank you for the lack of leadership demonstration of why you are not fit to be in the Oval Office. You came off as a coward to confront directly what is patently not only repulsive but vehemently untrue. Shame on you!

US Republicans spar in fiery 2016 presidential debate
29 October 2015, BBC

US Republicans have traded blows in a heated presidential debate in Colorado that featured several angry exchanges.

…Political friendships were strained by some of the testy exchanges, notably one between former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Florida Senator Marco Rubio. Mr Bush urged Mr Rubio, once his protege, to resign from the Senate because of his poor voting record. **He mocked his younger Florida rival by asking him if he was working the "French working week".**

Analysis - Nick Bryant, BBC News, Boulder

Twin contests played out on the stage in Colorado - a fight to become the candidate of the Republican establishment and a battle to become the standard bearer of the radical right. In the first contest, Jeb Bush delivered another listless performance that will deeply worry his donors, and a premeditated decision to attack his friend and rival Marco Rubio for absenteeism from his day job as the Florida senator backfired badly. It seemed so contrived, as Rubio, a big winner tonight, deftly pointed out.

In the establishment contest, it was the defining exchange of the night, and will enhance Rubio's growing stature and further diminish Bush. The New Jersey Governor Chris Christie also outstripped Bush.

But the main headline of the evening comes from Jeb Bush. He needed to energise his troubled campaign tonight, and he failed abysmally.

Jeb! Battered, deep fried, salted, malted and served. Heard they have nice beaches in Florida so get your tanning butter and a mojito. Joker!

'French work week': Do they really work less?
29 October 2015, BBC

At the US Republican presidential debate on Wednesday, former Florida governor Jeb Bush used the idea of a "French work week" to mock fellow contender Marco Rubio's patchy Senate voting record.

"You get like three days where you have to show up?" he asked. By evoking the stereotype of lazy French employees wedded to their 35-hour week, Mr Bush was using a cliche about Gallic work culture.

The French do tend to work fewer hours than employees in most developed countries, but they put in longer hours than those in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway, according to the OECD.

French staff can request to work above the 35-hour limit, while managers are not subject to the restriction.

US workers, meanwhile, work many more hours than their French counterparts - 1,789 hours annually on average, compared with 1,473 for the French. France's generous paid leave entitlements no doubt play a role in creating this gulf - 30 working days off a year in addition to 11 public holidays puts a serious dent in annual hours.

The US, in comparison, offers no legally mandated annual leave.

The lower number of hours worked in France reflects in part a relatively high labour productivity - the amount of goods and services produced per hour of work.

In France the average is $64 per hour (£42), slightly more than Germany and well above the OECD average of $49.

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I became in short a pet, the darling, the little black jewel of Turner's Mill. Pampered, fondled, nudged, pinched, I was the household's spoiled child, a grinning elf in a starched jumper who gazed at himself in mirrors, witlessly preoccupied with his own ability to charm. That a white child would not have been so sweetly indulged- that my very blackness was central to the privileges I was given and the familiarity I was allowed- never occurred to me, and doubtless I would not have understood even if I had been told. Small wonder then that from the sung, secure dominion of my ignorance and self-satisfaction I began more and more to regard the Negroes of the mill and filed as creatures beneath contempt, so devoid of the attributes I had come to connect with the sheltered and respectable life that they were worth not even my derision. Let some wretched cornfield hand, sweating and stinking, his bare foot gashed by a mishandled hoe, make the blunder of appearing at the edge of the veranda, with a piteous wail asking that I get old massah to please fetch him to the proper rear door in a voice edged with icy scorn. Or should any black children from the cabins invade, no matter how guilelessly, the precincts of the big house and its rolling lawn, I would be at them with a flourished broomstick and shrill cries of abuse – safe however behind the kitchen door. Such was the vainglory of a black boy who may have been alone among his race in bondage to have actually read pages from Sir Walter Scott and who knew the product of nine multiplied by nine the name of the President of the United States, the existence of the continent of Asia, the capital of the

state of New Jersey, and could spell words like Deuteronomy, Revelation, Nehemiah, Chesapeake, Southhampton, and Shenadoah.

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

Let's be ambivalent and check in on Uncle Ben's chicken shack:

Ben Carson compares abortion to slavery
26 Oct. 2015, BBC

Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, one of the current frontrunners for the Republican presidential nomination, wants to make abortion illegal in all instances, including cases of rape and incest. He told an NBC News interviewer on Sunday that he's a "reasonable person", however, and he'd listen if someone can come up with a "reasonable explanation for why they would like to kill a baby". Women, however, should not look at their foetus as "the enemy".

To illustrate his point, Mr Carson - whose understated yet forceful condemnations of liberal orthodoxy made him a darling on the conservative lecture circuit before he launched his presidential bid **- offered an analogy that compared women seeking abortions to slaveholders.**

"I know that's one of those words you're not supposed to say, but I'm saying it," Mr Carson began. "During slavery, a lot of slave-owners thought they had the right to do whatever they wanted to that slave, anything that they chose. And what if the abolitionists had said, 'I don't believe in slavery, but you guys do whatever you want'? Where would we be?" Mr Carson has made a habit of saying what he's "not supposed to say" and then deriding the subsequent firestorm as attacks from "politically correct" critics.
The retired doctor has said President Barack Obama's healthcare reform was "the worst thing" since slavery and that the US government is acting like Nazi Germany. He asserted that being gay is a choice, Muslims aren't

qualified to seek the US presidency, the Holocaust could have been prevented if persecuted Europeans owned more guns and - just a few days ago - that the US government should cut off funding to universities that are found to exhibit "extreme political bias".

Mr Carson's comments on abortion have set off yet another cycle of outrage from the left - a reaction that he will likely wear as a badge of honour. "Carson's comments are part of a larger disinformation campaign by Christian fundamentalists and other elements of the American right in which examples from the United States' slave regime are used to delegitimise women's full equality and freedom," writes Salon's Chauncey Devega.

The Washington Post's Jonathan Capehart writes: "Carson is a crackpot who should get nowhere near the White House, let alone the presidential nomination of a major political party. His incendiary and ignorant comments - not political correctness, not racism - are the cause of the 'relentless attacks' on him."

At one point, according to the New York Times, Mr Carson's political team was concerned about their candidate's propensity to make off-the-cuff statements that provoked outrage. In the end, however, they decided to "let Carson be Carson" - and the results have validated their instincts so far. Much like fellow Republican frontrunner Donald Trump before him, Mr Carson has soared in public opinion polls of likely Republican primary voters despite controversial statements that would sink more traditional politicians.

In recent surveys of Iowa, the state where voters will first help select presidential nominees, Mr Carson has tied or even taken the lead from Mr Trump. **In a Monmouth University poll released Monday, Mr Carson is backed by 32%, 14 points over second-place Trump.** This development has prompted the New York billionaire to begin targeting Mr Carson. He remarked this weekend that the soft-spoken candidate is "super low on energy". He told a CNN interviewer that Mr Carson wouldn't be able to make deals with nations like Japan and China.

Why do some people think the pyramids were grain stores?

Vanessa Barford BBC News, Washington DC

7 November 2015

US presidential hopeful Ben Carson has attracted attention and some ridicule this week for saying Egypt's pyramids were built to store grain. As most schoolchildren know, they were actually tombs for pharaohs. But where did the granary idea come from, and would it even have worked?

Egyptian history isn't something American presidential candidates are usually quizzed about on the campaign trail, but this week Republican Ben Carson faced a barrage of questions after it emerged he believed the pyramids were built by the Biblical figure Joseph for storing grain.

This was revealed on Wednesday when Buzzfeed published a video of Carson addressing students at a Michigan university affiliated with his Seventh-day Adventist Church 17 years ago. But the famed neurosurgeon, currently the frontrunner for the Republican nomination, told inquisitive journalists that his views had not changed.

So where does this granary theory come from?

In the Old Testament, Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers, where he later interprets a pharaoh's dreams and helps the Egyptians survive a seven-year famine - by storing grain. **There is no mention of pyramids in the Bible's version of the story but in the Middle Ages people started to write them into the story.**

"If you go to St Mark's cathedral in Venice, there's a medieval depiction showing people using the three great pyramids of Giza as granaries in Joseph's story," says John Darnell, a professor of Egyptology at Yale University.

"If you didn't have access to the structures, the idea had some currency."
The belief was also popularised by Saint Gregory of Tours, a sixth century Frankish bishop, who wrote: "They are wide at the base and narrow at the top in order that the wheat might be cast into them through a tiny opening, and these granaries are to be seen to the present day."

The Book of John Mandeville, a popular 14th Century travel memoir, also referred to "Joseph's Granaries, which he had made to store the wheat for hard times". But Darnell says the idea began to fall out of favour during the Renaissance, when people made more detailed studies of the pyramids.

"Now of course we know the pyramids were burial chambers - albeit just one element of far greater complexes. The architectural predecessors and descendants of pyramids, their internal passageways and the function of their spaces can be traced right through the period into the new Kingdom of Egypt," he says.

The story of Joseph is supposedly set in the time of Egypt's Middle Kingdom, Darnell points out, which is centuries after the pyramids of Giza were built.

Egyptologists have also questioned other aspects of Carson's pyramid theory. Whatever held Joseph's grain "would have to be something awfully big if you stop and think about it", he said in his 1998 lecture.

He added: "And when you look at the way that the pyramids are made, with many chambers that are hermetically sealed, they'd have to be that way for various reasons." His argument appears to have been that the chambers were hermetically sealed to preserve grain. But Darnell rejects this logic.

"The major internal element of the pyramids is stone and brick - there wouldn't be much space for grain, and it would be huge waste of power and engineering," he says. "Plus we know ancient granaries tended to beehive-shaped and quite small. It wouldn't make sense

to build gigantic monumental granaries - it would take ages to grain in, and smother everyone when it poured out."

Egyptologist James Allen of Brown University agrees. "There's no way in the world an ounce of grain would be stored in a structure like that," he says. "It would be totally impractical. It's like saying the Tower of London was built as a granary store."

This is only one of a number of comments from Carson that have taken some Americans aback. Others include his suggestion that being gay is a choice, that Muslims aren't qualified to seek the US presidency, and President Barack Obama's healthcare reform was "the worst thing" since slavery. However, none of these statements appears to have affected his poll rating.

Darnell argues that the pyramid theory is "somewhat surprising and scary", coming from a leading contender for the presidency, but he also sees this as an opportunity. "Egyptology isn't known as being a major topic in politics. But we are actually facing some remarkably similar situations to then - a jockeying for power and influence in the world, a rising power in what is now Turkey, a political and military vacuum in what is now coastal Syria and Lebanon," he says.

"If candidates would take a closer look at ancient Egypt… it might contribute to how they approach problems today, and that would make me very happy."

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Uninhabited by evidence, awed visitors have enjoyed making up their own accounts of how and why pyramids were built. Some said the pyramids were granaries. Medieval Arab legends told of an ancient king who foresaw the Great Flood and built pyramids to store the secrets of astronomy, geometry, physics and technology. The traveler (Ibn Batuta (1304-1377) reported that Hermes Trismegistos (the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth) ‘having ascertained from the appearance of the stars that the deluge would take place, built the pyramids to contain books of science and knowledge and other

matters worth preserving from oblivion and ruin." This belief in a hidden relation between th Great Pyramid and the truths of science and religion never used.

But why did ancient Egyptians create their monuments in the shape of pyramids? **The word "pyramid," purely Greek in origin, gives us no clue.** A similar word in Greek means "wheaten cake," and perhaps the Greeks thought that from a distance the pyramids looked like cakes resting on the desert. **"Obelisk," another Greek word of architectural interest, had a comparable flippant origin because it was the Greek word for "little spit" or "skewer.**" We know that the ancient Egyptians called a tomb a Castle of Eternity. In the Egyptian language their word for pyramid may have meant "place of ascension." This would square with the fact the earliest such structures were step pyramids, and such step cores were found within later pyramids….

The meanings and benefits of the Pyramids were not all other-worldly. They would also be monuments of community, of the awesome power of the state. Centuries of travelers' tales, of legends and the fantasies of Haggadah illustrators have created the misleading stereotype of a tyrannical Pharoah with gangs of sweating slaves driven by heartless overseers. **While we idealize the pious craftsmen and humble laborers who built Amiens, Mont-St. Michel, and Chartres over centuries, and we extol a society that could put so much of its capital into enduring monuments of faith, we have not been generous to the pyramid builders.**

The advance of Egyptology has helped us see similarities in the monument builders of all ages. Many ancient Egyptian images survive to show laborers moving heavy stones and shaping sculpture , and foremen directing the work. We do no see whips or any other evidence of forced labor. Egyptologists now are agreed that the pyramids were not the work of slaves. Perhaps, the suggest, ancient Egyptians, like other people since, were proud of their grand public works. Firm in the shared loyalties and religious faith, might they not have been proud too, to join in works of community?

…**In the Age of Pyramids the word "pharaoh" itself meant "great house," not the person of the ruler but the place where the divine ruler dwelled.** Pyramid builders, affirming their faith and their community, were making an eternal dwelling place for their ruler.

Daniel Boorstin
The Creators, The Power of Stone

Let's stop picking up and tossing old red bricks. Let's get our palms wet, shall we?

BP to pay £12bn for Gulf oil spill
2 July 2015

BP has reached an $18.7bn (£12bn) settlement with the US Department of Justice (DoJ) following the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

It comes as a US federal judge was expected to rule on how much BP owed in Clean Water Act penalties following the environmental disaster. Over 125 million gallons of oil spewed into the Gulf after an explosion at the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in 2010.

The settlement is the largest paid by a single company in US history.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill was one of the worst environmental disasters in US history and claimed the lives of 11 people. In December the US Supreme Court rejected the oil giant's legal challenge over an original compensation deal agreed in 2012.

At the time BP had already paid out $2.3bn in so-called business economic loss claims out of a total of $4.25bn in compensation claims to individuals and businesses, according to Patrick Juneau, the administrator appointed by the courts to handle claims. The settlement process is also separate from other court proceedings relating to the spill, including environmental and criminal penalties. BP has already set aside $43bn even without the Clean Water Act fine.

'Realistic'

US Attorney General Loretta E Lynch said the BP settlement was the largest to be paid by a single company in US history.

"If approved by the court, this settlement would be the largest settlement with a single entity in American history; it would help repair the damage done to the Gulf economy, fisheries, wetlands and wildlife; and it would bring lasting benefits to the Gulf region for generations to come," she said.

In a statement, Bob Dudley, BP's group chief executive, called the settlement a "realistic outcome which provides clarity and certainty for all parties".

"For BP, this agreement will resolve the largest liabilities remaining from the tragic accident and enable BP to focus on safely delivering the energy the world needs."

"For the United States and the Gulf in particular, this agreement will deliver a significant income stream over many years for further restoration of natural resources and for losses related to the spill."

BP has reported a sharp fall in profits for the three months to the end of June as lower oil prices continue to hurt.

Underlying replacement cost profit (RCP) was $1.31bn (£841m) compared with $3.63bn a year ago.

However, after setting aside $7.5bn for further costs relating to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster, BP recorded a loss of $6.26bn.

On 2 July, BP reached an $18.7bn settlement with the US Department of Justice (DoJ) over the oil spill.

BP said that in all, it was setting aside $9.8bn in the quarter for costs related to settlements with the DoJ and 400 local governments in relation to the oil spill, which became one of the worst environmental disasters in US history and claimed the lives of 11 people.

The results come at a time of continuing uncertainty for oil companies, with oil prices more than 50% lower than last year. Brent crude oil stood at $52.93 a barrel on Tuesday, compared with roughly $115 a year ago.

The lower oil price is not only hurting the profits of the major oil firms, but also means they have cut back on investment in exploration in areas where they consider it makes little economic sense to drill.

BP chief executive Bob Dudley said: "The external environment remains challenging, but BP moved quickly in response and we continue to do so. "Our work to increase efficiency and reduce costs is embedding sustainable benefits throughout the group and we continue with capital discipline and divestments."

Mr Dudley added: "In the past few weeks, oil prices have fallen back in response to continued oversupply and market weakness and the recent agreements regarding Iran. I am confident that positioning BP for a period of weaker prices is the right course to take, and will serve the company well for the future."

Analysis: Douglas Fraser, BBC Scotland business and economy editor

Eleven lives lost and the huge oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico five years ago have so far cost BP $54.6bn (£35bn).

And the London-based oil giant admits that it still can't say it has capped this dollar gusher, or how much it will be in the end.

BP is not alone in reporting a sharp drop in earnings, relying on its downstream refining to prop up the upstream problems. Later this week, Royal Dutch Shell reports on its half-year figures.

Loretta E. Lynch has her name spelled as US Attorney General with her middle initial included so she can't be confused with other AG's. That's much like Robert E. Lee, as if we may get lost in historical identification, to know who was exactly the South's losing general, i.e., not perhaps the victorious Robert D. and Robert Z. of the Confederacy. If they said Loretta B. Lynch then we know she can't be the AG with full authority so this is the real one, the fried-chicken and pepper-vinegar on collard greens one, that also cut a quick path into FIFA's fall from grace. Now it is confirmed this is the one with the central "E" that is positively identified. That's called a focus to detail and we should be grateful for the journalistic diligence. I figured out why I could sleep at night since that important middle initial has been set straight. It sure is nice to keep things in order.

On the subject of initials however, why was it perplexing to not ever hear or read the full name of BP: British Petroleum, with a logo of corporate green and yellow environmentally friendly hues for the largest payout in US history for blackening the Gulf with million of barrels of crude? BP could be Berlin, Bangkok, Belize or Bangalore Petrol. Baton Rouge, Biloxi, Bolinas, even Bakersfield too. Just eat the chicken and don't think about where the factory is. Consume but don't think, don't question. If we say green, you see green.

BP informally I can understand, like MS for Microsoft or AAA for Automobile Association of America, but for the gravity of the deaths, damage and negotiated multi-billion dollar payout over years, I would have preferred to read a transparent

quote from Robert Dudley (less Bob with two all beef patties, pickles, onions, special sauce, sesame-seed buns & side of fries and opt for a more formal like Robert E. - nobody writes of the general as Bobby Lee with a chocolate shake and two straws to go), British Petroleum's group chief executive. The first article has misplaced values on establishing the AG's name and not the BP complete corporate name. However, now I know what to do when one case of Temecula Syrah is damaged going to the Falkland Islands by having a boardroom table of ethically derelict NY attorneys issue a statement from V with bees and butterflies scribbles in the margins and ethnically diverse school kids in a ripening vineyard, joyfully holding sunflowers at play with grandparents in the distance with a circumspect apology. We can always learn from the big guys.

If you go to a BP pump, it just says BP and you jolly purchase the gasoline for your car. There is no Union Jack, no red, white and blue. No best friends forever flags crossed of Old Glory and Union Jack, allies through thick and thin. There is no picture of the Queen and her dashing charismatic prince of a son named Charles, that coming-of-age girls swooned over in his day like Justin Bieber, to be king. No pictures of the London skyline or a glutinous face of Henry VIII to symbolize complete contempt of the status quo and laws, a distinct corrupt and greedy my way or the highway kind of guy. No enlightening music from Arnold Bax, Henry Purcell, Vaughn Williams and Edward Elgar piped over Pumps #3 & #6 to give a lift to spirits and spring you refreshed into your journey into more gridlock traffic along with discount coupons at the local Mr. Pickwick's Fish & Chips or a two-for-one pint at everyone's favorite Frog & Grog.

BP in $20bn settlement over fatal US oil spillage
5 October 2015, BBC

Oil giant BP has agreed to pay $20bn (£13.2bn) to settle claims with the US stemming from the company's Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

An explosion on BP's deep-water drill, off the coast of Louisiana in 2010 killed 11 workers. Millions of barrels of oil were spilled into the surrounding waters.
The ensuing spill took 87 days to stop. BP says the deal gives it "certainty" over what it must pay.

The spill affected the shorelines of five states- Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida- crippling the ecosystems and local economies. BP spokesman Geoff Morrell said the deal gives "BP certainty with respect to its financial obligations."

The settlement is the largest the US government has ever reached with a single company. It requires court approval to be finalised. In July, the Department of Justice and BP announced an agreement for $18.7bn. This newest figure includes some payment BP has already made.

The money will be used by the US government and the affected states to handle environmental and economic damages.

"This historic resolution is a strong and fitting response to the worst environmental disaster in American history," said US Attorney General Loretta Lynch at a press conference on Monday.

The deal settles the largest legal claims pending against BP for the Deepwater Horizon spill.

By everyone calling BP by not its rightful name of British Petroleum when the chips are down for payoff it somehow makes me feel a bit of smoke, a bit of fog deployed in the public sphere. Certainly, the court documents would have had to identify British Petroleum in full. It's not a secret but it's not in your face either. If the same negligent accident by entities called, let's think - let's say ARAMCO or Shell, perhaps

their names or owning parties would have been realistically spelled out in full somewhere down the line, the truth breaking surface. Compare this:

Thirty ships left Dutch Harbor in Alaska on Thursday for the Arctic to support two initial exploratory wells.

The company has already committed about $7bn (£4.5bn) to the controversial project, and is confident it will find huge quantities of oil in the region.

But if the initial wells do not find oil, Shell will contemplate walking away from the region entirely.

The US Department of the Interior gave the green light to Shell to commence Arctic oil exploration in May this year, and the Anglo-Dutch group clearly believes it will get the remaining necessary permits in the next week or two.

This BBC article did not have to identify the Anglo-Dutch ownership of Royal Dutch Shell in American waters. However, in contrast, BP relevant articles just skip along purely BP and done. Finally, after many articles it is indentified as being in London. I have lingering doubts if mitigating BP's name is purely entirely innocent for public digestion. Article after article never once spells out the name in full, which because I was looking for it, intensifies the curiosity. Hypothetically, I wonder if SP for Shanghai Petroleum or INP for Imperial Nippon Petroleum were drilling off American coasts would be a cause for national consternation? Would they have been granted long term drilling rights? If there were to be a large spill, would racially charged terms of endearment be yammered? Would people full of vinegar and raised pumping fists say such compelling and crude things as, "Next time just spill your damn soy sauce so at least we can eat the fish and they will taste better! You know there is a difference between black pepper crab and black oil crab! Let me get a bib, hammer and shell bucket for you so you can taste what we' talkin' 'bout! We know you like dim sum, well this family treat is best served sticky, cold and

finger lickin' good. We call it dim dum' ! We like our oysters shucked fresh from the bed, not *oilsters* found dead!"

The Economist….BP Blood in the Water, pg 59
17 January 2015

Investors in BP are a patient bunch, and well rewarded for it. **Britain's third largest company** pays generous and reliable dividends, making it a mainstay of many private and institutional portfolios…Although BP's dividend yield is a juicy 5.8%, its shares have fallen by a fifth over 10 years, greatly underperforming the broader market and making total shareholder returns slightly negative. This is mainly beause of the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010, which cost 11 lives and a stonking $43 billon in fines, legal bills, compensation and clean-up…BP has slimmed since then….An institutional shareholder wonders if BP may resort to paying next month's dividend in the other two…**And BP, though nominally British, is strongest in America..BP has made a lot money there so far (Russia)…**

BP profits hit by lower oil and gas prices
27 October 2015, BBC

Oil giant BP has reported a fall in profits due to lower oil and gas prices.

Replacement cost profit between July and September was $1.23bn (£802m), compared with $2.38bn a year earlier. Total revenue was $55.9bn against $94.8bn a year ago. The oil price dipped below $50 a barrel in the quarter, while it was above $100 for much of the same period last year.

Prices have dropped due to oversupply and weaker demand.

On an underlying basis, profit for the third quarter was $1.8bn, down from $3bn a year earlier but higher than analysts' estimates of $1.2bn. BP shares opened almost 2% higher,

but by mid-afternoon were down 1% on the day. Replacement cost profit is a standard measure used in the oil industry that takes into account the price of oil.

Reflecting the tougher environment across the industry, the company's capital expenditure for the period fell to $4.3bn, down from $5.3bn. BP continued to rein in spending estimates for 2015, which it now expects to be about $19bn compared with the $24bn-$26bn forecast a year ago.

The company also announced that the total cost of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 would reach $55bn, higher than previous estimates.
Earlier this month, the company said it had agreed to pay $20bn to settle claims in the US. To meet these costs, it is selling off assets, and expects to divest $10bn this year, with another $3bn-$5bn in 2016.

BP also said it was maintaining its dividend at 10 cents a share.

Analysis: Kamal Ahmed, BBC business editor

Low oil prices are not all bad news for integrated oil companies. Yes, life upstream (the exploration and production part of the business) might be tougher because the business is not being paid as much for every barrel of oil it produces. But, for the downstream business (that's refined oil products such as fuel, lubricants and petrochemicals for making things like paint and plastic bottles) a low oil price can be a veritable boon. That's because the input costs - essentially the low oil price - are down and therefore the profit margin can be boosted.

Despite the company's immediate troubles, analysts said there was some reason for optimism. "Refining margins are better than expected, the company remains a cash generating machine and costs are being attacked aggressively to suit the difficult backdrop," said Richard Hunter at Hargreaves Lansdown stockbrokers.
"BP's longer term outlook remains positive."

'Hard time'

Oil prices have fallen sharply due to increased supply from US shale producers and lower demand, in part due to the slowdown in the Chinese economy.

The major oil producers of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, known as Opec, would normally cut production to support prices, but they have decided to keep pumping to try and flush out US shale producers which, they hope, will be unable to withstand a sustained period of low prices.

"BP has successfully adapted to changing circumstances many times in its history and, in a hard time for the entire industry, I believe we will once again successfully take on today's challenges," said BP chief executive Bob Dudley.

"We are already in action, with a quality portfolio and clear plans for the future. I am confident BP will continue to deliver value into the years and decades ahead."
BP is the first European or US oil major to report its third quarter earnings.

During the crisis nobody in America said, “Those damned bloody redcoat Beatles taking revenge on us for the Treaty of Paris in 1783! They wouldn’t let that sludge happen off their own coasts knowingly leak for days without a plan.” No. It was just a green and yellow BP problem, not British, elusive of what true national colors BP has, whatever BP is, if you dare cared while splitting wings at KFC. Incredible!

In the years ahead, I suppose we have no worries of KORAL Energy (KORea ALaska) putting up stations with Hankook Tires, KIA and Hyundai brochures in easy reach at the pump in the US. They would just have stock images of Tahitian and pristine Tongan blue water reefs of which nobody in Seoul’s management would visit but they look good for their eco-green & clean company image to fill vast holds above the Arctic Circle on Hyundai, Samsung and Daewoo built double-hulled

tankers on return voyages to China and Japan. Dare we dig a spade into the flaky cooled crust if we want to find the broth and meat in the pot pie? Yes, life has simple rewards if we keep our heads down like ostriches to not see the event horizon. The latter choice is easier but often not the best as you soon lose more than just your feathers but something perhaps a twee more precious. Fill 'er up, please with premium grade.

BP reminds me of a candidate for president many years past against Daddy Bush named Pierre DuPont. Pierre was a scion of the noted American dynasty that politically preferred to be called Pete. His given name he felt was an impediment with a lil' too much foie gras on it for voters. That's sad because the French were instrumental in America having the wherewithal to break from the British which was no easy matter. After the terminal loss of New France in 1759 at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City in which both British and French Generals, Wolfe and Montcalm died in what is now Canada, it was a French flotilla with a chafing memory for vindication years later that cut off British supplies and reinforcements from New York that eventually strangled Gen. Cornwallis and the redcoats. Most Americans are unaware of this momentous event as allies against the British crown. This was a dark day when Go Big Red was forced to go white flag, not Union Jack, to King George's dismay. Soon after, it was probably an opportune time to re-think about what color you wear on battlefields and go to camouflage to be less conspicuous. The rest, as they say is history, is about fluff of freedom and being unchained from distant colonial masters, only if we are brainwashed enough to turn a blind eye and stuff our ears to the wailing pain to the cancer of racism that was systemic for achieving prosperity on the backs and with hands as Harriet Beecher Stowe, would lament with her epic book "Life Among the Lowly," which we know better as "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that continues to ravage the world's superpower to this very day.

Today, the average woman often owns upwards of ten, twenty, fifty pairs of shoes, some of which have very little practical use and languish in the back of the closet until just the right occasion arises. This is thanks, in part, not only to factories but **also to industrial leaders like DuPont, which introduced low-cost artificial materials into the market in the early 1960s.** On the heels of the cookie-cutter experiment 1950s, youthful consumers were willing to experiment with style, and they tested out new, ourtrageous designs like the cuissarde- a sexy thigh-high boot-with aplomb. Then, in the 1980s, another important development: sneaker companies, eager to promote their technologically innovate product, courted sport stars to appear as spokesmodels, and the age of the celebrity endorsement was born. Finally, progress came full circle when, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the reign of the fairy-tale cobbler with his handmade, bespoke shoes returned. These glamourous, high-quality shoes could be purchased for a considerable price, and expressions of status- always subtly enmeshed with the worlds of footwear and fashion- became as conspicuous as the ruby red soles of a pair of Christian Louboutins.

…These days, when women pick out their shoes, they find themselves, consciously or not, negotiating between choices that have already been made for them by the fashion elite- the group of powerful designers, editors, and stylists who determine which shoes to show on the runways, and then to feature on the pages of popular magazines- and the prerogatives of style…**It's up to each individual to decide who she wants to be in any given moment, and what information shed like her footwear to convey.** Shoes have evolved to take on unique personalities and to communicate with the world in precise nonverbal language. If you ask a woman why she loves shoes she'll tell you that they're beautiful, and they make her feel good, that they have the ability to transform an outfit from simple jeans and a T-shirt into something showstopping and spectacular.

…In truth, they were beyond her budget either way, but she was considering their value in other nonmonetary terms. **"When I go out, I want people to see those red soles," she confessed. "I'm tired of not being taken seriously."**

- Rachelle Bergstein

Women from the Ankle Down
The story of shoes and how they define us

Ah, this quote is insightful for further reflection. We see parallels for digestion of another great consumer oriented product, wine, in which who, what and where are so important to weigh a purchase for *social approval*. This is why labels from France, convey a sense of sophistication plus safety as much as the Christian Louboutin red soles. Asian consumers, have been inordinately prone to not think for themselves – much like sheep shepherded by fashion houses telling the public what is in, what is out- by perceiving finer California wines as less than competitive and less to be desired to be admired- caring more for what is conveyed on the label, and inconveniently less about quality of taste and food pairings. Importers, intelligent established importers, have in many instances been defiantly cool to secure new labels from California, by not using reds such as Zinfandel which pairs perfectly with Asian cuisines as long arrows in their quivers. Zinfandel is already proven as a trusted varietal to thrust into the market, the importers with blinders on wrongly believe they could be taking on undue risk by introducing and promoting quality California wine. Europeans do not produce Zinfandel and this varietal stands firmly on it own. **Acceptable risk to many Asian importers is adding more French, Spanish and Italian labels; unacceptable risk is adding independent Zinfandel and upper tier Cabernet Sauvignon labels from California with less of an emphasis on distinct labels but more on recognizing the regions that could challenge the status quo of false assumptions and perceptions**. Contrary to all independent evidence from noted experts from even Europe that verify excellence of many California varietals from Napa, Sonoma and Central Coast, many large importers steadfastly remain recalcitrant to the detriment of Asian consumers as

they walk down narrow stultifying selections as though the condemned by witnessing underperforming California labels with disdain-if any at all- which were procured with the lowest of price points as the guiding criteria- without a more enlightened approach of recognizing quality and varietals at higher profitable price points. **The importers, of course, blame the wines solely with a stereotyped broad brush with a negligent nonchalance as opposed to taking responsibility for procuring a paltry selection of shoulder shrug varietals with uncompetitive labels and not assertively promoting the wines properly**. Too many wine selections in Asia are treated as safe, risk-free pedestrian uninspired city zoos in their shops and for distribution with bored yawning caged game eating at routine meal times; the joy and excitement of the open expanse of exploring the vast open Serengeti has been leeched out from the experience, the invigorating and necessity of the wild has been put down and laid to rest on cold concrete. The consumer is not at fault, the needle swings to the importer!

If Indonesia's Sumatra produces excellent coffee, why would any importer order green tea to later blame the consignment stocked next to offerings from Yunnan province? In this context, this is what importers have been historically doing from California and later pointing a finger whilst imploring California wines are not up to par. It was not a fair showing from the beginning. You put a tired beaten-up Peugeot next to a new Porsche 911 Carrera. I was in Guangzhou and a large wine importer had one, only one California wine, a Napa Cabernet Sauvignon from a reputable winery many know, and the product manager stated that nobody wants California wine. I begged to differ as the effort and investment was not sufficient to honestly state with a straight face that their experience with California wine as summed up with one label tucked away to be berated as worthy. With that kind of attitude from management and lack of commitment should any one label be the indicator of the vast swath of California wine? Is it fair to pick out one dish of dim sum and then categorically state that nobody likes dim sum when the joy of it is the many choices? Does Gai Lan define dim sum categorically? Can we say the same about sushi? I will let one piece of Toro define all Japanese cuisine. Perhaps Pad Thai defines all Thai

cuisine. If I had one Rhone should that be the end all of knowing everything about French wine? Would it be just for me to make a sharp conclusion on all of French wine resting on that one bottle from Côtes du Ventoux? Is that smart or fair? Hardly. That is essentially what some importers are opting to do or approaching so with California wine. This is indicative of the flat ignorance in the trade that needs to be dispelled and Asian importers are often entirely guilty of this offense. I have the marked passport to prove it, I have seen it with my own eyes. The import protocols for selections are deficient, not the wine; the attitude to market the wines are deficient, not the wine! Stop this injustice!

Today's marketplace is hyper-global and demands better and many Asian importers are decidedly guilty of patronizingly treating their clientele as credit card carrying children with a selection of stale biscuits and not a spectrum of a welcoming hot buffet for adults. People are demanding choices and importers – not consumers as they would have us to believe to substantiate the failure of their positions - have been too often restricting the market's choices. If any importers, take umbrage, it is only because a chord has been struck which should require cause for pause. iPhones and Galaxies were not so along thought of as too expensive for the masses, are now deemed necessary, with a sea change shift which sunk market leader Nokia rapidly. After being bought, for a few cool billions, Nokia is now pared down to the bone with little fanfare by Microsoft. Market shift.

Many importers, operating within narrow corridors that believe risk should be taken with adding more European labels for import as opposed to adding higher quality California labels - without disparaging France and other wine producing nations even though California wine if often favored in blind taste tests- are perceived as having less of a cachet for social approval; yet, the iPhone designed an easy ride from where I went to high school in Silicon Valley, does. A California Cabernet Sauvignon produced with French oak barrels in Napa unfairly eludes the mystique of chateaus is a perception that should be demystified with in-store education and real market promotions, not back-in-the-corner boxes. France's

position in wine exports will always be secure. France is fine and we can be grateful. Clients should be encouraged to remain faithful to those they love, but be brazenly promiscuous with sampling wines and explore the world. **Wines should not be left unattended and let them sell themselves. Importers and their venues should be dynamic, never static. Clients should be encouraged to try the same varietals produced in other countries.** The wine inquisitive public should be challenged to try native varietals from other countries: Italian Nebbiolo & Sangiovese, Spanish Tempranillo, Argentinian Malbec, California Zinfandel. Wine and marketing very much co-exist and are not independent of each other. **I know from my own observations in retail sales, that customers are inclined to purchase what they already know, missing new opportunities, if not directed or suggested**. Women would be looking for New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs and bypass a remarkable Sancerre because they did not see Sauvignon Blanc on the label. Bottles of Pomerol would go untouched but clients would be touching Merlot. Zinfandel in Asia needs to be explained and promoted otherwise they will be as Sancerre in California unless someone tells clients how delicious they are with local food pairings. **Many importers have been complicit and grudgingly negligent to spread the spectrums to wider latitudes, not by leading but allowing themselves to be unfortunately *led* without honest debate and sharper tact**. Do you prefer the Dark Ages or the Age of Enlightenment? I ask because many importers need to turn on the lights and say hello to their shuffling Quasimodo bell-tower approved selections. If that's not funny, perhaps impoverished narrow abused selections are not either. **Clients demand more choices with access to information and many importers still put up an unwarranted resistance for change.**

Importers have been woefully deficient in not expanding and explaining the benefits of grape varietals imported. Too often clients fend on their own to make purchases which defaults for them into what is perceived as safe: what they already know or told to know by society and stick with it. I have yet to meet anybody wishing to purchase wine who takes an acute delight in feeling insecure and hardly

savvy what they are open to purchasing. It is the duty of importers and wine merchants to engage their clientele to share with them their range of options and to diminish impediments, not raise them, as too many Asian importers are keen on doing. Staff need to know how to sell and field questions, not just dandily prancing around speaking about chateaus with pirouettes as token too important corsage-pinned sommeliers with bows on their shoes, acting like Nobel laureate chief surgeons in theater of some absurd ballet presentation- when only thoughtful no nonsense cotton balls and bandages are needed with *reassuring advice for clients to return to talk about the wine (implying you do care),* are important to be recruited. A client telling their own story about the quality of the wine reinforces the quality of the importer and secures the trust in the buyer-seller relationship. The ability to listen to the needs of clients is just as- if not more - important than what you wish to say. Engaging clients in the merits of higher quality wines is why many of them will better appreciate to spend upscale which improves the quality of their purchases and keeps your accounting departments smiling, ultimately holding your enterprise in higher esteem. If wines are discussed, the likelihood of higher price points can then be readily attained. No meaningful discussions, less price points and less bottles sold or shipped is a guarantee. The one California Cabernet Sauvignon was treated like stray dog that somehow was lucky to find a home on the floor and could stay as long as it stayed quiet and kept the floor clean. I almost wanted to tell the winery how poorly the importer treated their wine with veiled disdain. The winery deserved better and the importer needed to check themselves on the near vagrancy of California wines. The blame in so many words was, “People don’t ask for California wines.” Damn, I guess not the way you treat us! Just because you have a one party political system doesn’t mean you have to get only one wine from California to then denigrate. Do you only have one pair of shoes madam? No, I am confident to suppose with your panty hose. Let’s not cross lines and make the wrong associations please.

In Singapore last year (2014), I was in the lobby area of a large well-recognized importer to meet a new contact with a genuinely charming and helpful staff. They

have several shops and wide distribution. My wife and I know Singapore well with old friends who we were visiting before flying off to Bali on holiday. In an office window facing the lobby, it proudly had a sign with one word that requires no translation: California. That's a good sign! The purchasing manager came out and told me they do not carry any California wine but were indeed interested. The manager in our conversation, who was pleasant, asked me if I could procure Russian River Pinot Noir for them. Yes, of course, that's what we do. When I inquired later if they could come tour the wineries to see and taste all the options for themselves – as opposed to just shipping samples- it was met with the generous courtesy of a stony silence of dubious professional integrity and conduct. Saying no is for adults, hiding in silence is for bratty children. This importer, as opposed to being genuinely open to new opportunities to better understand California wine with an insider's advantage at hand- as other sage importers gladly take advantage of - found the convenient courage to activate the turtle strategy of pulling one's head inside, as the optimum tact for maintaining what they did not know. A bevy of Robert Parker 90+ ratings and a shrewd excursion to add and promote Zinfandel so perfect for the amalgamations of cuisines of Singapore to give their operations a wider latitude of choices that were not even in competition with other California labels, was dead on arrival. I am pleased we did not air freight samples because if managers communicate poorly they have a tendency to fabricate illegitimate reasons or insincerely disappear with very legitimate wine. This is the Achilles Heel of the trade unfortunately.

Another area of umbrage with importers are those managers, who are prone to purchasing as though for themselves and not stocking for the market. Importers need to put aside their personal likes and dislikes and serve the demands of the market first and not vice versa. Personal proclivities need to be checked. Stocking your private cellar is one thing entirely different than stocking for your clientele unless it is you! Your tastes are different than other tastes which is the humbling truth.

I cannot tell you how many return customers came back specifically to see me to thank me for recommendations on a previous purchase and inquiring what else is new and what that they should know about. Some of these were professionals in their fields but they understood I would give them an intelligent spread of wines for consideration. They appreciated somebody could take the time to navigate the world of wine and not hit icebergs. A few bottles before turned into cases sold at higher price points! This can only happen if you take the lead, listen and show the way. **Past importers have allowed me to select wines for their import approval which were received with high acclaim and within budget**. Their clients gave them the feedback that the wines were some of the best they ever tasted and they had gained a new respect for California wine. The risk they first perceived turned out to not be risky at all! Importers that put themselves in narrow corners should bring a paint brush to complete their positions properly because they will have not red soles, but wet.

I have strong doubts if being a sommelier automatically transfers competently into good salesmanship. Excellence in understanding the technicalities of wine does not equate to the ability to sell wine. Being an expert in constitutional law does not equate to the ability to sway a jury with far less education but who still hold the verdict in their hands. Aircraft carrier low-fuel night landings in inclement weather are not necessary for full-tank propeller daylight training concerns. A University of Paris physics professor who advises Airbus, is not required to layout how lift is generated with mathematical models in her métier to make us arithmetic mortals feel patently dumb in Flight School 101, returning home to reinvestigate our knowledge of color wheels with milk and cookies since we decided in two minutes into her presentation that aviation is too much for us to comprehend. I implore us to find the courage to re-think our positions. What is often held near and dear probably is not when wine is concerned.

The buyer of Christian Louboutin's red soled shoes, is indicative that consumers do want more choice and access to better quality products. **Women are increasingly**

important for higher price point wine purchases and men not savvy to knowing or underestimating women's purchasing power are purely deluding themselves. **Men are missing the mark on ascertaining just how important their best clients can be who are women**. **Women are incredibly gifted buyers of wine and both go together like lips to lipstick.** I have had women make some of the most expensive purchases of wine, serve them to applause, return triumphant from their social engagements and gratefully re-stock. Do it again! Women purchase more than just make-up, clothes and shoes. Women talk and will talk better with wine. Happy wife, happy life. If women are not wives, they still demand to be happy and wine is an express ticket to get there with family, friends, associates and significant others. **The trick is women need choices, such as cosmetics and shoes, don't you dare deny them!** Wine is for adults, not for children, so treat them as such! Fine wine is a vehicle for women to talk about their lives and express their status and sophistication**. Like fashion, importers need to frame for the consumer what hits the current social mark. Importers need to convey to women that quality Zin is in! You have to help women help themselves yet importers still gain all the credit in sales and the client's esteem. Something new to talk about! Isn't that refreshing?**

Likewise, importers callously making up their minds for consumers in their market spheres, do themselves and their clients a disservice- by not in any way denigrating Euro wines- but by making more quality California wines available to their clients. **The overarching fear in Asia of making errors and being exposed to potential internal blame, therefore, not taking on a measure of calculated risk I may add, is a by-product of why European ships arrived in Asia for trade; not the other way around which is exactly why you are reading this essay in English** (I have Asian friends and we discussed this cultural phenomenon; this is not my personal speculation). Those importers that remain spineless, wilting and static with reactionary risk-free positions, as opposed to having bold objectives and embracing enlightened dynamic world wine selections - most certainly inclusive of higher quality California wines- will be the victors in burgeoning, savvy and growing

wine markets in search of more choices than previous generations. For those looking for red sole shoes, there are also those willing to appreciate higher caliber fruit-forward red wines from California. Importers have been guilty with deficient purchasing import policies - not the complacent myth of clients locally not desiring better wines. **Nonsense! Don't believe in what you wish to believe, but challenge your assumptions**. If you have a mansion, why live in one room? Would you not be wasting your comfort and advantage? Tight selections will, if not already, harm importers market credibility.

The rapid transfers of information with wine exposes the deficiencies of thin selections. With an eye on the present, importers need to be shrewd and plan for the future. Games are never one when defensive positions are taken without an effective offensive strategy. Concentrate on raising your game, not worrying about who will take the blame. Be a leader and don't be led. I have seen this dynamic unfortunately with too many Asian import buyers focused on safe-zoning and not striking at winning; comfortable being in the pack and not in front of the pack ahead of their competitors, excelling splendidly in mediocrity- afraid of being their best. Bold gets the gold and thin hits the tin. Market shift.

So why the Christian Louboutins when Steve Madden is selling similarly proportioned shoes at a fraction of the price? It could be that women are actually dressing to impress one another: their friends and neighbors who also read fashion magazines and style blogs, and who are knowledgeable enough about designers to recognize the difference between a five-inch Chinese Laundry platform pump and the real-deal Jimmy Choos. Luxury shoes are mare made in Italy, and mass market ones are made in China…but despite reports that "men don't notice women in high heels," Manolo Blahnik begs to differ. "It's the height of the shoes that gives most women that sexy rhythm when they walk- and that's what men love most…Anyone who says men don't notice must be out their mind; the first thing that men look at are a woman's legs, and there is nothing more flattering than high heels. The male reaction to heels is half normal and half perversion, but some men tell me I've saved their marriage."

- Rachelle Bergstein

Women from the Ankle Down
The story of shoes and how they define us

When consumers start putting quality California wines on the table, perceptions can change as the bottles will speak for themselves of their pedigree. **Create the allure that what is fashionable now is Zinfandel and wines from Napa and Sonoma.** Sell the wines at higher price points, not as cheap disposable beac sandals, but as sexy high heels making a public statement to be admired. **Start with minimal quantities for test marketing purposes but challenge your operations and challenge your clients. This is an opportunity for real marketing to triumph and create a new demand for a very proven and worthy varietal. The opportunities have been directly in the face of importers**. I implore them to re-evaluate selections to create winning strategies and stop the backseat hope-to-be-safe import strategy, but take charge and put a firm hand on the wheel. Importers need to drive the market and not be passengers. Can we agree that pilots are best at the flight deck and not with the pack, watching movies with Shiraz in the back? When you know what you are doing, you have no fear of heights and to where you are going.

Fortunately, I came across an article from two master sommeliers comparing Old World - Europe, from New World – Americas, which is revealing and is an independent assessment not beholden to any region or country from EAT magazine in Vancouver, Canada:

...Today, the grape variety is king and generally occupies the place of honor on the label as well as in the bottle. **The objective of the winemaker is to produce a wine that expresses the grape itself, but not necessarily where the grape is grown.**

...Beyond distinguishing European countries from the rest of the wine producing world, the terms Old and New World have specific style of wine associated with them. Though

they are stereotypes, they are still used as a reference. The generalization of the Old World wines is that they are restrained, earthy and decidely structured wither by firm tannins or acidity or both. They tend to show better with food, and in Europe this is how wine is enjoyed....

...New World wines, on the other hand, are described as friendly and softer (in California we say fruit-forward) The wines are therefore fruit driven, riper and more generous (ah.. hot California Sun!...lower latitudes than other European countries). While they are easier to drink on their own and more immediately approachable, they are often deemed less age worthy (ready to drink younger with more vitality, more flavors).

"So which is better? **The Old World has somehow managed to convince us that it's wines are superior.** Certainly, the years of experience has served many regions well. It has allowed places like Burgundy to determine which sites are the best and how to encourage the wine to express that. **Yet, while carrying on traditions can be beneficial, simply hanging on to them because that's the way it has always been done doesn't necessarily make for better wines.** Furthermore, when questionable traditions are bound in the regulations it can be a detriment to quality. Italy in particular has been a victim to this. In the red wine region of Chianti, white grapes are required in the blend for decades. They eventually came to their senses and changed the law.

With fewer regulations, producers in the New World have been free of the shackles that have sometimes hindered European winemakers. This has allowed for more experimentation. The New World has also been quicker to embrace technology. Modern advances have gone a long way in improving overall quality of wine. The New World has been criticized, however, for its over reliance on technology as well as for following the current trends to the point of disregarding the terroir (soil, climate and vineyards inclinations to the sun) all together.

…..When tasted against one another, the New World still seems to have a leg up on the Old World. Riper and fruitier, the wines stand out and tends to be favourites. We put this to the test in our recent France versus California challenge, and California won. What a surprise!"

California wine, by the numbers

By Patrick Comiskey
August 21, 2015 San Francisco Chronicle

California's year in wine, by any measure, was impressive. Despite the challenges of yet another drought year, which led to one of the earliest bud-breaks and earliest harvests (already well under way) in recent memory, **the industry is robust and expanding, and global demand for this vinous product shows no signs of abating. Here's a look at some of the more impressive areas in the state's growth.**

15: New American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) in California

In the past year, the U.S. Alcohol Tax and Trade Bureau has granted AVA status to 15 new California appellations. The new AVAs crisscross the state, from Mount Shasta (Manton Valley) to Malibu (which faced a drought-inspired ban on vineyard development just weeks after its designation). But by far the most sweeping appellation action was centered in Paso Robles, on the Central Coast, which was given 11 geographically significant subdivisions, effectively redrawing this vast region and drawing distinctions between its cool western reaches and its warmer eastern sections.

Eleven is a huge number of appellations for consumers to acquaint themselves with, but growers are delighted nonetheless. "Establishing the reputations of the new AVAs in the marketplace will take time," says Jason Haas of Tablas Creek (which has already begun using its new moniker, "Adelaida District — Paso Robles"), "but it's important. We know that the regions have differences; we now have the tools with which to build this understanding. We can be part of more and better-informed discussions with wine lovers who are interested in how place is reflected in wine."

10: Estimated percentage of female winemakers in California

On the face of it, 1 in 10 seems like a disheartening number. But the figure refers only to head winemakers; many hundreds play supportive roles as assistants, enologists, and laboratory and vineyard managers, not to mention financial officers and administrators — all of which represent rungs on the ladder to top positions. "I think we should feel optimistic," said Lucia Albino Gilbert of Santa Clara University, who's been compiling data on female winemakers for, among other publications, the American Association of Wine Economists. Gilbert admits that the winemaking field is so fluid, it's very difficult to compile a reliable figure for women in top positions. "But the attitudes have changed a lot. Wineries that have had a woman winemaker are more likely to hire a second if that person moves on." This doesn't surprise Zelma Long of Zelphi Wines, who got her start at Robert Mondavi Winery in the early '70s. "Well, we're certainly capable," she says. **"Women have great natural sensory abilities, they're well organized, have a good attention to detail, all those things that make for a good winemaker."** There's still a way to go, she says, but to her the trend feels inexorable. "It's congruent with what I see in general, in business, and in politics: Women are taking leadership roles; it's like the slow tide that doesn't go backwards."

117: The number of grape varieties grown in the state

Of the 615,000 acres of wine grapes in California, nearly half of them, 305,600, are devoted to the Big Five: Cabernet, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Zinfandel. But in the state's annual acreage report, there's a category of "other" (white and red), and that other acreage, in 2014, stands at more than 40,000. Much of this category goes into bulk production, but more and more of it is being rescued by winemakers seeking to work with something outside of the Big Five — and not only are they finding grapes, they're finding customers.

Winemaker Chris Brockway of Broc Cellars in Berkeley loves taking advantage of these alt-varieties. "My first work at a California winery was at De Rose Cellars in Hollister,"

he says. "They were working with old vineyards and grew all these odd grapes like Negrette and Cabernet Pfeffer, alongside their Zinfandel." When Brockway started his own label, he focused on Rhone varieties, but was soon straying down less well-trodden pathways to find his grapes.

A search for Gamay Noir, for example, led him to Valdiguie, once known as "Napa Gamay" in California. Pockets of Valdiguie remain in the ground in California, much of it older vines; in the right hands the grape makes a bright, purple, peppery red that has a small but earnest appeal. "Young people like it," says Brockway, "partly because it's cheaper (below $25), but also because it's something new. **We don't hear people saying 'I only drink Cabernet' anymore**. They're not starting with the classics, they're going straight to Valdiguie and Picpoul."

4,285: Number of California Wineries

According to the Wine Institute, this is the number of bonded wineries in the state. The figure is double the number recorded a decade ago, and three times the count reported in the year 2000.

The estimated value of retail sales in 2014 was $24.6 billion, up 6.7 percent in value and 4.4 percent in volume from the prior year (and double the sales figures from the year 2000). **Even exports continue to rise: 46.4 million cases were exported in 2014, with a retail value of $1.5 billion.**

Clearly, the industry is moving in the right direction, responding to unprecedented consumer interest with wines of greater variety, sophistication, range of expression — and range of price — than ever before. The future isn't altogether certain. On the retail front, and in restaurants in particular, wine's dominance as an accompaniment with a meal is facing incursion from the equally robust beer and cider industries, and cocktails continue to vie for imbibers' attention. But wine remains one of the great fuels of enjoyment in sunny California.

Women 'nearing equality with men - in alcohol consumption'

By James Gallagher Health and science reporter, BBC News website

25 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/health-37751132

Women have all but caught up with men at knocking back alcohol, a global study of drinking habits shows.

The analysis of 4 million people, born between 1891 and 2001, showed that men used to be far more likely to drink and have resulting health problems.

But the current generation have pretty much closed the gap, the BMJ Open report says.

The changing roles of men and women in society partly explain the move towards drinking parity.

The study showed that in people born in the early 1900s, men were:

- More than twice as likely as women to drink alcohol at all (2.2 times)
- Three times as likely to drink to problematic levels
- And 3.6 times as likely to develop health problems from drinking, such as liver cirrhosis
-

But over the ensuing decades, the gap closed so that for those born at the end of the century men were only:

- 1.1 times as likely as women to drink alcohol at all
- A much lower 1.2 times as likely to drink to problematic levels
- And 1.3 times as likely to develop health problems from drinking

The team at the University of New South Wales, in Australia, analysed data from people all over the world - although it was massively skewed towards North America and Europe.

They concluded: "Alcohol use and alcohol-use disorders have historically been viewed as a male phenomenon.

"The present study calls this assumption into question and suggests that young women, in particular, should be the target of concerted efforts to reduce the impact of substance use and related harms."

Prof Mark Petticrew, from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: "Men's and women's roles have been changing over the decades, this is likely to account for some of these trends - but not all.

"The increasing availability of alcohol also plays an important part, as does the way that alcohol marketing is often targeted specifically at women and particularly young women.

"Health professionals need to help the public - both men and women - to understand the health risks of alcohol consumption, and how to reduce those risks."

World wine output expected to hit four-year low

20 October 2016, BBC

http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37715354

World wine output is expected to hit a four-year low in 2016 after bad weather hit production in France and South America, industry forecasts say.

Trade group the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) has estimated output will reach 259.5m hectolitres (mhl) this year - a fall of 5% compared with 2015.

This would be among the three poorest years for output since 2000, it added.
However, it said Australia, New Zealand and the US would all see output rise.
In Europe, Italy is again set to be the world's leading producer, even though output is expected to fall 2% this year to 48.8 mhl.

But in France - the number two producer - the OIV said production was likely to fall 12% after vineyards endured frost and hailstorms in the spring, then drought in the summer.

In South America, production was also hit by "climatic events".
As a result, Argentina is likely to report a 35% plunge in output, Chile a 21% fall and Brazil a 50% fall when compared with 2015.

South Africa, meanwhile, is on track to report a bruising 19% fall in production - but other New World producers are doing better.

The OIV said Australia was expected to see a 5% rise in production, New Zealand a 34% jump and the US - the world's fourth-largest producer of wine - growth of 2%.

Chinese wine-tasters scoop surprise win in France

9 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-37601132

Chinese wine-tasters have won a taste test in France, in what organisers call "a thunderbolt in the wine world". They came first out of 21 teams by identifying details of six white wines and six red wines without seeing the bottle or label. **The French team came second and the US team came third, while former champions Spain slipped into 10th place and the UK only managed 11th**. The Chinese competitors put their success down to knowledge and luck. But they did say competition was fierce to get on the team.

China's wine industry has grown in recent years as the country has begun to devote an increasing amount of its land to vineyards. Last year it had 799,000 hectares (1.97 million acres) of land dedicated to growing grapes, second only to Spain worldwide.
In 2011, a Chinese winery beat a host of French rivals to collect an international gold medal for one of its wines.

The Chinese team that competed on Saturday at the Chateau du Galoupet, one of France's biggest wine estates, included Liu Chunxia, Tze Chien Chen, Xi Chen, Xianchen Ma and coach Alexander Brice Leboucq.

Their surprise win saw them perform best at identifying the 12 wines' countries of origin, grape varieties, vintages, producers and appellation (geographical areas).

Organisers from the French specialist magazine La Revue du vin de France wrote that the "astounding Chinese team" were "humble even in victory".

They "conceded that in blind tasting, 50% is knowledge and 50% is luck," the magazine continued.

Celebrate California's immense diversity and add robust selections to your imports. Start with small volumes for trial by building upon imports of proven quality and value that do satisfy. You will be rewarded for being dynamic and your clients will vote their approvals with their increasing orders. **Do not allow stagnancy in selections any longer to hold sway that quality California wines, especially Zinfandel, does not sell. False! It's a myth, just like the notion of racial supremacy, that serves us all best when denounced, abandoned and buried.**

I promise the Sun will still rise smiling for us all in the morning and no harm will happen to any one country's reputation or prestige. Treat clients as thinking adults and not naïve children, give them a buffet of real choices. Everybody wins because more explorations in wine will expand markets with more insightful clients purchasing from more enlightened importers. Remember Liberté is a woman of strength and vision. She is the embodiment of enlightenment! Follow her example with confidence and blaze the way forward. Touché!

III

FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

If your aim in life is pursuing the truth, one of the things you might to study is why deception is so common in life.

- Eugene Burger
American Magician

Great liars are also great magicians.

- Adolf Hitler
Chancellor of Germany
Legal Austrian Immigrant, Corporal WWI, Vegetarian

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

- Patrick Henry
American Founding Father
Attorney, Orator, Virginia Plantation Owner

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

The US Bill of Rights: AMENDMENT II
Right to Keep and Bear Arms

Bullets never solved a human problem yet.

- Wonder Woman
All-American Superhero

State where the greatest number of presidents were born: Virginia (8)

George Washington (1st President)

..He valued land, and when he died, he owned 70,000 acres in Virginia and 40,000 acres in what is now West Virginia.

Thomas Jefferson (3rd President)

Peter (father) died when Thomas was 14, leaving him 2,750 acres and his slaves.

William Henry Harrison (9th President)

…Although born to one of the wealthiest, most prestigious, and most influential families in Virginia, Harrison was elected president with a "log cabin and hard cider" slogan.

The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1998

John Adams (2nd President)

"Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence. "

Ronald Reagan (40th President)

" Facts are stupid things."

Proofiness by Charles Seife

The **Lafayette dollar** was a silver coin issued as part of the United States participation in the **Paris World's Fair of 1900.** Depicting Lafayette with George Washington and designed by Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber, it was the only U.S. silver dollar commemorative prior to 1983, and the first U.S. coin to depict an American citizen. **Beginning in 1898, prominent Americans sought to erect in Paris a monument to Lafayette, French hero of the American Revolutionary War.** Among these supporters was Chicago businessman Ferdinand Peck, whom President William McKinley chose as commissioner-general to the exposition. Peck made the monument proposal a part of the American plans for Paris, and appointed the Lafayette Memorial Commission to raise funds for it. A part of this fundraising was the one-dollar commemorative coin, approved by Congress on March 3, 1899.

Conjoined busts of Washington and Lafayette appear on the obverse. Barber stated that the bases for his work were a sculpture of Washington by Jean-Antoine Houdon, and an 1824 medal of Lafayette by François-Augustin Caunois. For the reverse, he used an early sketch of the planned monument, designed by Paul Wayland Bartlett, whose last name appears on the base of the statue on the reverse. The coins did not sell out, and 14,000 were later melted by the United States Treasury. The Lafayette dollar is valued from several hundred dollars to tens of thousands, depending on condition.

Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette was born on September 6, 1757 to a noble French family. When the boy was less than two years old, his father was killed at the Battle of Minden, making the toddler a wealthy nobleman. The young marquis married in 1774. In 1775, while on military duty in Metz, Lafayette heard of the rebellion against British rule in North America. The young officer quickly came to believe that the American cause was noble. **On learning that the Second Continental Congress lacked funds, Lafayette hired a ship at his own expense and in 1777 sailed for America, though he initially received a cold reception from the Congress**. So many foreign officers had sought to be a part of the Continental Army that its commanding general, George Washington, asked that no more be engaged. Lafayette's

application, which sought no pay, met with eventual success. Congress had received a letter from the American envoy to France, Benjamin Franklin, stating that Lafayette's family was wealthy and influential. Franklin urged Congress to accommodate Lafayette, and also keep him safe and out of the action lest his death harm the American cause.

Congress dutifully voted in July 1777 to commission Lafayette as a major general, and sent him to meet Washington. The two men formed a very close relationship despite a quarter-century difference in age. Franklin's wish to keep Lafayette safe was frustrated by the young man's desire to be where the action was hottest, and he was wounded at the Battle of Brandywine in September 1777. France soon entered the war on the American side, and was instrumental in the victory. Lafayette helped lead the decisive Yorktown campaign, leading to the surrender of British Lieutenant General Lord Cornwallis.

Lafayette returned to France after 1781, a national hero in both countries. He returned to the United States in 1784, his last visit for 40 years. In France, he involved himself in politics, favoring a constitutional monarchy. He was given office and commands after the French Revolution, but was captured by the Austrians in 1792, remaining in captivity for five years. After Napoleon arranged his release, Lafayette remained on his estates and away from politics during the Emperor's rule. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1815, he again involved himself in politics, sitting in the Chamber of Deputies.
In 1824, the American Congress voted unanimously to have President James Monroe invite Lafayette to return as the guest of the nation. The marquis and his son, George Washington Lafayette, arrived in New York City to mammoth celebrations. Over the next year and a half, Lafayette visited all 24 states. He was given innumerable honors and gifts, including land in Florida. The marquis returned to France in 1825, and died in 1834. One of only eight people to be made an honorary citizen of the United States, according to Arnie Slabaugh in his book on commemorative coins, "Lafayette became so popular and respected in both countries that the friendship he helped cement between the two nations has extended to this day".

The obverse of the Lafayette dollar features jugate, or conjoined, heads of Washington and Lafayette. Slabaugh noted Barber's account that the busts were based on the sculpture by Houdon and the medal by Caunois, but, "possibly these did have some effect on the design but it has always been my belief that the immediate source or idea for the design was the Yorktown Centennial medal of 1881." Swiatek and Breen contended that although the ultimate ancestor of Barber's depiction of Washington was the Houdon bust, the source of the Lafayette bust and the format of the obverse "was beyond doubt Peter L. Krider's Yorktown Centennial Medal (1881)". Krider, a Philadelphia engraver not employed by the Mint, issued a number of tokens and medals in the 1870s and 1880s. **"United States of America" and "Lafayette Dollar" appear at the top and bottom of the obverse of the coin.**

The reverse is based on an early sketch of the statue of Lafayette by Bartlett. It depicts a mounted statue of Lafayette, riding left. His horse has two feet up, which, by some accounts, in art means Lafayette died on the battlefield, which he did not—one hoof up would mean a battlefield wound, and all four feet on the ground means the subject died a natural death. Barber's monogram does not appear on the coin, but the name "Bartlett" appears on the base of the statue. Also on the base, and extending below it, is a palm branch. The reverse inscription, "Erected by the youth of the United States in honor of Gen. Lafayette/Paris 1900" is a tribute to the school fundraising efforts that took place in 1898. Swiatek and Breen pointed out that even if one grants that the 1900 date was intended to be that of the exposition and the erection of the statue, the coins would still violate the 1873 act, that required the date of mintage to appear on the coins, and thus "the Lafayette dollars are technically undated and therefore illegal!"

On the reverse, Lafayette holds a sword, extended upwards. Bartlett described the version of the statue that Barber worked from: **"Lafayette is represented in the statue as a fact and a symbol, offering his sword and services to the American colonists in the cause of liberty. He appears as the emblem of the aristocratic and enthusiastic sympathy shown by France to our**

forefathers." Swiatek and Breen noted, "We may take Lafayette's pose on the statue, as depicted on the coin, to represent him in triumphal procession rather than charging against the enemy—note his sheathed sword, like a Highland pipe major's baton, serving as a standard rather than brandished unsheathed as a weapon."

Barber's design for the Lafayette dollar has often been criticized. Swiatek and Breen complained about the "lifeless head of the President [Washington]". Q. David Bowers stated that "the shallow relief of Barber's work is but a travesty of Krider's extremely detailed high-relief artistry". According to Don Taxay, "When one compares Barber's portraits to those by Du Vivier [*sic*] and Caunois, it is clear why [sculptor and Barber enemy. Saint-Gaudens used to refer contemptuously to the "commercial medalists of the Mint". The difference here is not merely in the relief, but in elementary modeling skill." Art historian Cornelius Vermeule stated that, "the Lafayette dollar lacks the quaint, dated appeal of the Isabella quarter or the amusing originality of the Columbian half-dollar. Despite the necessity for low relief the jugate busts are too linear. The reverse suffers from too much lettering of uniform size. The words 'Paris 1900' might have been enough; at most, the addition of 'From the Youth of the United States' would have conveyed the matter."

- Wikipedia

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient land, your stored pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-lost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

- Emma Lazarus

The **Statue of Liberty** (***Liberty Enlightening the World***; French: *La Liberté éclairant le monde*) is a colossal neoclassical sculpture on Liberty Island in New York Harbor in New York City, in the United States. The copper statue, designed by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, a French sculptor, was built by Gustave Eiffel and dedicated on October 28, 1886.

It was a gift to the United States from the people of France.

- Wikipedia

A Lip-Smacking Sampling of Savory Crackers and Seasoned Croutons of US History

1619: First black laborers
Indentured servants in English North American colonies, landed by Dutch at Jamestown in August. Chattel slavery legally recognized in 1650.

1620: First servant named Nigel called initially "Big Black Nig" in February. Later by another sobriquet when ordered to go cut firewood to put under hanging Dutch ovens and carry *timber* to build town church when too slow after 14 hours a day. No gloves or proper work boots.*

1673: Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet reached the upper Mississippi River and traveled down it.

1682: Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, claimed lower Mississippi River country for France, called it Louisiana, April 9th. Had French outposts built in Illinois and Texas, 1684. Killed during mutiny Mar. 19, 1687.

1699: French settlements made in Mississippi, Louisiana

1709: British-colonial troops captured French fort, Port Royal, Nova Scotia in Queen Anne's War 1701-13. France yielded Nova Scotia (now province of Canada) by treaty of 1713.

1712: Slaves revolted in New York, April 6th. Six committed suicide; twenty-one were executed. Second rising, 1741; thirteen slaves hanged, thirteen burned, seventy-one deported.

1726: Poor people rioted in Philadelphia.

1732: Last of the 13 colonies, Georgia, chartered.

1744: King George's War pitted British and colonials vs. French. Colonial captured Louisburg, Cape Breton Is., June 17 1745. Returned to France 1748 by Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle.

1754: French and Indian War began when French occupied Ft. Duquesne (Pittsburgh).

1755: British moved Acadian French from Nova Scotia to Louisiana.

1759: French Gen. Joseph de Montcalm and British Gen. James Wolfe were killed. British captured Quebec.

1763: Peace pact signed. French lost Canada and American Midwest.

1770: British troops fired Mar. 5th into Boston mob, killed five including Crispus Attucks, a black man, reportedly leader of the group, later called Boston Massacre.

1773: East India Co. tea ships turned back at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in May. Cargo ship burned at Annapolis, Maryland October 14; cargo thrown overboard at Boston Tea Party Dec. 16th to protest the tea tax.

1774: Rhode Island abolished slavery

1775: Battle of Bunker Hill, British troops repulsed by colonial Patriots. George Washington named commander in chief by Continental Congress on June 15th.

1776: France and Spain each agreed May 2nd to provide arms to colonial army.

Declaration of Independence approved July 4th.

Sea attack from British at Charleston, South Carolina repulsed.

Battle of Long Island lost to British under Washington's command with 10,000 men. New York evacuated.

British Lake Champlain fleet defeated at Valcour but British returned to Canada.

British Gen. Howe failed to destroy Washington's army at White Plains.

Washington in Pennsylvania, recrossed Delaware River, defeated Hessians (German mercenary allies of British) at Trenton, New Jersey, Dec. 26th.

1777: Washington defeated Lord Cornwallis at Princeton, Jan. 3rd. Continental Congress adopted Stars and Stripes flag.

British Maj. Gen. Burgoyne force of 8,000 from Canada captured Ft. Ticonderoga, July 6th. Americans beat back Burgoyne at Bemis Heights Oct. 7, cut off British escape route. Burgoyne surrendered 5,000 men at Saratoga, NY, Oct. 17th.

France recognized independence of 13 colonies, Dec. 17th.

1778: France signed treaty of aid with US, Feb. 6th. Sent fleet; British evacuated Philadelphia in consequence, Jun. 18th.

1779: John Paul Jones on the ship *Bonhomme Richard* defeated Serapis in British North Sea waters Sep. 23rd.

1781: Cornwallis, sapped by Patriot's victories, retired to Yorktown, VA.

Adm. Francois de Grasse landed 3,000 French and stopped British fleet in Hampton Roads. Washington and Jean Baptiste de Rochambeau joined forces, arrived near Williamsburg, Sep. 26. Siege of Cornwallis began Oct. 6th; Cornwallis surrendered Oct. 19th.

1784: Thomas Jefferson's proposal to ban slavery in new territory after 1802 was narrowly defeated Mar. 1st.

1792: White House cornerstone laid Oct. 13th .
(slaves utilized in construction)

1793: Eli Whitney invented cotton gin, reviving Southern slavery.
(Gin is short for engine)

1796: Washington's Farewell Address as president delivered Sep. 19th. Gave strong warnings against permanent alliances with foreign powers, big public debt, large military establishment, and devices of "small, artful, enterprising minority"

1803: Napoleon sold all of Louisiana, stretching to Canadian border to US for $ 11.25KK in bonds, plus $ 3.75KK indemnities to American citizens with claims against France.

1808: Slave importation outlawed. Some 250,000 slaves were illegally imported 1808-60.

1819: Spain ceded Florida to US, Feb. 22nd.

1820: First organized immigration to blacks to Africa from US began with 86 free blacks sailing Feb. to Sierra Leone.

Missouri Compromise. Slavery was allowed in Missouri but not elsewhere west of the Mississippi River. Repealed 1854.

1831: Nat Turner, black slave in Virginia, led local slave rebellion, starting Aug. 21st. 57 whites killed. Troops called in, 100 slaves killed. Turner captured, tried, and hanged Nov. 11th (first and only slave rebellion of this magnitude)

1835: Seminole Indians in Florida uner Osceola began attacks Nov. 1st, protesting forced removal. Unpopular 8-year war; Indians sent to Oklahoma.

Texas proclaimed right to secede from Mexico.

Gold discovered on Cherokee land in Georgia. Indians forced to cede lands Dec. 20th and to cross Mississippi.

1838: Cherokee Indians made "Trail of Tears," removed from Georgia to Oklahoma starting in October.

1850: Sen. Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850 admitted California as 31st state, Sep. 9th, with slavery forbidden; made Fugitive Slave Law more harsh; ended District of Columbia slave trade.

1852: Uncle Tom's Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, published.

1854: Republican Party formed at Ripon, Wisconsin, Feb. 28th. Opposed Kansas-Nebraska Act (became law May 30th), which left issue of slavery to vote of settlers.

1856: Lawrence, Kansas sacked May 21st by pro-slavery group; abolitionist John Brown led anti-slavery men against Missourians, Aug. 30th.

1857: Dred Scott decision by Supreme Court, Mar. 6th held that slaves did not become free in a free state. Congress could not bar slavery from a territory, and blacks could not be citizens.

1859: Abolitionist John Brown, with 21 men, seized US Armory at Harper's Ferry oct. 16th. US Marines captured raiders, killing several. Brown was hanged for treason, Dec. 2nd.

1861: Seven Southern states set up Confederate States of America.

1862: Union forces were victorious in Western campaigns, took New Orleans May 1st. Battles in East were inconclusive.

1863: In draft riots in New York City about 1,000 were killed or wounded; some blacks were hanged by mobs July 13-16.

1864: Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman marched through Georgia, taking Atlanta Sep 1st, Savannah Dec. 22nd.

1865: Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered 27,800 Confederate troops to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

Apr. 9th, Gen. J. E. Johnston surrendered 31,200 to Gen. Sherman at Durham Station, North Carolina.

13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, ratified Dec. 6th.

1866: Ku Klu Klan formed secretly in South to terrorize blacks who voted. Disbanded 1869-71. A 2nd Klan organized in 1915.

1875: Congress passed Civil Rights Act, Mar. 1st. giving equal rights to blacks in public accommodations and jury duty. Act invalidated in 1883 by Supreme Court.

1909: Adm. Robert E. Peary claimed to have reached North Pole Apr 6th, on sixth attempt., accompanied by Matthew Henson, a black man, and 4 Eskimos. May have fallen short.

1943: All war contractors barred from racial discrimination, May 27th
Race riot in Detroit, June 21st; 34 dead, 700 injured. Riot in Harlem, NYC, 6 killed.

1955: US agreed Feb. 12th to help train South Vietnamese Army.

Rosa Parks refused Dec. 1st to give her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, AL. Bus segregation ordinance declared unconstitutional by

a federal court following boycott and NAACP protest.

Supreme Court ordered "all deliberate speed" in integration of public schools, May 31st.

1956: Massive resistance to Supreme Court de-segregation rulings was called for Mar. 12th by 101 Southern congressmen.

1957: Congress approved first civil rights bill for blacks since Reconstruction Apr. 29th to protect voting rights.

National Guardsmen, called out by Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus, Sep. 4th Barred 9 black students from entering all-white high school in Little Rock. Faubus complied Sep. 21st with federal court order to remove Guardsmen, but the blacks were ordered to withdraw by local authorities. Pres. Eisenhower sent federal troops Sep. 24th to enforce court order.

1960: Sit-ins began Feb. 1st when 4 black college students in Greensboro, NC refused to move from a Woolworth lunch counter when denied service. By Sep. 1961, more than 70,000 students, whites and blacks, had participated in sit-ins.

Congress approved a strong voting rights act, Apr. 21st.

US announced Dec. 15th it backed rightist group in Laos, which took power the next day.

1961: Freedom Rides from Washington, DC across Deep South were launched in May to protest segregation in interstate transportation.

1962: James Meredith became first black student at University of Mississippi, Oct. 1st, after 3,000 troops put down riots.

1963: University of Alabama desegregated after Gov. George Wallace stepped aside when confronted by federally deployed National Guard troops.

Civil rights leader, Medgar Evers, assassinated June 12th.

March on Washington by 200,000 persons Aug. 28th in support of black demands for equal rights.

Baptist churh in Birmingham, AL bombed Sep. 15th in racial violence. 4 black girls killed.

South Vietnam Pres. Ngo Dinh Diem assassinated Nov. 2nd; US earlier had withdrawn support.

1964: Panama suspended relations with US Jan. 9th after riots. US offered to negotiate a new canal treaty, Dec. 18th.

Omnibus civil rights bill cleared by Congress July 2nd, signed same day by President Johnson, banning discrimination in voting, jobs, public accommodations.

Tonkin Gulf Resolution authorizing presidential action in Vietnam, after North Vietnamese boats reportedly attacked 2 US destroyers (false claim), Aug. 2nd.

1965: Pres. Johnson ordered continuous bombing of North Vietnam below 20th parallel.

Malcolm X assassinated Feb. 21st at New York City rally.

March from Selma to Montgomery, AL begun Mar. 21st by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., to demand federal protection of black's voting right. New Voting Rights Act signed by Aug. 6th.

Los Angeles riot by blacks living in Watts area resulted in death of 34 persons and property damage estimated at $ 200 million.

US forces in South Vietnam reached 184,300 by year end.

1966: US forces began firing into Cambodia, May 1st.

Bombing of Hanoi area of North Vietnam by US planes began June 29th. By Dec. 31st, 385,300 US troops were stationed in South Vietnam, plus 60,000 offshore and 33,000 in Thailand.

Edward Brooke (R, MA) elected Nov. 8th as first black US Senator in 85 years.

1967: Thurgood Marshall was sworn in Oct. 2nd as first black US Supreme Court Justice.

1968: "Tet Offensive": Communist troops attacked Saigon, 30 province capitals Jan. 30th, suffered heavy casualties.

Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, TN, Apr 4th.

1969: Expanded 4-party Vietnam peace talks began Jan. 18th. US force peaked at 543,400 in April. Withdrawal started July 8th.

US Astronaut Neil Armstrong command of Apollo 11 mission, became first person to set foot on the moon, July 20th.

1986: On Jan. 20th, for the first time, the US officially observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

US, via Congress Sep. override of Pres. Reagan's veto, joined other nations in imposing sanctions on South Africa, pressuring the government to end apartheid.

1989: Douglas Wilder (D) was elected governor of Virginia, the first black governor since Reconstruction.

1992: Riots swept South-Central Los Angeles Apr. 29th, after jury acquitted 4 white policemen on all but one count in the videotaped in 1991 beating of black motorist Rodney King. The death toll in the violence was put at 52.

1993: A federal jury, Apr. 17th, found two Los Angeles police officers guilty and two not guilty of violating the civil rights of motorist Rodney King in 1991 beating incident.

* What a nice informal name for such a hard working and constructive member of the community.

The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1998

Unlike Britain, Canton (Guangzhou), a picturesque port with gilded temples and beautifully laid public gardens, overflowed in silver. Howqua, the chief of the local syndicate of merchants, allowed to trade with the barbarians, was reputed to be the richest man on Earth. The main, indeed the only saleable British merchandise was referred to as the 'gentle and soothing garden balm.'

By 1830 the officially forbidden trade was reckoned to be the largest international commerce in any single commodity anywhere in the world….It followed the realization in Peking that the country's silver reserves were draining away and that the number of opium addicts, mostly men aged between 20 and 50, could now be reckoned in the millions. The drug's happy but drowsy victims included the Son of Heaven's three sons, a serious blow to the succession.

In reply and at his oratorical best (or worst) Thomas Babington Macaulay, at 39 the secretary of state for war, a pulse-quickening appeal for a 'patriotic policy.' His verbal mists congealed around Captain Elliot's glorious action in running up the Union Jack the moment he arrived at the beleaguered Factories in Canton, 'reminding our countrymen that they belonged to a people unaccustomed to defeat, submission and to shame.'

But the most rousing speech was delivered by William Ewart Gladstone, at thirty-one still the rising hope of unbending Toryism.

Does the Prime Minister know that the opium smuggled into China which irrevocably corrupts its people comes exclusively from British ports or ports that we control and in British vessels? We require no preventative service to down this iniquitous traffic…We have only to stop the sailing of the smuggling vessels…The Chinese gave us notice to abandon our contraband trade. When they found that we would not, they had every right to drive the infamous and atrocious traffic off their coasts…Our flag must not become a pirate flag protecting a godless and deeply sinful enterprise…

Back in Canton, the trigger for the resumption of hostilities, known as the Arrow incident, was as absurd as such triggers often are. **The crew of a vessel call the Arrow which had a long and murky past but which may have been flying a British ensign (flag) was boarded in the harbour by Chinese customs officers probably by mistake. The mostly Chinese crew were arrested** and taken ashore but released after a protesting letter from the acting British Consul, Sir Harry Parkes.

Gladstone comfortably occupied the moral high ground; but Palmerston, though no orator, had the commercial aces up his sleeve:

I wonder what the House would have said to me if I had presented it with a large naval estimate for a number of cruisers for the purpose of preserving the morals of the Chinese people who were disposed to buy what other people were disposed to sell them. Ending our opium trade would simply increase the Turkish and Persian crop available to willing traders from France, Russia and the United States.

Trade was trade. The house divided and defeated Peel's motion by 27`1 to 262 votes. The legitimacy of the opium wars was established.

Napier's successor Captain Charles Elliot, Royal Navy, was the 34 year old sprig of another noble house – Lord Minto was his uncle – brave and honourable…He abominated the opium trade and held in contempt all those who made a living from it. William Jardine in particular he destested, describing him as 'a shifty fellow and, though a doctor and an Edingburgh graduate, *not* a gentleman.'

…Jardine and Matheson were revolutionizing sales techniques. No longer did they rely on humble local dealers. They had secured the services of Chinese-speaking Europeans, including that of the Rev. Dr. Karl Gutzlaff, a Prussian-born Protestant missionary and linguist. The doctor thought well of opium and was happy to act as the firm's spokesman, interpreter and salesman provided his own demands were met. Apart from a

comparatively modest commission he wished to be allowed to distribute with his packages of opium selected chapters of the Scriptures in his own translation. What could be more fitting that the 'wholesome coupling of bodily wellbeing and spiritual uplift?' The biblical extracts were handsomely printed in the firm's own printing shop and carried the firm's imprint. **They also carried interleaved promotional literature for opium, 'the best way to achieve the spiritual enlightenment necessary to grasp the message of the Gospels.'** But news of this aroused misgivings in Peking. Both religious and commercial proselytizing had long been forbidden. The two activities combined did not cancel each out the mischief associated with either. Resentment continued to simmer and would one day inevitably erupt.

In London, Queen Victoria expressed her 'abhorrence' of the 'massacres perpetrated by this peasant revolt in China.' Those nearer scene were increasingly alarmed by the Robin-Hood-ish undertones of the rebellion. No doubt entered the minds of Jardine and Matheson. The God-worshippers were their irrational ban on opium were to be destroyed. It was against this background that the Second Opium War was to be fought. China had to be defeated and forced into the comity of poppy-loving nations but the suitably compliant Manchu dynasty rather than the quasi-Christian Taiping were to be preserved. Weak emperors, not powerful prophets, were the ultimate guarantors of the free flow of opium.

…Elliot too was recalled and reprimanded for trying to trying to bankrupt the Treasury. Queen Victory, descended of thrifty German housewives, noted in her diary that 'Captain Elliot completely disobeyed instructions and almost gave away much of my Treasury.' But this left the captain's character unblemished and he was still Lord Minto's nephew. **He was appointed British charge d'affaires to the newly constituted Republic of Texas, of the Foreign Office's cold provinces at the time. Five years later, let bygones be bygones, he was promoted to the governorship of Trinidad and eventually to that of St. Helena.** Following Napoleon's sojourn there thirty years earlier the last posting carried with it a knighthood and the rank of admiral. In his memoirs he remembered with pleasure his only meeting with Lin (emperor's envoy). 'He was an

honest Chinese of the old school, the poor devil and great hater of opium. We fought but in fact we agreed about most things. I wish there had been more of his sort.'

…When asked by a House of Commons committee fifteen years later if they were ever troubled but doubts about the morality of their enterprise, Jardine answered:

When the East India Company was growing and selling the stuff there was a formal declaration of the House of Lords and Commons with all the bench of bishops in attendance that it would be inexpedient and indeed foolish to throw it (the opium trade) away. It could indeed promote the spread of the Gospels which missionaries in our own employ have in fact accomplished. I think our moral scruples need not have been so very great.

Few have seriously questioned Mr. Gladstone's judgement of 1840 that:

A war more wicked in its origin, a war more calculated in its progress to cover this country with a permanent disgrace, I do not know and have not read of… I am in dread of the judgement of God upon England for our national iniquity towards China.

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

Other incidents quickly followed and on May 10 another small Vietnamese-held island was occupied by Cambodian troops on Wai Island, eighty miles southwest of Kampong Som. Two days later, into the midst of this offshore skirmishing blundered **an elderly American container ship, the SS Mayaguez**, which was promptly intercepted and boarded by Cambodian coastguards. What followed was pure farce, or would have been but for the loss of life it entailed. President Ford, **smarting from the US withdrawal from Saigon less than two weeks before,** decided to hang tough and ordered an aerial bombardment to interdict access to the ship. **In Phnom Penh, Pol summoned the Standing Committee, who agreed that the crew should be released and**

the vessel sent on its way, as it happened a week earlier in the case of a *Panamanian* ship. Instructions to that effect were radioed to the local commander and as announcement prepared for the following day. By then the President had already decided to send in the marines for a heliborne rescue attempt. Over the next few hours, **fifteen marines and twenty-three American airmen were killed,** US bombers destroyed the oil refinery at Kompong Som and the nearby airfield at Ream, and an undetermined number of Cambodians died. **In the meantime, unknown to the rescuers, the crew of the Mayaguez had all been released unharmed.** Mr. Ford said later the raid gave 'a whole new sense of confidence' to the American people and ***helped put the Vietnam War behind them.***

Thus the new regime began with a lie, and lying would remain one its defining characteristics. **After April 1975, nothing the Cambodian leaders said could ever be taken at face value**. They lied to hide unpleasant truths; they lied because they could not be bothered to remember what had really happened; they lied by mistake, by accident, out of laziness, or for no discernible reason at all. The lie became an instrument of rule, enveloping policy in a miasma of uncertainty, secrecy and dissimulation.

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Born in the USA but Choosing Ghana

27 November 2015. BBC

Generations ago their ancestors were sold into slavery, now some Americans of African descent are choosing to return to the lands of their forefathers. Nancy Kacungira has been finding out why. The Akoma Academy in Cape Coast, Ghana, is unapologetically African. From the brightly coloured African-print uniforms sported by the students to the posters of the continent's icons on the walls - everywhere you look, you see a piece of African heritage. But the school's owner was born and raised in Detroit in the United

States. Chekesha Aidoo - who was born Priscilla Davis - grew up in a family of educators. For a long time though, she knew very little about the continent she now lives in.

The school tries to promote a positive self-image among its students, teaching African history so that they can be proud of their heritage. Some of the children attend free-of-charge, and she finds sponsors for others who also cannot afford the fees.

Like Ms Aidoo, Imakhus Okofu did not know much about Africa before she came to Ghana, but her reasons for coming had nothing to do with sentiment.

"I didn't come to Ghana because I had some yearning to want to be in Africa," she tells me." Based on what media and what everyone told us about it, the last place I wanted to be was in Africa." She was working as a travel agent in New York when she decided she needed to experience Africa herself before she recommended it as a tourist destination. So at the age of 50 she came to Ghana with business in mind, but as part of her tour she paid a visit to what was once a slave dungeon - and it changed her life.

Cape Coast Castle is one of dozens of slave castles built on the West African coast by European traders. **From Cape Coast, and the other sites, more than 12 million Africans were shipped out, in chains, across the Atlantic Ocean.** The passage of time has not faded the scratching on the black walls, or dulled the stale, acrid smell in the dungeons.

It was here that Ms Okofu felt the full horror of what had happened to her ancestors. **"Going through the dungeons was traumatic. I kept thinking, why would anyone do this? "They didn't tell us about this, I never heard about this in school. I knew when I crossed that threshold and came out that I would never be the same again.**

"And I knew then that Africa was going to be my home." It has been her home for 25 years.

Ms Okofu now runs a hotel by the beach and occasionally organises tours of the slave castles. She also acts as a repatriation guide, giving advice to other African Americans who want to or have relocated to Africa.

She says there is a sizable community of them in Ghana, with about 300 in her area alone.

'I belong in Ghana'

She remembers the incredulity that met her decision to move to Ghana, not just from family in America, but from Ghanaians too.

"They'd ask me: 'Why would you leave America to come here and suffer?'
"And I'd say: 'This is suffering? I lived through civil rights movement. **Everything we ever got in America we fought for.'** I don't hate America, but I don't like it. I love Africa."

It took 50 years for her to discover where home really was for her, but once she did, Ms Okofu had no doubts about where she belonged. "When did I become an American? When I landed on the soil of America? No, I'm still an African."

Four in 10 Africans did not survive the perilous journey across the Atlantic **and those who did,** ***were destined for a life of torture*** **- never to return to their homes.**

Hundreds of years later, a return of a different kind is finally possible. Some of the descendants of those sold into slavery still feel a bond with Africa strong enough to make them want to leave the land they were born in, and return to the continent their ancestors were forced to leave.

The second round of the BBC World News Komla Dumor award will be announced early next year so look out for it.

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…In each generation, new tactics have been used for achieving the same goals- goals shared by the Founding Fathers. Denying African Americans citizenship was deemed essential to the formation of the original union. Hundreds of years later, America is still not an egalitarian democracy. The arguments and rationalizations that have been trotted out in support of racial exclusion and discrimination in its various forms have changed and evolved, but the outcome has remained largely the same. An extraordinary percentage of black men in the United States are legally barred from voting today, just as they have been throughout most of American history. They are also subject to legalized discrimination in employment, housing, education, public benefits, and jury service, just as their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were.

What has changed since the collapse of Jim Crow has less to do with the basic structure of our society than with the language we use to justify it. **In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.** Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you are labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination – employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service- are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it….**I came to see that mass incarceration in the United States had, in fact, emerged as a stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system of racialized social control that functions in a manner strikingly similar to Jim Crow.**

While the conspiracy theories were initially dismissed as far-fetched, if not downright loony, the word on the street turned out to right, at least to a point. The CIA admitted in 1998 that guerrilla armies it actively supported in Nicaragua were smuggling illegal drugs into the United States- drugs that were making their way on the streets of inner-city black neighborhoods in the form of crack cocaine. The CIA also admitted that, in the midst of the War on Drugs, it blocked law enforcement efforts to investigate illegal drug networks that were helping to fund its covert ware in Nicaragua.

The term *mass incarceration* refers not only to the criminal justice system but also to the larger web of laws, rules, policies and customs that control those labeled criminals both in and out of prison. Once released, former prisoners enter a hidden underworld of legalized discrimination and permanent social exclusion. They are members of America's new undercaste.

What is completely missed in the rare public debates today about the plight of African Americans is that a huge percentage of them are not free to move up at all. It is not just that they lack opportunity, attend poor schools, or are plagued by poverty. They are barred by law from doing so. And the major institutions with which they come into contact are designed to prevent their mobility. To put the matter starkly: **The current system of control permanently locks a huge percentage of the African American community out of the mainstream society and economy. The system operates through our criminal justice institutions, but it functions more like a caste system than a system of crime control.** Viewed from this perspective, the so-called underclass is better understood as an undercaste – a lower caste of individuals who are permanently barred by law and custom from mainstream society. Although this new system is racialized social control purports to be colorblind, it creates and maintains racial hierarchy much as earlier systems of control did. Like Jim Crow (and slavery) mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions that operate collectively to ensure the subordinate status of a group defined largely by race.

…Equally important to understand is this: Merely reducing sentence length, by itself, does not disturb the basic architecture of the New Jim Crow. So long as large numbers of African-American continue to be arrested and labeled drug criminals, they will continue to be relegated to a permanent second-class status upon their release, no matter how much (or how little) time they spend behind bars. They system of mass incarceration is based on the prison label, not prison time.

Skepticism about the claims made here is warranted. There are important differences, to be sure, among mass incarceration, Jim Crow and slavery- the three major racialized systems of control adopted in the United States to date. Failure to acknowledge the differences, as well as their implications, would be a disservice to racial justice discourse. **Many of the differences are not as dramatic as they appear, however; other serve to illustrate the ways in which systems of racialized social control have managed to morph, evolve, and adapt to changes in the political, social and legal context over time.** Ulitmately, I believe that the similarities between these systems of control overwhelm the differences and that mass incarceration, like its predecessors, has been largely immunized from legal challenge.

The history of racial caste in the United States would end with the Civil War if the idea of race and racial difference had died when the institution of slavery was put to rest. But during the four centuries in which slavery flourished, the idea of race flourished as well.

Indeed, the notion of racial difference – specifically the notion of white supremacy- proved far more durable than the institution that gave birth to it.

White supremacy, over time, became a religion of sorts. Faith in the idea that people of the African race were bestial, what whites were inherently superior, and that slavery was, in fact, for black's own good, served to alleviate the white conscience and reconcile the tension between slavery and the democratic ideals espoused by whites in the so-called

New World. There was no contradiction in the bold claim made by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" if Africans were not really people. Racism operated as a deeply held belief system based on "truths" beyond question or doubt. **This deep faith in white supremacy not only justified an economic or political system in which plantation owners acquired land and great wealth through brutality, torture, and coercion of other human beings; it also endured, like most articles of faith, long after the historical circumstances that gave rise to the religion passed away.**

- Michelle Alexander
The New Jim Crow

Mankind's fascination with taming the world's seas and linking distant lands has often been at the cost of men, unfortunately, deliberately with many corners cut as a means to a profitable untidy end. The history of maritime commerce has been notoriously riddled with unscrupulous captains and crews owned by unscrupulous ship owners that value the cargo or the payoff of insurance policies above all else with a modest regard, at best, for human life. Integrity on the high seas has often been a portside café concept and less of a galley's dark rum reality. It became normal for ship owners in Britain to purposely give low outbound freight rates to overload their ships fully aware that crews were being put in peril. After a set length of time of the ship never arriving into its intended destination port, a claim would be filed and the ship owners could celebrate their good fortune for the loss of the ship and all hands on deck. It took ship insurers such as Lloyd's to figure out that more was going on than just unfortunate random losses at sea.

For all the Anglophile television show admirers of grand estates and grand titles, few really want to know how these fabulous families with their fabulous wealth, generated the capital to buy their lands, build mansions, gain titles and ultimately respectability. Being superficial is rewarding because we really don't want to know

who or where others paid the ultimate price, we just want to sip the tea and taste the pastries, delighting in pleasant conversation and sublime surroundings. We are prone to romanticize about the Age of Sail because captivating paintings of lore, swashbuckling pirate movies rife of adventure and, for those green inclined, envying the low carbon footprints of a Portuguese caravel, hence soon fastening a makeshift mast and sail upon the back of a pick-up truck for freeway fuel efficiencies. It always was a tough and brutal business and in any many respects, it still is today. Since we all have limited contact with the oceans because of the promise of mass air travel attained, in many respects, the oceans remain vast and still mysterious because of our limited contact: we fly over oceans, not remain battened down seasick and voluntarily held hostage with nowhere else to go. What rare person can afford to spend 2-3 weeks sailing from San Francisco to Shanghai, the first 2-3 days green in the face, when you can arrive in 12 hours? Sure, I'll have the Shiraz with beef and expect to land in 5 hours later, thank you.

When one considers the dubious transits across the oceans with wooden sail ships with inanimate cargoes, consider as we are averse to ponder upon, the rank horror of those unfortunate souls that were chained, stacked and packed like sardines in holds of coffin ships, which also proved to be detrimental to their free crews as well:

Coffin ship is the name given to any ship that has been over-insured and is therefore worth more to its owners sunk than afloat. These were hazardous places to work in the days before effective maritime safety regulation. They were generally eliminated in the 1870s with the success of reforms championed by British MP Samuel Plimsoll.

Many of these in the days of wooden sailing ships were old ships riddled with wood rot and woodworm and shipworm, repainted and renamed and falsely stated to be new ships. There were over 2000 cases of sailors who had signed on as crew for a ship, seeing the ship's condition, refusing to go on board it, and being tried in court for this refusal. Samuel Plimsoll stated in the UK Parliament that **"The**

Secretary of Lloyd's tells a friend of mine that he does not know a single ship which has been broken up voluntarily by the owners in the course of 30 years on account of its being worn out."

In 1977 the ship *Lucona* sank in the Indian Ocean as a result of a time bomb which had been planted by Udo Proksch, the owner of the cargo, so he could fraudulently collect the insurance money. The cargo was claimed to consist of a disassembled uranium processing plant but in fact consisted of worthless scrap. 6 of the 12 crew members died.

The Death Ship (German title: *Das Totenschiff*) is a novel by the pseudonymous author known as B. Traven which deals with sailors working on a ship which the owners want to sink.

- Wikipedia

Taking Britain as an example, in the mid-nineteenth century there were few rules and regulations and virtually no construction or safety standards for merchant ships. **Many ships were sent to sea badly built, ill found, grossly overloaded and often over-insured. These 'coffin ships' frequently took their unfortunate crews to the bottom of the oceans of the world.** As a result of the agitation for reform from a member of Parliament called Samuel Plimsoll, the 'Plimsoll Act' became law in 1876 and the Board of Trade was empowered, as the responsible government department, to survey ships, pass them fit for sea, and have them marked *with a load line indicating the legal limit to which they could be submerged.*

In due course other laws were introduced as they became necessary, and Great Britain built up a body of maritime law, which was specifically geared to tackling the problems that arise when a nation state operates an extensive merchant shipping fleet. Other countries developed their own on a piecemeal basis though, because Britain dominated the maritime scene, it was common for countries with a developing maritime interest to adopt British law as a basis for drafting their own legislation. Thus, British rules and regulations came to apply much more widely than in the United Kingdom.

Shipowners, like most businessmen, find that regulation often conflicts with their efforts to earn a reasonable return on their investment. When Captain Plimsoll first started his campaign against the notorious 'coffin ships' in the 1870s, ***British shipowners argued that the imposition of loadlines would put them at an unfair competitive advantage***….

The same, sometimes legitimate, resistance to regulation is found in most industries, but the world's oceans provide the shipping industry with an unrivalled opportunity to bypass the clutches of regulators and thereby gain an economic advantage.

- Martin Stopford
  Maritime Economics

It may come as news that appearances do count and, yes, race is an appearance. I'm going to attempt to pull this together about just how important appearances count in the real world, apple to apple.

Many years ago when my brother was in law school, he told a story that I always remembered. There was a woman who had on paper everything going for her. I am just making up stuff: highest LSAT score, Editor of Law Review, Valedictorian, Phi Beta Kappa: she was the academic over-achiever. She would wear headphones not to hear music in her Walkman but to keep her brains firmly in her head because she just had too much. She would go to interviews at prestigious law firms, and over and over be turned down with a one page good-luck-in-life Juanita letter. Letters would arrive thin with one page from mail carriers so she instinctively didn't need to open them after a few experiences. She came to grips, being smart of the reason why, the true reason why: she was terribly homely. She wasn't trying to be in the movies, just wanted to earn a living pushing paper and negotiating intelligently. The bottom line is others were hired who simply did not have the same stellar academic achievements as her. Nobody looked better on paper but nobody looked as frightful in person. Others looked better in person, not on paper and still very bright,

however, they would not turn well-heeled clients off nor peers, male and female, at the firm.

My brother has a friend who is also an attorney. The friend is bright, affable with a tall athletic build and played football. He told me women would stumble and swoon when his friend would walk into a conference room. I imagine it must be like some kind of celebrity effect. Of course, he has a nice home in an affluent neighborhood, lovely wife, cute kids, Ben & Jerry's ice cream on right side and Grey Goose vodka on the left of the designer kitchen with Sub-Zero freezer, he's all that. If you hypothetically put him in a uniform walking into a Boeing 777, those concerned would have a sigh of relief as he quells any notion with his height, age and natural demeanor as a man who knows his business who just looks selected for the part from Hollywood casting. Like a friend of my wife and I, he's not a doctor but if you put these two guys in bleached white name-tailored smocks in a hospital, they could walk into an operating theater and there would be no doubts that the Hands of Above have arrived and that they wouldn't know how break into a sweat after an hour with forceps, but then go unwind and play a round of golf later hopefully to do so to keep up a healthy tan. My brother told a story long before his friend's marriage about him getting a drink in downtown San Francisco where he and an associate went after office hours to let off some steam.

A woman walked into the hotel's bar who was shockingly beautiful. Nearly every head turned to gain an admiring view. Because he's confident and smooth- attributes that have served him well we must assume- he started a conversation with her and it turned out she was an attorney too but from a very lofty law firm from New York that is incredibly difficult to be hired. Her firm only took the best of the very best. If you are in their profession you know what firm this is. He would have gotten a good-luck-in-life John letter if he applied at the same firm and he went to a strong law school. She had come west on business and arrived the same afternoon. He was blown away because here in front of him was a professional peer not relying on a pretty smile. Her intellect was a strong as her looks if not more! Too

good to be true! If the same woman interviewed that my brother knew, certainly, undeniably doors would have not opened, but flung open with ripe offers and juicy perks with thick letter certified envelopes. Both women were white and the unattractive attorney got an abstract taste of what it is like to be black, qualified and still severely challenged to find meaningful higher-grossing employment in her sphere of expertise. As the seas, the world is often cruel.

"….But as for the lad in question, I must only repeat that I had no more idea that you were taking him to that camp meeting than I had knowledge that the two of you were what you describe as inseparable friends. Lacking eyes in the back of my head, or a seventh sense, I can scarcely be asked to mark the relationship between every human being among the eighty or so of great Frenchmen, Voltaire, who said that the beginning of wisdom is the moment when one understands how little concerned with one's own life are other men, they who are so desperately preoccupied with their own. I knew nothing about that you and that boy, nothing at all."

But to get back to Cobb, rather meanderingly I'm afraid, and again by way of Hark. Hark had a flair for the odd, the off-center: had he been able to read and write, been white, free, living in some Elysian time when we anything but negotiable property worth six hundred dollars in a depressed market, he might have been a lawyer; to my disappointment, Christian teachings (my own mainly) had made only the shallowest imprint upon is spirit, so that being free of spiritual rules and restraints he responded to the mad side of life and could laugh with abandon, thrilling to each day's new absurdity. In short, he had a feeling for the crazy, the unexpected; all in all, this caused me mild envy. There was for instance the time when our shed behind the wheel shop was still uncompleted, and our master paid us a visit during a roaring thunderstorm, gazing skyward at the water cascading through the roof. "It's leaking in here," he said, to which Hark replied: "Nawsuh, Marse Joe, hit leakin' outside. Hit *rainin*' in here." Likewise, it was Hark who gave expression to that certain inward sense- an essence of being which is almost impossible to put into words- that every Negro possesses when, dating from the age of twelve or ten or even earlier, he becomes aware that he is only merchandise, goods,

in the eyes of all white people devoid of character or moral sense or soul. This feeling Hark called "black-assed," and it comes as close to summing up the numbness and dread which dwells in every Negro's heart as any word I have ever known. "Don' matter who dey is Nat, good or bad, even ol' Marse Joe, dey white folks dey gwine make you feel black-assed. Never seed a white man smile at me yet 'thout I didn't feel just about twice as black-assed as I was befo'. How come dat 'plies, Nat? Figger as white man treat you right you gwine feel white-assed. Naw suh! Young massah, old massah sweet-talk me, I jes' feel black-assed th'ough an' th'ough. Figger when I gets to heaven like you says I is, de good Lord hisself even He gwine make old Hark feel black-assed, standin' befo' de golden throne. Dere He is, white as snow, givin' me a lot of sweet talk and me feelin' like a black-assed angel. 'Cause pretty soon I know his line, yas suh! Yas suh, pretty soon I can hear Him holler out: 'Hark, You dere, boy! Need some spick and span roun' de throne room. Hop to, you black-assed scroundrel! Hop to wid de mop and de broom!'"

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

This is a news quip that demonstrates the deftness of expensive competent attorneys to take as much as sting out of the equation as possible. This was a significant leader in American politics as Speaker of the House who pleads guilty for improper financial transactions; however, doesn't have to plead guilty for exactly why the funds were transferred which is believed for insalubrious behavior with his own personal take on mentoring a minor. This is basically admitting your wrong but not the actual motivation for doing so. The attorneys found convenient flags to fly to impede a clear unobstructed focus on the matter; a glancing dusky hit and not a direct noon sunlight hanging:

Dennis Hastert pleads guilty in hush-money case
28 October 2015, BBC

Former US Speaker of the House of Representatives Dennis Hastert has pleaded guilty in a case tied to hush-money.

The 73-year-old was charged with lying and breaking financial laws in an attempt to pay $3.5m (£2.3m) to cover up "misconduct".

The admission is part of deal with prosecutors that could see Mr Hastert serve up to six months in prison. The plea represents a dramatic fall for the former senior US politician.

The plea agreement, seen by the BBC, says that Mr Hastert "agrees to enter a voluntary plea of guilty to Count 2", which charged him with "structuring and assisting in structuring currency transactions". "Structuring" is a term used to describe the act of removing several small sums of money (in this case less than $10,000) in order to avoid rules that require banks to report large transactions. Count 1 alleged that Mr Hastert had lied to the FBI during the investigation. The agreement says that prosecutors will ask for this charge to be dismissed once the sentence for Count 2 has been imposed.

Media reports suggest the charges may be connected to his history as a teacher and wrestling coach in Illinois in the 1970s. One woman has said Mr Hastert sexually abused her brother then and she believes he was not the only victim.

Mr Hastert was not charged with sexual abuse as part of the case. Jolene Burdge told ABC News in June that her late brother Steve Reinboldt never came forward about the alleged abuse because he feared "no-one would believe him". She said he told her about the abuse in 1979, when he revealed he was gay. The FBI interviewed Ms Burdge, who has considered coming forward with her brother's story in the past, in May.

Ms Burdge never asked Mr Hastert for money, but she thinks the unnamed person cited in the case as being paid off knows what happened to her brother.

Mr Hastert served as speaker of the House of Representatives from 1999 to 2007, when he resigned from the chamber after the Republicans lost control. He was first elected to the House in 1987.

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Dennis Hastert, ex-US House speaker, sentenced to 15 months in jail
27 April 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36155261

A federal judge has sentenced Dennis Hastert to 15 months in prison, calling the former House Speaker "a serial child molester" who tried to cover up his abuse with hush money.

Using a wheelchair, Hastert, 74, told the court he was "deeply ashamed" that he "**mistreated**" students while he worked as a school coach in the 1970s. One of the victims said the abuse left him "devastated" and "betrayed". Hastert served as an Illinois congressman from 1987 to 2007.

He was the longest serving Republican House Speaker in US history. As House Speaker, Hastert was second in the line of succession to the presidency. Many of his former Republican colleagues had appealed to the judge for leniency.

In October, he pleaded guilty to violating banking reporting laws after he tried to pay someone $3.5 million to keep quiet about his past sexual abuse. Prosecutors allege Hastert abused five boys while he was working in Yorkville, a suburb of Chicago, between 1965 and 1981. However, Hastert could not be charged with the sexual abuse of his victims because of the amount of time that has passed since the crimes.

His defence lawyers had sought to avoid a prison sentence, saying Hastert is in poor health and had already paid a high price in disgrace. After his guilty plea, Hastert's portrait was removed from the House of Representatives in the US Congress.

Judge Thomas Durkin said on Wednesday that Hastert must also undergo sex offender treatment, serve two years of probation after his release and pay $250,000 to a fund for victims.

Perhaps, with his inside know-how of Congressional doings, Hastert should have been seriously vetted by the Trump campaign. Trump, undeniably, proved himself as a long-shot candidate willing to take crazy chances. This was the ultimate dark-horse running mate he could have gone with. Hastert was the longest serving Speaker of the House! As soon as Trump was elected president, he could have pardoned him immediately right after he took oath so Hastert could have been sworn in as Vice President. He had far more experience than Pence for keeping Republicans in voting order. Hastert's political credentials are par excellence even if his past personal foibles with the youth were wickedly damaging. We still see that he had a lot of support- political capital- within the party requesting for leniency.

Contrast Mr. Speaker's muffled admission of guilt for transgressions with a case of murder down South. The news article that follows is typical of being black without access for a competent legal defense. This case is even more warped with an added twist of convicting another man for the same crime later and still keeping the originally wrongly convicted man locked down for decades in Louisiana. Note this is not in 1955 but presently in 2015. White men, especially of means, would never even have to consider such a fate. The jury, being all white, convicts just as easy as dropping a feather as being black in court implies being guilty just by who you are, not what needs to be actually proven; to convict white requires real evidence. The notion of fair has not ever been evenly spread when color is involved. Also, evidence that is contrary to implied guilt that could offer reasonable doubt for acquittal was withheld from the court to the further advantage of the prosecuting attorneys. Thousand of black men through the century to this very day have been railroaded into incarceration as true justice has a distinct habit of pulling up her blindfold to take a good stony look at the accused and unfairly adds weight to the scale for easy convictions: it's all out of balance and the scales do not zero where the zero historically lies on the continent. White Americans would prefer to believe cases such as this happen in Latin America, as though conveniently in some backward banana republic controlled by a handful of dominant families or in distant South

America is some retro-caudillo fiefdom reigning over impoverished Indians and disenfranchised blacks on estancias the size of Romania. Justice in America is fickle for those with less of color, far sturdier with access to more; the South as its own shady magnolia tree interpretations we are reminded again which drives at the heart of the matter of ascertaining flags of convenience:

US man freed after 23 years in jail over another's crime

21 November 2015, BBC

A US man (black) whose conviction was overturned after serving more than 23 years in jail for crimes including the killing of a UK tourist (white woman) has been freed.

"It's a great day," Robert Jones, 42, said as he left Orleans Parish Prison in Louisiana on Friday.

Mr Jones was sentenced to life for rape, robbery and the manslaughter of Julie Stott in 1992. **He was jailed even though another man, Lester Jones, had already been convicted of the murder.** There had also been compelling evidence that linked him to all of the crimes Robert Jones was accused of having committed.

State prosecutors had withheld crucial evidence in Robert Jones's trial. In June, a Louisiana court ruled that he did not get a fair trial, but he remained in prison.

Last month, the murder detective and the judge from Mr Jones's original trial told BBC News they believed his conviction had been a miscarriage of justice. This week a judge said he could leave prison on bail pending a retrial, citing "disturbing testimony from a lead detective".

Speaking outside the prison, Mr Jones's mother described his release as a "blessed day". His daughter Bree, who was born after he was jailed, said: "I've been looking forward to it for a long time."

This case was just last year and reeks of a similar abominable miscarriage of justice conveniently down South with a two for one conviction for the same crime against brothers with absolutely no evidence linking them to the crime scene. This is the justice system brazenly preying on those most vulnerable which is insightful to the Southern code of ethics especially but unfortunately not categorically. This doesn't happen to whites if we look at the record transparently:

DNA evidence overturns 30-year convictions in US case

2 September 2014, BBC

Two US men (black, of course) who spent three decades in prison for rape and murder, one of them on death row, have been released after DNA evidence proved their innocence. **Mentally disabled half brothers Henry McCollum, 50, and Leon Brown, 46, were convicted in 1984 of raping and killing an 11-year-old girl in North Carolina.** Recently analysed DNA evidence from the crime scene implicated another man, who is in prison for a similar crime.

A county judge ordered the immediate release of the brothers. Tuesday's court judgement followed an investigation by the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission, which tested DNA evidence found at the scene. The commission found that none could be traced to Mr McCollum or Mr Brown.

This case is a tragedy which has profoundly affected not only the lives of the people involved, but which profoundly affects our system of justice in North Carolina," said lawyer for Mr Brown, Ann Kirby.

No physical evidence

The near-naked body of 11-year-old Sabrina Buie was found in 1983 near the town of Red Springs, North Carolina. She had been raped before being killed.

Mr McCollum and Mr Brown, who were 19 and 15 at the time, were picked up by police a few weeks later. **There was no physical evidence connecting them to the crime.**

Mr McCollum confessed after five hours of intense questioning, without a lawyer or family member present. His younger brother also signed a confession written by the police.

The two later recanted their confessions in court, saying they were made under duress. But despite a weak case, the brothers were found guilty and given death sentences.

Mr Brown's sentence was later reduced to life in prison and his charge reduced to rape, but Mr McCollum remained on death row for three decades.

In the years since their false confessions, Mr McCollum and Mr Brown maintained their innocence and made a number of appeals.

In 2010 the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission took up their case and uncovered evidence the men's legal team had not been able to obtain.

Life lost

The evidence found no link between the brothers and the victim, but did implicate Roscoe Artis, 74, who lived close to where the victim's body was found.

Although he was not a suspect in the original case, Artis was found guilty for the rape and murder of another girl in similar circumstances less than a month after Sabrina Buie's killing.

After Tuesday's release of Mr McCollum and Mr Brown, their legal team thanked those who had worked to correct wrongs that occurred under the previous prosecutions

"It's terrifying that our justice system allowed two intellectually disabled children to go to prison for a crime they had nothing to do with, and then to suffer there for 30 years," said lawyer Ken Rose.

"It's impossible to put into words what these men have been through and how much they have lost.

As attorneys, both women - Saks and Back-at-the-Rack - plus the Founding Fathers from the Southern colonies, which later formed into the Confederacy, would have taken pleasure with expansion of the 1950's solution to an inescapable problem as a loophole in the maritime world with 'flags of convenience. ' Hypocrite and attorney Patrick Henry with his rousing speech of freedom yet owning a vast estate and a community of slaves would unlock the crypt under magnolia trees on his forsaken plantation and jump up to kiss the attorneys on both cheeks, maybe one a bit warmer than the other, if they were the ones to hypothetically to have figured how to do what you need to do to skirt laws, taxes and obligations in front of everyone's face....legally.

….By 30 June 1947 (post WWII), the (US) government had sold 3.3 million deadweight tons (306 ships) to Americans and 8 million deadweight tons (799 ships) to foreigners…US investors at last began to avail themselves of the surplus ships, so that their total acquisitions before the Ship Sale Act of 1946 expired climbed to 9.5 million deadweight tons (847 ships), but the foreign share had also climbed to 12 million tons (1,113)…

Pause. Think after WWII with entirely collapsed economies, what countries were purchasing ships en masse less than 24 months since the ending of hostilities? Was Korea rich? Japan buying? India ready for the world? China? Indonesia? Philippines?

Malaya? Angola? France? Maldives? Aruba? Egypt? The world was exhausted from war and the Brits were even mailing the keys to the bank and walking away from India and Palestine foreclosing on a game called Empire. Game over. So, who was purchasing used tonnage?

…**What the figures did not reveal was that many of the ships were sold to U.S. citizens who were fronts or dummy corporations just waiting for the first opportunity to transfer ships to foreign owners, increasingly for operation under the Panamanian and Liberian flags of convenience**…As more and more ships passed into foreign hands, the share of the country's oceanborne trade carried by US- flag vessels declined from a war time high of 68% in 1945 to 39% in 1950, falling below a stated goal or retaining a 50% share of ocean borne commerce for US ships.

- Rene de la Pedraja
The Rise and Decline of US Merchant Shipping in the 20th Century

The movement towards open registers started in the 1920s, when US shipowners saw registration under the Panamanian flag as a means of avoiding the high tax rates in the United States, while at the same time registering in a country with the stable political orbit of the United States. There was a spate of registrations during this period, but the real growth came after WWII when the US government sold off Liberty ships to US owners. Anxious to avoid operation under the American flag, US tax lawyers approached Liberia to set up an advantageous regime for ship registration, and the registration conditions in Liberia were developed specifically to attract shipowners to register under that flag on the payment of an annual fee. Shortly afterwards, Panama adapted its laws to attract shipowners from anywhere in the world, and thus the two major international open registers were established…

Solution under the legal noses: WWII Liberty ships = Liberia.

…Shipping is particular well suited to offshore registration and once this facility became available it was widely adopted. **Today about half the world merchant fleet is registered under open registers.**

…Open registers have been set up with the specific aim of offering shippowners a registration service, often as a means of earning revenue for the flag state. The terms and conditions offered by open registers vary considerably, depending upon the policy of the country concerned. Some are highly professional and enforce international conventions on safety, while others are less vigilant, allowing shipowners to cut corners. However, all aim to offer terms that are favourable to an international shipowner….Confronted with a choice of flags which he can register his ship, the shipowner must weigh up the relative disadvantages and disadvantages of each of the alternatives

….TAX:

There are generally no taxes on profits or fiscal controls. The only tax is the subscription tax per net registered ton.

…CREWING:

The shipping company has complete freedom to recruit internationally.

…COMPANY LAW:

Ownership of the stock in the company need not be disclosed;
Shares are often in 'bearer' form, which means that they belong to
Person who hold them; liability can be limited to a one-ship company;
and the company is not required to produce audited accounts…

…SAFETY STANDARDS:

International open registers differ in the way they enforce safety standards for the ships on the register. Some enforce high standards, while others leave safety entirely to the shipowner

1922: Panama

Two ships of United American Lines changed from US registry to avoid laws on serving alcoholic beverages aboard US ships (US Prohibition)

1930s: Panama

Shipowners with German-registered ships switched to Panamanian registry to avoid possible seizure.

(WWII ends 1945)

1946 – 1949: Panama

Liberal registration and taxation advantages

1949: Liberia

Low registration fees, absence of Liberian taxes, absence of operating and crewing restrictions made registry economically attractive.

Martin Stopford,
Maritime Economics

The reasons for choosing an open register are varied and include tax avoidance, the ability to avoid national labor and environmental regulations, and the ability to hire crews from lower-wage countries. National or closed registries typically require a ship be owned and constructed by national interests, and at least partially crewed by its citizens. Conversely, open registries frequently offer on-line registration with few questions asked. The use of flags of convenience lowers registration and maintenance costs, which in turn reduces overall transportation costs. The accumulated advantages can be significant, for example in 1999, 28 of Sea-Land's fleet of 63 ships were foreign flagged, saving the company up to 3.5 million dollars per ship every year.

… Between Sept. 1939 and June 1941 the US Maritime Commission approved the transfer of 63 US flagged vessels to Panamanian registry, which provided a convenient way around the Neutrality Act. If the ships were sunk, neither the government nor US citizens were involved, and hence a repetition of the events leading to WWI was impossible.

Merchant ships have used false flags as a tactic to evade enemy warships since antiquity, and examples can be found from as early as the Roman era through to the Middle Ages. More recently, this technique was used by the British during the Napoleonic Wars and the United States during the War of 1812. **During the mid-19th century, slave ships flew various flags to avoid being searched by British anti-slavery fleets.** However, the modern practice of registering ships in foreign countries to gain economic advantage originated in the United States in the era of World War I, and **the term "flag of convenience" came into use in the 1950s.**

- Wikipedia

An estimated 99 percent of the crimes committed at sea — everything from murder to kidnapping, slavery to thievery — go unprosecuted and barely noted, according to maritime experts. Even when these crimes are noted, justice is rarely sought, as was the case recently with a grisly cellphone video of four men bobbing in the water next to a ship, pleading for mercy. They were soon shot to death by order of a shipboard authority, which stirred curiosity and laughter among crewmen but little else as the crime drifted away in the ship's wake. The video and the scale of the routine mayhem at sea are among the findings of a series of articles in The Times that detail the extremes of violence and danger at sea.

Impunity seems to be the law as nations choose to exercise minimal responsibility, inquiring into crimes only for those ships flying their own flag. "In the maritime world, it's far easier for countries to look the other way," Mark

Young, a retired United States Coast Guard commander and former chief of enforcement for the Pacific Ocean, told Ian Urbina of The Times.

Thousands of seafarers, fishermen and migrants die under suspicious circumstances each year, but the ships move on and no one is required to report crimes committed in international waters. Tens of thousands of workers, many of them children, are exploited and enslaved every year on boats, while thousands more die in accidents linked to lax or nonexistent safety practices. Stowaways are cast into the sea. Crews go unpaid by shipowners and are left marooned far from home.

Governments that call themselves civilized have been largely ignoring the outlaw aspects of the oceans for centuries. The question is how much longer normal mayhem will continue, as the limits of the globe become ever clearer. **"Like the Wild West," is how Mr. Young described the maritime realm. "Weak rules, few sheriffs, lots of outlaws."**

The Editorial Board
New York Times Lawlessness at Sea July 23, 2015

Flags That Provide a Veil of Secrecy

'Flags of convenience' cloak ownership and let those who don't pay crews, or who run unseaworthy ships, escape detection.

Every seafarer knows that things that happen at sea don't get the attention of things that happen on land. **Oil spilled on beaches makes headlines, abuse and abandonment rarely do. That's despite the debt we owe to seafarers who bring us, as the title of a recent book reminds, 90 percent of everything.**

How can this be**? One reason is the proliferation of flags of convenience, in which countries hire out their flags to shipowners based in other countries on a purely commercial basis. This makes meaningless the link between a ship and the nation whose flag it flies.** It's the antithesis of the strong merchant marine protected for almost a century by the federal Jones Act, and which is now under attack even in states with a strong maritime history such as Canada and Australia. Australia is dismantling its equivalent of the act even as it is investigating three suspicious deaths on a visiting Panama-flagged vessel.

There are, of course, good and even excellent ship owners using flags of convenience, and there are responsible flag of convenience nations too. But there are also many bad and even scandalous ones.

The problem is that flags of convenience provide a veil of secrecy: complete commercial anonymity. They cloak ownership and allow those who don't pay their crews, or knowingly run unseaworthy "coffin ships" to escape detection and prosecution.

They also impose a huge competitive burden on all those who want to run decent and responsible ships. Couple the lack of transparency with an unwillingness among many flags of convenience countries to investigate safety and crimes on the ships that are technically their sovereign territory and you have a system where even murder can go unpunished.

It needn't be this way. A genuine link between the owners of a vessel and its flag, with a trained national maritime workforce, can be upheld. There are many good laws and regulations out there. Port state control organizations (which inspect ships visiting a nation's ports), responsible flag states, trade unions and my organization (the I.T.F.) are among those trying to enforce those laws and regulations, and defend those doing the dangerous and vital job of seafaring.

Since 2013, the Maritime Labor Convention has been a valuable tool to help do this. It sets out minimum standards for the treatment of crews and a legal framework that bodies such as port state control and the International Transport Workers' Federation can utilize to enforce them. There's also International Labor Organization Convention 188 to improve conditions on fishing boats, which, if more countries ratify it, could help clean up the industry – not least by obliging signatory countries to combat, for example, people trafficking.

The tools are there, the question is whether there's the national, international and consumer will to apply them. The problem is known, and it's fixable. It may be out of sight, but it should never be out of mind. Distance from land is no excuse.

Steve Cotton, General Secretary
International Transport Workers' Federation,
New York Times July 23, 2015

Stowaways and Crimes Aboard a Scofflaw Edge

Few places on the planet are as lawless as the high seas, where egregious crimes are routinely committed with impunity. **Though the global economy is ever more dependent on a fleet of more than four million fishing and small cargo vessels and 100,000 large merchant ships that haul about 90 percent of the world's goods, today's maritime laws have hardly more teeth than they did centuries ago when history's great empires first explored the oceans' farthest reaches.**

Murders regularly occur offshore — thousands of seafarers, fishermen or sea migrants die under suspicious circumstances annually, maritime officials say — but culprits are rarely held accountable**. No one is required to report violent crimes committed in international waters.**

Through debt or coercion, tens of thousands of workers, many of them children, are enslaved on boats every year, with only occasional interventions. **On average, a large ship sinks every four days and between 2,000 and 6,000 seamen die annually, typically because of avoidable accidents linked to lax safety practices**.

Ships *intentionally* dump more engine oil and sludge into the oceans in the span of three years than that spilled in the Deepwater Horizon and Exxon Valdez accidents combined, ocean researchers say, and emit huge amounts of certain air pollutants, far more than all the world's cars. Commercial fishing, much of it illegal, has so efficiently plundered marine stocks that the world's population of predatory fish has declined by two thirds.

Vessels that disappear over the horizon tend to vanish not just from sight but from oversight, a New York Times investigation found. Countries have signed dozens of maritime pacts, the shipping industry has published reams of guidelines and the United Nations maritime agency has written hundreds of rules, all aimed at regulating ships, crews and safety. But those laws are also often weak, contradictory and easily skirted by criminals. National and international agencies usually have neither the inclination nor resources to enforce them.

The modern flagging system, which allows ships to buy the right to fly the flag of a country as long as it promises to follow its laws, provides good cover for the unscrupulous.

Usually, a ship may be stopped on the high seas only by a law enforcement or military vessel flying the same flag. The world's navies, though, have been scaling down for decades. Most nations, including the Bahamas, whose flag the Dona Liberta flew, have no ships that regularly patrol beyond their national waters. (**Some landlocked countries like Mongolia and Bolivia offer flags for cheaper costs**.)

When wrongdoing occurs, no single agency within a country or specific international organization typically has a sufficient stake in the matter to pursue it. The stowaways on the Dona Liberta, for example, were undocumented immigrants from Tanzania, living in South Africa and brought to shore in Liberia. **The ship was owned by a Greek company incorporated in Liberia, crewed primarily by Filipinos, captained by an Italian, flagged to the Bahamas and passing through international waters.** "Who leads such an investigation?" Mr. Young asked.

Ian Urbina
New York Times July 17, 2015

Protecting the Untamed Seas

The broader philosophical debate over how to manage the oceans typically divides into two camps. On one side, advocates of a laissez-faire approach argue that at the core of modern maritime culture is a 17th-century notion known as mare liberum, Latin for freedom of the seas, which was popularized by a Dutch lawyer, Hugo Grotius. He contended that ships in passage should be unimpeded by governments, competitors or pirates. The sea, he argued, is international territory for use by all nations in passage or commerce.

Mare liberum has been central in fostering free trade and global commerce by keeping merchant routes unfettered by national rules or bureaucracies. Its proponents argue that the concept goes a long way toward explaining why roughly 90 percent of the goods we consume travel to market by sea. And mare liberum dictates that access to the oceans' riches should remain on a first-come, first-served basis, they say.

The opposing view is that the high seas are one of several "global commons" (along with the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space) that are shared by the public at large. Benefits derived from these commons should be distributed equitably. If, for example, the high seas offer up revolutionary new drugs, poorer countries should be able to access the

research and share in the profits from their sale. The "tragedy of the commons," some maritime experts say, is that since everyone is responsible, no one is willing or able to act. Often, this results in a free-for-all.

International waters have long been a magnet for unregulated activity. In many parts of the world, the waters beyond national jurisdiction represent an outlaw ocean, where crimes ranging from murder and slavery to dumping and illegal fishing occur with impunity. While larger shippers face tighter rules and more oversight because they typically operate out of bigger ports with more enforcement resources, this is far less true for the smaller and more numerous commercial vessels and fishing ships in regions like Southeast Asia and off the coast of Africa.

Meanwhile, advocates and entrepreneurs have turned to the open seas to circumvent prohibitions against abortion, gambling, prostitution and illicit drugs. Libertarians are courting venture capitalists to underwrite futuristic plans to create legally autonomous floating communities.

Ian Urbina
New York Times July 31, 2015

Let's move from maritime to land masses and still observe corporate exposures being mitigated by competent tax attorneys taking a cue from hulls docked at the ports, shall we? It's the same concept applied first for the maritime industry to evade tax liabilities and labor laws which has now slipped conveniently into the natural discourse of boardroom strategies of corporate America to save billions of dollars. With corporations with stock traded publically, secrecy of ownership cannot be administered as so often within the realm of shipping. Shipping is low profile regardless of the mass of the ships. The commercial spheres at large are not aware that the father of US corporate inversions appears to be a largely legal constructs with post-WWII flags of convenience that has morphed into a brazen broad based tax savings strategy. I have yet to read a mention of anyone putting the two concepts together but the connection seems more than coincidental. Inversions did not come out of the blue; the needle points magnetically that

inversions are the offspring of flags of convenience with many similarities. It's worth speculating that someone as infamously devious as Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco would automatically be drawn to such a savvy strategy relatively well before other CEOs and boardrooms because he believed himself shrewder than everybody and was always testing the legal perimeters, pushing the boundaries, in which he finally was pinched with luxurious down feather pillowed cellblock housing. Tech giants can foster their public images as clean responsible corporate citizens- never wishing to be remotely allied with Tyco's past reckless largesse- but when finances in the billions are at risk for federal taxes, Silicon Valley behemoths perhaps are not as different than Tyco as to be believed by taking a tip from that darned Den Den and shopping for a friendly island to start calling some of their operations home…officially. If their in-house attorneys with their major retained law firms are competent and current, which we prudently assume they are, they need to be aware of all their options to protect the house. A multi-billion chip manufacturer such as Intel can be technically based in the remote South Pacific Cook Islands without a wafer fab yet holding a one room office with a single 486 computer complete with a 10 meg Seagate hard drive with a blazingly fast Hayes 1200 baud modem for internet connection that can suffice as the main boardroom with an accredited Indonesian clove-cigarettes chain smoking security guard to ward off corporate and foreign espionage.

Genentech can be based in the Cayman Islands with a dedicated laboratory consisting of ten Pyrex beakers, two microscopes to critically observe a new found species of paramecium and one Bunsen burner with a sporadic gas source. They could not be admonished for maintaining a fully stocked posh waterfront condominium adjacent to a golf course with spa, for visiting executive staff to oversee pertinent research in compliance to long range plans and goals, as options for hotel lodgings at five-star resorts with aspiring Michelin star chefs are incompatibly austere with basic bread-n-butter corporate standards.

A global wine and beer conglomerate can be based in Iceland with a backyard experimental lava rock vineyard with varying clones of Pinot Noir to quantify cold-weather growth yields. Voila! Isn't that convenient.

Kozlowski joined Tyco in 1975, becoming CEO in 1992. With Kozlowski at the helm, Tyco massively expanded during the late 1990s. The company consistently beat Wall Street's expectations and through a series of strategic mergers and acquisitions, ushered in a new era of mega-conglomerates. Kozlowski left Tyco in 2002, amid a controversy in regard to his compensation package.

Kozlowski, commenting on his trial in a March 2007 interview with the CBS television newsmagazine *60 Minutes*, told Morley Safer, "I was a guy sitting in a courtroom making $100 million a year … I think a juror sitting there just would have to say, 'All that money? He must have done something wrong.' I think it's as simple as that."
Kozlowski, asserted his innocence by stating, "I am absolutely not guilty of the charges. There was no criminal intent here. Nothing was hidden. There were no shredded documents. All the information the prosecutors got was directly off the books and records of the company."

Kozlowski is not the only one to question his conviction. Writing in Forbes magazine at the end of the second trial, civil rights lawyer Dan Ackman said:

It's fair to say that Kozlowski and Swartz abused many corporate prerogatives and that they invented new ones just so they could abuse them. They acted like pigs, as a lot of CEOs act like pigs. Still, the larceny charges at the heart of the case did not depend on whether the defendants took the money—they did—but whether they were authorized to take it. Questions of authority are, by nature, legal questions, not questions for jurors. Much has been made of how the second Tyco trial was less of a circus than the first one. That's true, but only by comparison.

On November 15, 2007, the appellate division of the New York State Supreme Court denied Kozlowski's appeal in a unanimous decision.

Kozlowski became notorious for his extravagant lifestyle, supported by the booming stock market of the late 1990s and early 2000s; allegedly, he had Tyco pay for his $30 million New York City apartment which included $6,000 shower curtains and $15,000 "dog umbrella stands".

According to *Forbes*, Kozlowski also purchased several acres in the private gated community, "The Sanctuary", in Boca Raton, Florida, while he was CEO at Tyco International. He also purchased a multi-million dollar oceanfront estate on the island of Nantucket.

Tyco paid $1 million (half of the $2 million bill) for the 40th birthday party of Kozlowski's second wife, Karen Mayo Kozlowski. The extravagant party, held on the Italian island of Sardinia, featured an ice sculpture of Michelangelo's *David* urinating Stolichnaya vodka and a private concert by Jimmy Buffett. In a camcorder video, Dennis Kozlowski states that this party will bring out a Tyco core competency – the ability to party hard. Subsequently, this shareholder meeting/birthday party became known as the Tyco Roman Orgy.

- Wikipedia

Tyco votes to stay offshore

6 March 2003, BBC

Shareholders in scandal-hit conglomerate Tyco have voted to keep their company registered in Bermuda, resisting a move to bring it back to the US.

The company, whose shares plummeted 71% last year, is one of a handful which **have come under the microscope for reincorporating abroad to save on US taxes - a practice decried by many as unfair and even unpatriotic.**

Major pension funds and other institutions holding Tyco shares wanted the company back onshore, because they said that would mean greater accountability on the part of its senior executives.

The whole board was replaced last year after revelations about their largesse with the company's money - and following former chief executive Dennis Kozlowski's indictment for tax evasion on a number of paintings bought in New York.

An attempt to sack PricewaterhouseCoopers, the auditor which presided over the company's books while executives allegedly spent millions on their lavish lifestyles.

Institutional pressure

The effort to get Tyco onshore again may have failed, but the 26% of the votes it garnered is a much higher level of support than most resolutions at company meetings. Calpers, the California public employees retirement system and one of the prime movers in the anti-offshore push, has already barred investment in a number of companies which have shifted their official base elsewhere to avoid US taxes.

As with Tyco, the manoeuvre - known as **"corporate inversion" - leaves all management functions within the US, simply moving the registered address to a low-tax location such as Bermuda.**

Stanley Works, a Connecticut company which was planning to head for Bermuda last year, eventually gave up the plan under heavy fire from unions, local lawmakers and investors.

Legal manoeuvrings

The decision - accompanied by a promise from the new board to consider the "complex" question in detail - comes as US lawmakers tried to pass legislation designed to close off the issue till after the next election.

While discussing the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act, a bill designed to ensure dependents of those in the military received death benefits tax-free, Republicans in the House of Representatives added a clause declaring a moratorium on inversions till December 2004.

But Democrats charged that the moratorium was simply a way of kicking the issue into the long grass - while at the same time letting off anyone who had inverted before March 2003.

Calling the amendment an "amnesty for tax dodgers", Texas Democrat Lloyd Doggett said the bill had been "perverted".

"The leadership of the House has launched a sneak attack to protect the corporate 'ex-patriots' who have renounced America," he said, giving a flavour of the kind of language anti-inversion activists are turning to.

Eleven years later:

Burger King and Tim Hortons agree merger details
26 August 2014, BBC

Burger King has confirmed that it plans to buy Tim Hortons, the Canadian coffee and doughnut chain, for about $11bn (£6.6bn; 8.3bn euros).

The deal would create the world's third-largest fast-food chain, with 18,000 restaurants in 100 countries The new group would have a market capitalisation of about $18bn and

annual sales in the region of $23bn. Burger King's majority shareholder, 3G Capital, will own about 51% of the merged company.

Under the terms of the deal, which has been unanimously approved by both companies' boards of directors, Tim Hortons shareholders will receive 65.50 Canadian dollars ($59.74; £36.10) in cash and 0.8025 shares of the new company for every share they own, the companies said in a joint statement.

Warren Buffett's investment firm Berkshire Hathaway will contribute $3bn "in preferred equity financing" to the deal, the companies said, but would not have any managerial control over the business.

Although Burger King's shares closed up 19.5% on Monday after it was revealed the two companies were in talks, shares closed down 4.32% on Tuesday when the terms were finalised.
However, investors were cheered by the prospect for Tim Hortons: shares in the firm ended up 8.47% on Tuesday, followed by a 19% rise in the share price on Monday.

Tax avoidance

The firms have said that any new group would have its headquarters in Canada, where corporate taxes are lower. These so-called "tax inversion" deals are attracting increasing criticism in the US, where President Barack Obama is understood to be looking at how they can be prevented in future.

The US corporate tax rate is 35%, but 26.5% in Ontario, Canada, where Tim Hortons is based.

3G Capital, a New York and Rio de Janeiro-based investment company, bought Burger King in 2010 for about $3.3bn and floated the company in 2012, holding on to nearly 70% of the shares.

The companies will retain their separate brand identities, but save costs by sharing corporate services. Tim Hortons used to be owned by US fast-food chain Wendy's, before being spun off as a separate company in 2006.

Obama accuses firms of "cherry-picking" over tax rules

25 July 2014, BBC

US President Barack Obama has urged lawmakers to end a tax loophole that allows US companies to avoid paying US corporate taxes.

He accused firms of "cherry picking" the rules, by moving their tax base overseas, while keeping most of their business in the US. Know as inversion, nine companies so far this year have used the practice.

"My attitude is I don't care if it's legal - it's wrong," the president said in a speech in Los Angeles.

The potential savings of inversion were widely seen as part of the reason why US pharmaceuticals firm Pfizer attempted to buy Britain's AstraZeneca earlier this year. That deal stirred up controversy with critics concerned that the company would cut back on UK research and development.

'Stop rewarding'

President Obama also called for "economic patriotism".

"Economic patriotism says it's a good thing when we close wasteful tax loopholes and invest in education, and invest in job training that helps the economy for everybody. "Let's stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas; give tax breaks to companies that are bringing jobs back to the United States," he said.

Democrats in the US Congress have put forward a proposal that would make inversion much more difficult and the president called on Republicans to support that effort. US companies have called on the government to lower and reform corporate taxes, which would make it less attractive for them to move their tax base overseas.

Obama criticises US firms for becoming 'magically Irish'

25 July 2014, BBC

US President Barack Obama has criticised American firms for becoming "magically" Irish, in order to avoid paying business taxes in the US. He accused firms of changing their mail address in order to take advantage of lower tax rates in the Republic of Ireland and other countries.

Mr Obama described the practice as "gaming the system".
The president, who is of Irish descent on his mother's side, made the remarks during a CNBC television interview.

Several large US companies have set up European bases in Dublin in recent years, including Google and Facebook. **More recently there have been a series of takeovers of Dublin-registered companies by US firms in a process known as "inversion" and such moves have been controversial.**

Mr Obama told CNBC: **"This is basically taking advantage of tax provisions that are technically legal,** but I think most people would say if you're doing business here, if you're basically still an American company but you're simply changing your mailing address in order to avoid paying taxes, then you're really not doing right by the country and by the American people."

He added: **"If you simply acquire a small company in Ireland or some other country to take advantage of the low tax rate, you start saying 'we're now magically an Irish company' despite the fact that you may only have 100**

employees there, and you've got 10,000 employees in the United States, you're just gaming the system.

As they say at Notre Dame, Go Fighting Irish!

Pfizer seals $160bn Allergan deal to create drugs giant

23 November 2015, BBC

US drugs giant Pfizer has sealed a deal to buy Botox-maker Allergan for $160bn (£106bn) in what is the biggest pharmaceuticals deal in history. **The takeover could allow Pfizer to escape relatively high US corporate tax rates by moving its headquarters to Allergan's Dublin base.**

The merged company will be the world's biggest drug maker by sales. Allergan shareholders will receive 11.3 shares in the new company for each of their Allergan shares. Pfizer shareholders will receive one share for each of their shares in that company. Shares in Pfizer fell 2.7% in afternoon trading in New York, while Allergan was 3.2% lower following the announcement.

Hilliary Clinton, the likely Democratic presidential candidate, said inversion deals like Pfizer's would "leave US taxpayers holding the bag" and called on Washington to ensure that the biggest companies "pay their fair share".

Senator Bernie Sanders, another Democratic hopeful, said the deal would be a disaster for consumers and allow another major US company to hide its profits overseas.

Savings

The merged business will be called Pfizer Plc. The companies said they expected the deal to be completed in the second half of 2016, subject to regulatory approval in the US and Europe.

Pfizer said it expected the merger to result in savings of $2bn in the first three years.

Pfizer boss Ian Read will be chief executive and chairman of the merged company, with Allergan boss Brent Saunders becoming president and chief operating officer.
"The proposed combination of Pfizer and Allergan will create a leading global pharmaceutical company with the strength to research, discover and deliver more medicines and more therapies to more people around the world," said Mr Read.
Critically, the terms of the deal propose that the merged company will maintain Allergan's Irish domicile. This means the profits of the new company would be subject to corporation tax of 12.5% - much lower than the 35% Pfizer pays in the US.

'Next chapter'

Last year**, Pfizer made an offer to buy AstraZeneca in a move that analysts said was designed to reduce Pfizer's tax bill.** The UK drugs group rejected the bid, arguing it undervalued the company.

Explaining Allergan's motives, Mr Saunders said: "This bold action is the next chapter in the successful transformation of Allergan, allowing us to operate with greater resources at a much bigger scale."

The deal is the latest in a series of mergers and acquisitions in the sector, as pharmaceuticals companies struggle to cope with patents on a number of major drugs expiring.

Ketan Patel, at EdenTree Investment Management, said: "The pharmaceutical sector, which has had over $220bn of deals in the first half of 2015 alone, will be buoyed further by the proposed purchase of Allergan by Pfizer, the largest pharma deal ever at $160

billion, surpassing the $116 billion Pfizer paid for Warner Lambert in 2000. **The deal is also the biggest [tax] inversion deal."**

Is the term a reverse-merger sidestepping an inversion? The new company will still be called Pfizer PLC. Could a reverse-merger be a construct of an inversion? Other articles mention inversion but this seems to be a unique way (suspect) for WSJ to mitigate the inflammatory gist of the purchase by trying to be overly technical – cherry pick - to lend further leverage to give credence about their gripes of the US tax code. It's really about the Democrat's fault with Hillary's loops and some dense Republicans to point a finger with for the perceived fault (adds a crumble of credibility so its not all one way). Does Ireland have a navy spanning the globe, air force at the push button ready, army with heavy artillery and gunship helicopters, Medicare for the growing elderly population and a web of prisons that any totalitarian government would wring its hands in envy? How much larger in population, economy and geography is Ireland compared to the US? Ireland is the size of one California county so it doesn't have nearly the same needs as the US and never will. Does Ireland have the same global reach economically as the US? Did China's President Xi Jinping visit London this year to have dinner with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth to let Ireland know they better not act up - or else Beijing may Rub-a-Dub? This is not an apple-to-apple comparison between a green Granny Smith and Fuji varietal and Granny offers lower taxes rates. Think of the bigger picture.

Besides being not just critical which is above board and fair, some facts perhaps could be taken out of context to skew the opinion in its favor. I prudently have reasonable doubts until proven otherwise in the future about the results of the bottom line as mentioned.

This next article is preaching to the choir I ascertain:

Clinton's Pfizer Follies

Review & Outlook Opinion

27 November 2015, Wall Street Journal

Americans are more cynical than ever about politics, and with ample cause. Witness this week's denunciations of Pfizer Inc. by politicians for trying to survive competitively under tax laws these same politicians wrote.

On Monday the New York based drug giant finally announced its long-mooted merger with Ireland's Allergan in a roughly $ 160 billion deal that is the largest tie-up in a record year for deal-making. The merger will, among other things, make it easier for the new Ireland-based Pfizer PLC to bring profits generated overseas back to the US. But the same politicians who continue to tilt the playing field against US companies are blasting Pfizer for trying to do right by its shareholders, workers and customers.
"For too long, powerful corporations have explotited loopholes that allow them to hide earnings abroad to lower their taxes," thundered Hillary Clinton, that epic collector of corporate cash tribute. "Now Pfizer is trying to reduce its tax further."

Even further? Its effective tax rate of 25% is among the highest in its industry anywhere in the world, hence the need to move the legal address and endure grief from politicians like Mrs. Clinton. …

Pfizer CEO Ian Read says he's been traveling to Washington for two years and telling "almost anybody who would listen" that the US tax code is "hugely disadvantageous" for companies like his. He points out that an Irish company, after taxes, can choose to invest in the US nearly 88 cents of a dollar of profits earned in its home country.

But if an Irish subsidiary of a US firm wants to make a similar investment in the US, it has to pay both the Irish and US governments. That leaves only 65 cents on the dollar left to invest in America. Mr. Read says that some foreign competitors "can invest $ 2 to $ 3

billion more in research than we can and we're fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

His solution is the Allergan deal. Pfizer expects the combined company to have an effective tax rate of 17%-18% compared to Pfizer's anticipated 25% for 2015. And while the company isn't saying exactly how much it plans to bring back to the US, a spokesman says "we expect significantly increased access to our earnings and cash flow following" the transaction.

..If Mrs. Clinton doesn't like it, she out to denounce herself. The former secretary of state is promising more red tape to prevent US firms from leaving and rails about the "loopholes that litter our tax code, distort incentives for investment, and disadvantage small businesses and domestic firms that cannot game the international tax system."

But she knows all about loopholes and gaming the system. She's been proposing a new tax loophole on the campaign trail roughly every other week. Her proposals include tax credits for businesses with profit sharing-plans and a separate credit for companies that hire apprentices. And don't forget her plan to expand the New Markets tax credit, which gives businesses tax breaks for investing in "qualified community development entities" that allegedly assist people with low incomes….

This is how Democrats, with some Republican help, built a monstrously complicated tax code. And if not for the loopholes, many companies couldn't bear to pay the federal corporate tax rate of 35% which is the highest in the developed world. This high rate is what drives companies to send checks to outfits like the Clinton Foundation trying to persuade people like Hillary Clinton to cut them a break by tweaking the tax code.

The response from Treasury Secretary Jack Lew to companies fleeing onerous US taxation has been to try to block business escapes without any changes to law or even formal regulation. Last year he put out a "notice" that sought to prevent some types of

corporate inversions. When that didn't work he recently issued another notice, which included corrections to the previous one.

So now Treasury is altering a rule it didn't write clearly with amendments that also have not been formally adopted. Why not change the nation's tax laws each morning with a tweet from Mr. Lew? Things could hardly get much worse for companies wishing they could operate in the US with *a stable and reasonable tax system*. (**The Pfizer-Allergan deal is a reverse merger rather than an inversion so it likely won't be affected by the corrected non-rule issued by the hapless Mr. Lew.**) *****

Democrats will keep wailing about the loopholes they invited and in many cases created with their insistence on having the developed world's highest tax rate. But voters might want to check out the plans of the Republican candidates, premised on lower rates, a simpler tax code and no punishment for investing in the US. **They'd raise more tax revenue and while companies raise wages at home.**

* Why not the new enterprise to be named Allergan PLC with a reverse-merger instead of Pfizer?

Pfizer abandons $160bn Allergan deal
6 April 2016, BBC
http://www.bbc.com/news/business-35974998

US drugs giant Pfizer has scrapped a planned merger with Ireland's Allergan amid plans to change US tax laws.

The decision comes two days after the US Treasury announced fresh plans to prevent deals known as "inversions", where a US firm merges with a company in a country with a lower tax rate.

The Pfizer-Allergan deal, valued at $160bn (£113bn), would have been the biggest example of an "inversion".

It would also have been the biggest pharmaceutical deal in history. Pfizer said the move was "driven by the actions announced" by the US Treasury.

Ian Read, Pfizer's chairman and chief executive, said: "Pfizer approached this transaction from a position of strength and viewed the potential combination as an accelerator of existing strategies."

He added that the company could look at splitting off part of the business. "We plan to make a decision about whether to pursue a potential separation of our innovative and established businesses by no later than the end of 2016, consistent with our original timeframe for the decision prior to the announcement of the potential Allergan transaction."

Pfizer said it would pay Botox-maker Allergan $150m "for reimbursement of expenses associated with the transaction".

'Fair share'

Under the proposed acquisition, Pfizer would have moved its headquarters to Dublin, where the tax bill would have been lower than in the US. The corporation tax rate in the Republic of Ireland is 12.5%, compared with 35% in the US.

On Tuesday, US President Barack Obama weighed in on the inversion trend, saying "these companies get all the rewards of being an American company without fulfilling their responsibility to pay their fair share of taxes".

In 2014, American fast-food chain Burger King bought Canadian coffee and doughnut chain, Tim Hortons. The merged group moved to Ontario in Canada, where the corporate tax rate is at 26.5%.

Analysts had said that Pfizer needed to look at acquisitions to help grow its business and revenue. Pfizer made an offer to buy UK drugs group AstraZeneca in 2014. But Astra rejected the offer, arguing it undervalued the company.

Panama Papers: How did Panama become a tax haven?

5 April 2016
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35967590

A huge leak of documents from a Panamanian law firm, Mossack Fonseca, has thrown new light on how the rich and powerful hide their wealth. It has also brought renewed attention on Panama itself, one of the world's best-known tax havens. But what makes Panama different from other low or no-tax jurisdictions and how did it become this way?

How did it all start?

According to a 2013 academic study published by the Norwegian Center for Taxation, the history of Panama as a tax haven began in 1919 when it started to register foreign ships to help American oil giant Standard Oil escape US taxes and regulations. Where Standard Oil led, other US ship owners followed, some seeking to avoid higher wages and better working conditions imposed by US legislation.
Among other applications of Panamanian registration at this time, US passenger ships were able to serve alcohol to their customers during Prohibition without breaking the law.

Within a few years, Panama saw the opportunity to extend the principles it had applied to shipping of minimal tax, regulation and disclosure requirements to offshore finance. According to the Norwegian study, "Wall Street interests helped Panama introduce lax company incorporation laws, which let anyone start tax-free, anonymous corporations, with few questions asked". For decades, offshore finance had a relatively modest profile in Panama, but it took off in the 1970s as world oil prices surged.

What happened then?

Panama passed laws entrenching corporate and individual financial secrecy. Strict confidentiality laws and regulations were put in place, with severe civil and criminal penalties for violations. The names of corporate shareholders were not required to be publicly registered. The country also has strict banking secrecy laws. Financial institutions are prohibited from giving information about offshore bank accounts or account holders. The only exception is reported to be a specific Panamanian court order in conjunction with investigations into terrorism, drug-trafficking or other serious offences (not including tax evasion). **Furthermore, Panama has no tax treaties with other countries, providing an extra layer of protection for foreigners. And it has no exchange controls, so there are no limits or reporting requirements for money transfers in or out.**

By 1982, partly attracted by business opportunities deriving from the Panama Canal and its free trade zone, more than 100 international banks had offices in Panama City.

The result of all this?

"These laws attracted a long line of 'dirtbags' and dictators who used Panama to hide their stolen loot, including Ferdinand Marcos, 'Baby Doc' Duvalier, and Augusto Pinochet," wrote journalist Ken Silverstein in a 2014 expose of Mossack Fonseca for Vice. "When Manuel Noriega, commander of the Panama Defence Forces, took power in 1983, he essentially nationalised the money-laundering business by partnering with the Medellin drug cartel and giving it free rein to operate in the country."

The following years saw setbacks to Panama's attempts to position itself as a legitimate offshore banking centre. Global financial troubles hit Latin America especially hard, and debts owed by regional players including Mexico and Argentina soared. At the same time, criticism was growing about the influence of narco-businesses in Panama. Eventually, the US decided to act, invading Panama in 1989 and overthrowing Noriega.

His successor, Guillermo Endara, a civilian and lawyer, put a new complexion on Panama's international image. But accusations that the country's financial system permitted money-laundering, fraud and international tax evasion have persisted.

What makes Panama different from other tax havens today?

"There is no such thing as a good tax haven," Jolyon Maugham, a barrister who specialises in tax, told BBC 5 Live. "They don't serve any purpose for the global economy... And what is true in the general is certainly true of Panama. "Panama is a real standout bad guy in this story. It's a uniquely ugly place to site your assets... notable only for the extreme and unattractive secrecy that it offers." **Mr Maugham says Panama makes available "an especially strict form of secrecy, a type of opacity of ownership, and (if the reports of backdating are correct) a class of wealth management profession[als] some of whom have especially compromised ethics. "You go to Panama, in short, because, despite its profound disadvantages, you value these things."**

Campaign group, the Tax Justice Network, says of Panama: "In recent years, it has adopted a hard-line position as a jurisdiction that refuses to co-operate with international transparency initiatives."

Tax, and making legal avoidance arrangements, is a global business and havens compete to provide the services, and secrecy, that clients may seek. Pascal Saint-Amans, director of the OECD's centre for tax policy, has been quoted as saying: "From the standpoint of reputation, Panama is still the only place where people still believe they can hide their money."

Following revelations from the Mossack Fonseca documents, Panama's President Juan Carlos Varela said his government had "zero tolerance" for illicit financial activities.

Panama Papers - tax havens of the rich and powerful exposed

- Eleven million documents held by the Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca have been passed to German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung, which then shared them with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. BBC Panorama is among 107 media organisations - including UK newspaper the Guardian - in 76 countries which have been analysing the documents. The BBC doesn't know the identity of the source
- They show how the company has helped clients launder money, dodge sanctions and evade tax
- Mossack Fonseca says it has operated beyond reproach for 40 years and never been accused or charged with criminal wrong-doing.

Will India's tax evasion amnesty scheme curb 'black money'?

By Sanjoy Majumder BBC News, Delhi
14 October 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-37640399

Earlier this month, the Indian government announced that tens of thousands of people had taken advantage of a tax evasion amnesty scheme to declare more than $9.5bn (£7.3bn) in undisclosed incomes and assets.

It's being seen as a financial windfall for the government and also being described as an unqualified success at tackling the country's long-standing underground economy or black money problem.

Cash transactions are a way of life in India. They could involve simple purchases on the street, or large-scale ones involving suitcases stuffed with used notes to buy automobiles or even property.

A significant part of this cash flow is hidden from the government, to avoid paying tax. Cleaning up this system and cracking down on black money has been a stated goal for India's Narendra Modi-led government.

'Secrecy'

From June this year, the government ran a highly visible campaign, entreating citizens to use a four-month window to declare previously undisclosed assets and incomes in exchange for complete immunity from prosecution as well as anonymity, so long as they paid 45% in taxes and penalties.

"We conducted a series of town-hall meetings all over the country," says Hasmukh Adhia, India's revenue secretary.

"All the top officials as well as local-level tax commissioners attended. People had a lot of doubts about the scheme but we assured them of the secrecy aspect," he added.

All sorts of people took advantage of the amnesty scheme.A group of street food vendors from Mumbai are said to have contributed $7.5m. A real estate developer from Gujarat, Naresh Agrawal, who says he has an annual turnover of $45m, declared the equivalent of $6m.

"The rules have become much more stringent now. If you get caught using black money to strike a real estate deal, you have to pay 100% tax and penalties. No builder wants to take that risk," Mr Agrawal said.

"Earlier you were always nervous of getting caught. Now that I have disclosed everything, I can sleep easier."

'Property deals'

That's the reason why many believes this scheme has worked so well, especially when compared to previous attempts, because the government is making it harder for people to conduct large cash transactions.

"A lot of black money would get exchanged as part of property deals," says Shalini Jain, a tax consultant with global financial services company, Ernst and Young. "Now the government has made it mandatory to cut tax at source in these transactions, so it brings to attention any property transaction. This has discouraged many from going ahead with it."

By some estimates, the government could raise nearly $4.5bn from the scheme. But it may not be as good as it sounds.

Only 3% of India's 1.2 billion strong population are said to pay income tax, yet less than 65,000 people came forward during this amnesty programme. Economist Arun Kumar points out that it's only a fraction of the country's undisclosed wealth. "You have to account for not just undeclared income but also the wealth it generates after it is invested, used to buy property etc," he says."By my estimate, India's undisclosed wealth is about 60% of its GDP, which makes it around $1.35 trillion."

And, the big fish may have got away.

"We have to wait for the final breakdown but it appears that most of those who came forward are small business owners or relatively small players. The big hoarders have either not taken part or have only disclosed a nominal amount of their holdings," Prof Kumar adds.

The government says it plans to use the money to fund public welfare programmes, so in effect it will plough the recovered wealth back into the economy. It's already been described as a resounding success. But it's unlikely that it will make India's black money problem go away.

Hanjin ships, cargo and sailors stranded at sea

By Andreas Illmer, BBC News
1 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37241727

With South Korea's biggest shipping company filing for bankruptcy protection, the vessels, sailors and cargo of Hanjin Shipping are stuck in limbo, stranded at sea. Ports, fearing they will not get paid, refuse to let them dock or unload. That means the ships are forced to wait for Hanjin, its creditors or partners to find a solution.

It's a case of unprecedented scale, with experts expecting the deadlock to last for weeks, if not months.

"[It is] a major disaster for the shipping companies and for the companies that own the goods in those containers," Greg Knowler, maritime and trade analyst with IHS Markit, told the BBC from Hong Kong.

Peak season

Not only are ships not allowed to unload, containers waiting to be picked up are also being held back by the ports as collateral over unpaid bills. And even if the ports did allow them in, Hanjing would probably not as the vessels could expect to be immediately repossessed by the firm's creditors. Beyond the ships and containers, there is of course the cargo within those containers - in many cases part of a tight chain of supply and delivery.

By September, the global shipping industry is already into what is its busiest time of the year ahead of the Christmas season.

"Just imagine, there are some 540,000 containers with cargo caught up at sea," explains Lars Jensen, chief executive of Sea Intelligence Consulting in Copenhagen.

That means that a lot of the goods en route to the US are geared at the busy year-end holidays and any disruption will be a major headache for the companies that have entrusted their products into the hauls of the Hanjin freighters.

Who owns what?

Let's break down the somewhat confusing ownership structure at play here.

Hanjin operates partly with its own ships, and partly with vessels it leases from others. So **some of the vessels stuck at sea are owned by other companies who now can't get them back and on top of that have to assume they won't get paid for leasing them in the first place.**

The containers on board the ships are also not all Hanjin's own. As the company is part of an alliance with five other cargo firms, there will be a mix of containers on each vessel - some belonging to Hanjin, the rest to the other four partners. And lastly, there are the firms who own the content of the containers, for instance an Asian electronics firm sending its goods to the US market.

Hanjin's bankruptcy is the largest ever to hit the shipping industry so there's no roadmap as to what will happen now, no precedent of comparable scale.

Stuck in ports

There are the containers stuck at ports.

Let's take a container brought from, say, the Philippines to Hong Kong, to then be picked up from there and taken to the US.

Berthing and handling of that cargo at the Hong Kong port costs money. If Hanjin can't pay that, the port will hold on to those containers as collateral until someone will be willing to pay.

A possible solution would be that the companies who own the contents of those containers ask other shipping companies to step in and pick up where Hanjin left off. The cost of this would be immense, and would come on top of anything they had already paid to Hanjin beforehand. Part of it might be covered by insurance but it would still be an extremely costly endeavour.

Stuck at sea

The containers stuck on board the ships are the next problem. While at sea, there is no way to get the cargo off board. Ships that are only leased by Hanjin could see their actual owner take back control and bring them into a harbour. They would still need to be cleared of their cargo but could then be leased to other companies.

Given that the owners of any leased vessels would probably not want to foot the bill themselves they may try to draft in the four partner lines that have containers on the ship or maybe even the companies whose cargo is inside those containers.

The ships owned by Hanjin itself would most likely have to be sold before anyone would bring in the money to get them into a port and cleared. The fact that they would have to be sold as is, i.e. at sea, and with a load of overdue containers on board would probably weigh down the price of the vessels.

Stranded sailors

Each stranded ship has about 15 to 25 crew on board. Unable to call at any port, they will have to depend on the supplies they have with them until a solution can be found. While food should last long enough, they will eventually need fuel. In a worst-case scenario, should they find themselves unable to pay for fuel being delivered by a shuttle, they would risk running into serious trouble. In that case though, nearby ports would likely be forced to accept them.

Aside from the prospect of being stuck for weeks at sea, the sailors will also face uncertainly over their wages. Most of them are not actually hired by Hanjin but by crewing agencies. Those agencies are unlikely to get paid by Hanjin and therefore won't be able to pay the crews.

"Unless someone steps in very quickly - and there is no sign of that - this will last a very long time," according to Mr Jensen.

Ships, cargo and crew might find themselves stuck for weeks, if not months, without knowing when and where their current voyage will end.

South Korean shipping giant Hanjin to enter receivership

31 August 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37227560

South Korea's biggest shipping group Hanjin is set to enter receivership after its creditors refused to provide further funding to the indebted firm. Hanjin's board unanimously agreed to make the court filing at a meeting on Wednesday, a company spokesman said.

It faces a cash shortage after failing to persuade key lenders to reschedule debt under a new restructuring plan. Shares of Hanjin remain suspended in Seoul after plunging by as much as 29% on Tuesday.

Hanjin, which is also the world's seventh-largest container line, has been unprofitable for four of the last five years.

Potential buyer?

Hanjin may get some financial relief courtesy of rival Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM). Shares of HMM jumped by as much as 22% after Korea's financial regulator said the firm may buy some of Hanjin's assets. However HMM hasn't been spared from the woes bedevilling the sector. It recently announced a reorganisation plan too.
South Korea's shipping and shipbuilding industry is one of the hardest-hit by a prolonged downturn in global trade.

Troubled waters

A drop in orders has led to overcapacity and depressed freight rates, as well as an increase in debts.

"Korean shipping companies have suffered large losses largely because charter rates on leased vessels were fixed in 2010 at a high level while actual shipping rates have fallen," Nomura analyst Young Sun Kwon said.

The South Korean government is now looking to undertake a painful reorganisation of the entire industry, which will require major retrenchments.
The ongoing restructuring is one of several reasons why we expect growth to be weak this year and next, Krystal Tan from Capital Economics said.

"The loss of tens of thousands of jobs certainly won't help economic sentiment," she added.

"But it is a relatively small number when set against the 26m people in employment in Korea so we're not likely to see a big spike in the unemployment rate."

Japan shipping companies plan container merger

31 October 2016, BBC

http://www.bbc.com/news/businessE37819631!

Three of Japan's biggest shipping companies are merging their container operations to become more efficient. Nippon Yusen, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines and Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha said the joint venture would see savings of more than 110bn yen ($1bn; £820m) a year. With a fleet of 256 container vessels, the proposed business would hold about 7% of the world shipping market.

Globally the shipping industry is suffering from overcapacity and weak economic growth. That has left hundreds of ships standing idle and earlier this year led to the collapse of South Korea's Hanjin - the world's seventh largest container shipping firm.

A 'wave of consolidation'

The merged group, which would become the world's sixth largest container shipping operation by capacity, is expected to start operating in April 2018. Shipping analyst Greg Knowler of IHS said the deal did not come as a complete surprise, given all carriers had reported some huge losses in the past year or so. "The quest for scale, and expectations that weak demand and excess capacity will continue for at least another two years, are driving the wave of consolidation that has swamped the liner shipping industry this year," he said.

The three Japanese companies said that "by strengthening the global organization and enhancing the liner network, the new joint-venture company aims to provide higher quality and more competitive services in order to exceed our clients' expectations".

Flags in public are harmless, or are they?

Confederate flags found at US black church in Atlanta

30 July 2015, BBC

….It all added a new twist to an already racially charged debate over the Confederate flag, which was thrust into the national spotlight by the mass murder at a South Carolina church. **Pictures emerged of the man charged with the killings posing with the flag, which many African-Americans believe is a symbol of America's history of slavery. Many white Americans, on the other hand, consider the flag part of southern US heritage and a tribute to military veterans.** Last month a woman scaled a flagpole outside the South Carolina state house to remove the flag, and lawmakers in the state later voted to remove it permanently.

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US police are investigating after four Confederate flags were found on the grounds of a church near the Martin Luther King Jr Center in Atlanta.

The flags, which were placed neatly on the ground, were discovered at about 06:00 local time (11:00 GMT) on Thursday by a maintenance worker. No eyewitnesses have come forward yet but security camera footage of the area was being reviewed, police said.

The flag is very divisive in the US and seen as a symbol of slavery by critics. Staff were disturbed when they came across the flags at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, according to the Reverend Shannon Jones.

"Our groundsmen were so upset, they took pictures and thenthey moved them," she told reporters.

She said the church has been holding a conference on the role on black churches in social justice issues this week.

Police said a security guard had seen a suspicious vehicle parked near the church on Wednesday night, but it is unclear if it was involved.
Mr King once preached at the church in Georgia's capital.

The Confederate flag the battle emblem of the southern states in the US Civil War, and its supporters today say it is an important part of southern heritage.

The backlash against it grew when nine black people were shot dead at a South Carolina church in June. **The man charged with the killings, Dylann Roof, was pictured holding the flag.**

US Confederate flag 'threats' to Georgia black family
12 October 2015, BBC

A group of white men and women driving cars flying the Confederate flag threatened a black family at a child's birthday party, say prosecutors. Fifteen members of a group Respect the Flag face street gang charges from the incident near Atlanta in late July.

Pick-up trucks decorated with the Confederate banner drove past the party in Douglasville and shouting broke out.

Residents told local media the people in the trucks used racial slurs but they say they were attacked.

On Monday the Douglas County district attorney's office said that, following an investigation, the individuals from Respect the Flag were being charged with violating the

state's law on street gangs and with making "terroristic threats".Two of them are also charged with battery in relation to a separate incident at a petrol station the same day.

The Confederate battle flag became a potent symbol for the Southern states fighting the Civil War and is seen by some as an icon of slavery and racism.

Earlier this year, there was renewed debate in the US about its place on public buildings after a man accused of killing nine worshippers at a black church in South Carolina appeared in many photos holding the flag.

We can deduce that flags of convenience are a sham that everyone has known about in the maritime world and now further insinuating itself into the broader commercial spectrum. You can go to any port and witness freight friendly floating low-liability legal loopholes which we conveniently call ships. A high percentage of the ships you observe you know are not owned by Liberians and Panamanians but, by international convention, must have a flag over the fantail to signify the country of registration, hence laws, pertaining to the vessel. Liberia is one of the poorest countries on the planet that has been destroyed through decades of poor management, civil strife & war and endemic corruption. Liberia's broken economy does not rely on tourism, blood diamonds or oil but with procuring open registrations fees. The sun never sets on the Liberian flag but few know, let alone care, exactly where Liberia is. Liberia will register a Hong Kong bulk freighter one hour and the next a New Zealand- Australian ferry. However, Liberian and Panamanian flagged ships are essentially unrivaled on the high seas. If registration fees are paid, no credible questions asked. Pablo Escobar could have had Panama-registered ships to transport powdered milk and sugar from Panama to Cadiz.

Think of open registration as the old school Rat Pack Las Vegas controlled by mob entities with the slimmest and most malleable government regulators. They hardly give a damn what you do if you pay the registration fee to set-up shop. Liberia is not in a position nor does it aspire to authorize giving compulsory inspections with

critical eyes. Consider that open registrations are akin to financial systems that package sub-prime mortgages into new names and sold without due diligence on real income and murky actual ownership.

Liberia was founded by America as a preserve to return slaves to West Africa which was a patently ridiculous idea. The capital is named Monrovia, named after an American president, James Monroe. No, Marilyn Monroe was not related but he is mostly noted for his Monroe Doctrine. Guinea, is to its east and Sierra Leone lies to its west, not Sierra *Leona* but perhaps has had influence for the lack of financial integrity. This Monroe Doctrine served notice that with the demise of the Spanish Empire a new swinging hickory stick in the hands of Uncle Sam was in charge in the hemisphere.

Corruption is endemic at every level of the Liberian government. When President Sirleaf took office in 2006, she announced that corruption was "the major public enemy." In 2014 the US ambassador to Liberia stated that corruption there was harming people through "unnecessary costs to products and services that are already difficult for many Liberians to afford". Liberia scored a 3.3 on a scale from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt) on the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. This gave it a ranking 87th of 178 countries worldwide and 11th of 47 in Sub-Saharan Africa. This score represented a significant improvement since 2007, when the country scored 2.1 and ranked 150th of 180 countries. When seeking attention of a selection of service providers, 89% of Liberians had to pay a bribe, the highest national percentage in the world according to the organization's 2010 Global Corruption Barometer.

After the turmoil following the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars, Liberia's internal stabilization in the 21st century brought a return to cordial relations with neighboring countries and much of the Western world. In the past, both of Liberia's neighbors Guinea and Sierra Leone have accused Liberia of backing rebels inside their countries.

Shipping flag of convenience

Due to its status as a flag of convenience, Liberia has the second-largest maritime registry in the world behind Panama, with 3,500 vessels registered under its flag accounting for 11% of ships worldwide.

Liberia is unique among African countries because it was the only African nation that was colonized and controlled by freed African-Americans and ex-Caribbean slaves as a free state and a homeland to live. **Liberia and Ethiopia were the only two African countries during the 19th century conquest of Africa that were not controlled or colonized by European powers.** According to historians, Liberia—which means "Land of the Free"—originated from the freed African-Americans and ex-Caribbean slaves who established Liberia as a free state. **During the colonial era, Liberia was presumed a protectorate of the United States.**

- Wikipedia

US lifts decade of sanctions against Liberia
12 November 2015, BBC

The US has lifted economic sanctions against Liberia as President Barack Obama praised the country's commitment to democracy since the end of the 2003 civil war, the White House has said.

The president scrapped sanctions implemented 11 years ago against former strongman Charles Taylor. Taylor is now in a maximum-security prison for a series of war crimes.

President Obama said that Taylor's imprisonment meant that sanctions were no longer necessary. He said that he and his allies now had a "diminished ability" to "undermine Liberia's progress".

National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said that the US wanted to congratulate the people of Liberia "for their determination, ingenuity and commitment to peace and democracy" that has made the lifting of sanctions possible. **Taylor and his inner circle fuelled a brutal 1991-2002 civil war in Liberia that killed tens of thousands of people.**

He was arrested in 2006 and charged by the International Criminal Court in The Hague with 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for acts committed by rebels in Sierra Leone who he aided and abetted. **Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in jail for what judges described as "some of the most heinous crimes in human history**".

The former Liberian leader is now being held in a maximum-security British prison. Liberia has been led by Nobel Prize winner Ellen Johnson Sirleaf since 2006. She has worked closely with the West in tackling Ebola.

Panama was formerly Colombian territory that was politically torn away aiding rebels with US intervention to make the country into an operational satellite with an allegiance to America linking the two great oceans via the isthmus. Both Liberia and Panama are historically and distinctly under the direct influence of American political persuasions.

In November 1903 Panama proclaimed its independence and concluded the Hay–Bunau-Varilla Treaty with the United States. The treaty granted rights to the United States "as if it were sovereign" in a zone roughly 16 km (10 mi) wide and 80 km (50 mi) long. In that zone, the U.S. would build a canal, then administer, fortify, and defend it "in perpetuity." In 1914, the United States completed the existing 83 km (52 mi) canal. The

early 1960s saw the beginning of sustained pressure in Panama for the renegotiation of this treaty.

The United States of America's intentions to influence the area (especially the Panama Canal construction and control) led to the separation of Panama from Colombia in 1903 and the establishment of it as a nation (the United States intensively encouraged the Panamanian separatist movement). From 1903 until 1968, Panama was a constitutional democracy dominated by a commercially oriented oligarchy. During the 1950s, the Panamanian military began to challenge the oligarchy's political hegemony.

- Wikipedia

Flags of convenience are mocking symbols of a false allegiance purely to comply for legal purposes with maritime law that give as much latitude to ship owners as possible. This is like Wall Street financiers and American police departments keeping straight faces and saying they are diligently policing themselves upon formal inquiries which insults our collective intelligence. This tact that is employed for lowering costs and mitigating economic and political liabilities has been adopted by Southern states under the auspicious claim of being not only American but distinctly Southern in culture and values: capable of operating with their own interpretations of social justice and laws. The Stars and Bars is a blazing symbol of declaration of allegiance of operating to their racist values and systems first and foremost. The flag on the bridge of the ship maybe federal Stars & Stripes but the fantail declares where it is inherently coming from in its core which is distinctly skewed and corrupt by nature, Southern style, of course.

After the South lost the Civil War in 1865 with Gen. Lee signing off at Appomattox Court House, and the South lay prostrate and decimated, the Confederate Battle Flag was done, or so it seemed. Far above any talk to massage and whitewash the reason for the war with “states rights first”, was the coming to terms for the termination of

African slavery. The aggregate equity value of African slaves in America made slaves the dominant national asset. For the South to lose their slaves, it amounted to a direct catastrophic asteroid hit to not their whimsical wisteria way of life, but to their economy in total. Being an agrarian based economy with less industrial infrastructure meant that their wheels of commerce would immediately grind to a halt as the gears were being well lubricated by the flow of slaves' blood. The South had less incentive to invest in industrial output as their slaves were producing at lower costs and could be readily be replaced upon demand with Africans. The Southern economy was addicted to slavery and, like any addiction, is difficult to break the chains. Slavery soon took on a new form with black chain gangs which is often less noted but remained an important component historically of Southern penal systems. Notice chain gangs were uniquely Southern and implementation was not adopted outside the former Confederacy. It's fair to assume many- far more than rational – of the men could/were incarcerated on complete falsely trumped charges to raise the ranks of chain gangs. Counties would loan chain gangs for a fee to enterprises. **Chain gangs were a *convenient s*olution – a loophole – for slavery.**

The introduction of chain gangs into the United States began shortly after the Civil War (Reconstruction). The Southern states needed finances and public works to be performed. Prisoners were a free way for these works to be achieved.

A **chain gang** is a group of prisoners chained together to perform menial or physically challenging work as a form of punishment. Such punishment might include repairing buildings, building roads, or clearing land. **This system existed primarily in the southern parts of the United States, and by *1955* had been phased out nationwide, with Georgia the last state to abandon the practice.**

The use of chain gangs for prison labor was the preferred method of punishment in some Southern states like Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The use of chain gangs in the United States generally **ended in 1955.**

(>>> 90 Years after the Civil War, through WWI and WWII. Why '55?)

Various claims as to the purpose of chain gangs have been offered. These include:

- Punishment
- Societal restitution for the cost of housing, feeding, and guarding the inmates. The money earned by work performed goes to offset prison expenses by providing a large workforce at no cost for government projects, and at minimal convict leasing cost for private businesses
- **A way of perpetuating African-American servitude** after the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ended slavery.
- Reducing inmates' idleness
- To serve as a deterrent to crime
- To satisfy the needs of politicians to appear "tough on crime" (and/or blacks)
- **To accomplish undesirable and difficult tasks**

The use of chains could be hazardous. Some of the chains used in the Georgia system in the first half of the twentieth century weighed twenty pounds. Some prisoners suffered from *shackle sores* — ulcers where the iron ground against their skin. Gangrene and other infections were serious risks. Falls could imperil several individuals at once.

-Wikipedia

One of the most compelling accounts of the post-emancipation period is ***The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, written by C. Vann Woodward in 1955.*** The book continues to be the focal point of study and debate by scholars and once described by Martine Luther King Jr. as the "historical bible of the Civil Rights Movement." As Woodward tells the story, the end of slavery crated an extraordinary dilemma for

*The following year, Kenneth Stampp at Berkeley did the same to U.B. Phillips with **The Peculiar Institution**, which examined the slave system through the eyes of the slaves

themselves for the first time. – Time Magazine, *Why We Are Still Fighting the Civil War,* April 18, 2011, pg. 48.

Southern white society. Without the labor of former slaves, the region's economy would surely collapse, and without the institution of slavery, there was no longer a formal mechanism for maintaining racial hierarchy and preventing "amalgamation" with a group of people considered intrinsically inferior and vile. This state of affairs produced a temporary anarchy and a state of mind bordering on hysteria, particularly among the planter elite. But even among poor whites, the collapse of slavery was a bitter pill. In the ante bellum South, the lowliest white person at least possessed his or her white skin – a badge of superiority over even the most skilled slave or prosperous free African American.

Nonetheless, as numerous historians have shown, the development of a new racial order became the consuming passion for most white Southerners. Rumors of a great insurrection terrified whites, and blacks increasingly came to be viewed as menacing and dangerous. In fact, the current stereotypes of black men as aggressive, unruly predators can be traced to this period, when whites feared than an angry mass of black men might rise up and attack them or rape their women.

Their campaign to "redeem" the South was reinforced by a resurgent Ku Klux Klan, which fought a terrorist campaign against Reconstruction governments and local leaders, complete with bombings, lynchings and mob violence.

Once again, vagrancy laws and other laws defining activities such as "mischief" and "insulting gestures" as crimes were enforced vigorously against blacks. The aggressive enforcement of these criminal offenses opened up an enormous market for convict leasing, in which prisoners were contracted out as laborers to the highest private bidder. Douglas Blackmon, in Slavery by Another Name, describes how tens of thousands of African Americans were arbitrarily arrested during this period, many of them hit with court costs and fines, which had to be worked off in order to secure their release. With no means to pay off their "debts," prisoners were sold as forced laborers to lumber camps,

brickyards, railroads, farms, plantations, and dozens of corporations throughout the South. Death rates were shockingly high, for the private contractors had no interest in the health and well-being of their laborers, unlike the earlier slave-owners who needed their slaves, at a minimum, to be healthy enough to survive hard labor. Laborers were subject to almost continual lashing by long horse whips, and those who collapsed due to injuries or exhaustion were often left to die.

A mood of outrage and defiance swept the South, not unlike the reaction of emancipation and Reconstruction following the Civil War. **Again, racial equality was being forced upon the South by the federal government, and by *1956* Southern white opposition to desegregation mushroomed into a vicious backlash.** In Congress, North Carolina senator Sam Ervin Jr. drafted a racist polemic, "the Southern Manifesto," which vowed to fight to maintain Jim Crow by all legal means. Erwin succeeded in obtaining the support of 101 out of 128 members of Congress from the eleven original Confederate states. (79%)

A fresh wave of white terror was hurled at those who supported the dismantling of Jim Crow. White Citizen's Councils were formed in almost every Southern city and backwater town, compromised primarily of middle to upper-middle class whites in business and the clergy. Just as Southern legislatures had passed the black codes in response to the early steps of Reconstruction, in the years immediately following Brown v. Board, five Southern legislatures passed nearly fifty new Jim Crow laws. In the streets, resistance turned violent. **The Ku Klux Klan reasserted itself as a powerful terrorist organization, committing castrations, killings, and the bombing of black homes and churches.** NAACP leaders were beaten, pistol-whipped, and shot. As quickly as it began, desegregation across the South ground to a halt. **1958, thirteen school systems were desegregated; in 1960, only seventeen.**

The rhetoric of "law and order" was first mobilized in the late 1950s as Southern governors and law enforcement officials attempted to generate and mobilize white opposition to the Civil Right Movement. In the years following Brown v. Board of

Education, civil rights activists used direct-action tactics in an effort to force reluctant Southern states to desegregate public facilities. **Southern governors and law enforcement officials often characterized these tactics as criminal and argued that the rise of the Civil Rights Movement was indicative of a breakdown of law and order**. Support of civil rights legislation was derided by Southern conservatives as merely "rewarding lawbreakers."

For more than a decade- **from the mid-1950s until the late 1960s- conservatives systematically and strategically linked opposition to civil rights legislation to calls for law and order,** arguing that Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of civil disobedience was a leading cause of crime. Civil rights protests were frequently depicted as criminal rather than political in nature, and federal courts were accused of excessive "lenience" toward lawlessness, thereby contributing to the spread of crime. In the words of then-vice president Richard Nixon, the increasing crime rate "can be traced directly to the spread of the corrosive doctrine that every citizen possesses and inherent right to decide for himself which laws to obey and when to disobey them."

…That dominance came to an abrupt end with the creation and implementation of what has come to be known as the Southern Strategy. **The success of law and order rhetoric among working-class whites ultimately and the intense resentment of racial reforms, particularly in the South, led conservative Republican analysts to believe that a "new majority" could be created by the Republican Party, one that included the traditional Republican base, the white South, and half the Catholic, blue-collar vote of the big cities.** Some conservative political strategists admitted to appealing to racial fears and antagonisms were central to this strategy, though it had to be done surreptitiously. H.R. Haldeman, one of Nixon's key advisers, recalls that Nixon himself deliberately pursued a Southern, racial strategy: "**He (President Nixon) emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to.** Similarly, John Ehrlichman, special counsel to the president, explained the Nixon administration's campaign strategy

of 1968 in this way: "We'll go after the racists." In Ehrlichman's view, **"the subliminal appeal the anti-black voter was always present in Nixon's statements and speeches**."

…Appealing to the racism and vulnerability of working-class whites had worked to defeat the Populists at the turn of the century, and a growing number of conservatives believed the tactic should be employed again, albeit in a more subtle fashion
During the presidential election that year, both the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, and the independent segregationist candidate, George Wallace, made "law and order" a central theme of their campaigns, and together they collected 57 percent of the vote. **Nixon dedicated seventeen speeches solely to the topic of law and order, and one of his television ads explicitly called on voters to reject the lawlessness of civil rights activists and embrace "order" in the United States.** The advertisement began with frightening music accompanied by flashing images of protestors, bloodied victims, and violence. A deep voice then said:

It is time for an honest look at the problem of order in the United States. Dissent is a necessary ingredient of change, but in a system of government that provides for peaceful change, there is no cause that justifies resort to violence. Let us recognize that the first right of every American is to be free from domestic violence. So I pledge to you, we shall have order in the United States.

A the end of the ad, a caption declared: "This time…vote like your whole world depended on it….NIXON." Viewing his own campaign ad, Nixon reportedly remarked and with glee that the ad "hits it right on the nose. **It's all about those damn Negro-Puerto Rican groups out there."**

Racially biased police discretion is key to understanding how the overwhelming majority of people who get swept into the criminal justice system in the War on Drugs turn out to be black or brown, even though the police adamantly deny that they engage in racial profiling. In the drug war, police have discretion regarding whom to target (which individuals), as well as where to target (which neighborhoods and communities).

As noted earlier, at least 10 percent of Americans violate drug laws every year, and people of all races engage in illegal drug activity at similar rate. With such an extraordinarily large population of offenders to choose from, decisions must be made regarding who should be targeted and where the drug war should be waged.

From the outset, the drug war could have been waged primarily in overwhelming white suburbs or on college campuses. …All of this could have happened as a matter of routine in white communities, but it did not.

Instead, when police go looking for drugs, they look in the 'hood. ***Tactics that would be political suicide in an upscale white suburb are not even newsworthy in poor black and brown communities*. So long as mass drug arrests are concentrated in impoverished urban areas, police chiefs have little reason to fear a political backlash, no matter how aggressive and warlike the efforts may be.** And so as the number of drug arrests increases or at least remains high, federal dollars continue to flow in and fill the department's coffers.

The hyper-segregation of the black poor in ghetto communities has made the roundup easy. Confined to ghetto areas and lacking political power, the black poor are convenient targets. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's book, American Apartheid, documents how racially segregated ghettos were deliberately created by federal policy, not impersonal market forces or private housing choices. The enduring racial isolation of the ghetto poor has made them uniquely vulnerable to the War on Drugs. …It is not uncommon for a young black teenager living in a ghetto community to be stopped, interrogated, and frisked numerous times in the course of a month, or even a single week, often by paramilitary units. Studies of racial profiling typically report the total number of people stopped and searched, disaggregated by race. **These studies have led some policing experts to conclude that racial profiling is actually "worse" in white communities, because the racial disparities in stop and search rates are much greater there.** What these studies do not reveal, however, is the frequency with

which any given individual is likely to be stopped in specific, racially defined neighborhoods.

The impact of the drug war has been astounding. In less than thirty years, the US penal population exploded from around 300,000 to more than 2 million, with drug convictions accounting for the majority of the increase. **The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, dwarfing the rates of nearly every developed country, even surpassing those in highly repressive regimes like Russia, China, and Iran. In Germany, 93 people are in prison for every 100,000 adults and children. In the United States, the rate is roughly eight times that, or 750 per 100,000.**

The racial dimension of mass incarceration is its most striking feature. No other country in the world imprisons so many of its racial or ethnic minorities. The United States imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of apartheid. In Washington, D.C., our nation's capitol, it is estimated that three out of four black men (and nearly all in the poorest neighborhoods) can expect to serve time in prison. Similar rates of incarceration can be found in black communities across America.

These stark racial disparities cannot be explained by rates of drug crime. Studies show that people of all colors use and sell illegal drugs at remarkably similar rates. If there are significant differences in the surveys to be found, **they frequently suggest that whites, particularly white youth, are more likely to engage in drug crime than people of color.** That is not what one would guess, however, **when entering our nation's prisons and jails, which are overflowing with black and brown offenders. In some states, black men have been admitted to prison on drug charges at rates twenty to fifty times greater than that of white men.** And in major cities wracked by the drug war, as many as 80 percent of young African American men now have criminal records and are thus subject to legalized discrimination for the rest of their lives. These young men are part of a growing undercaste, permanently locked up and locked out of mainstream society.

The stark and sobering reality is that, for reasons largely unrelated to actual crime trends, the American penal system has emerged as a system of social control unparalleled in world history. And while the size of the system alone might suggest that it would touch the lives of most Americans, the primary targets of its control can be defined by race.

One in three young African American men will serve time in prison if current trends continue, and is some cities more than half of all young adult black men are currently under correctional control- in prison or jail, on probation or parole. Yet mass incarceration tends to be categorized as a criminal justice issue as opposed to a racial justice or civil rights issue (or crisis).

…Saying that mass incarceration in the New Jim Crow can leave a misimpression. The parallels between two systems of control are striking, to say the least- in both, we find racial opportunism by politicians, legalized discrimination, political disenfranchisement, exclusion of blacks from juries, stigmatization, the closing of courthouse doors, racial segregation, and the symbolic production of race – yet there are important differences. Just as Jim Crow, as a system of racial control, was dramatically different from slavery, mass incarceration is different from its predecessor. In fact, if one were to draft a list of differences between slavery and Jim Crow, the list might well be longer than the list of similarities. The same goes for Jim Crow and mass incarceration. Each system of control has been unique- well adapted to the circumstances of its time. If we fail to appreciate the differences, we will be hindered in our ability to meet the challenges created by the current moment….

An example of a difference that is less significant that it may initially appear is the "fact" that Jim Crow was explicitly race-based, whereas mass incarceration is not. This statement initially appears self-evident, but it is partially mistaken. Although it is common to think of Jim Crow as an explicitly race-based system, in fact a number of the key policies were officially colorblind. As previously noted, poll taxes, literacy tests, and felon disenfranchisement laws were all formally race-neutral

practices that were employed in order to avoid the prohibition on race discrimination in voting contained in the Fifteenth Amendment. **These laws operated to create an all-white electorate because they excluded African Americans from the franchise but were not generally applied to whites.** Poll workers had the discretion to charge a poll tax or administer a literacy test, or not, and they excercised their discretion in a racially discriminatory manner. Laws that said nothing about race operated to discriminate because those charged with enforcement were granted tremendous discretion, and they excercised that discretion in a highly discriminatory manner.

The same is true in the drug war. **Laws prohibiting the use and sale of drugs are facially race neutral, but they are enforced in a highly discriminatory fashion.** The decision to wage the drug war primarily in black and brown (Latino) communities rather than white ones and to target African Americans but not whites on freeways and train stations has had precisely the same effect as the literacy and poll taxes of an earlier era. A facially race-neutral system of laws has operated to create a racial caste system.

In the early 1980s, just as the drug war was kicking off, inner-city communities were suffering from economic collapse. The blue-collar factory jobs that had been plentiful in urban areas in the 1950s and 1960s had suddenly disappeared…The impact of globalization and deindustrialization was felt most strongly in black inner-city communities…One study indicates that as late as 1970, more than 70 percent of all blacks working in metropolitan areas held blue-collar jobs. Yet by 1987, when the drug war hit high gear, the industrial employment of black men had plummeted to 28 percent…**The decline in legitimate employment opportunities among inner-city residents increased incentives to sell drugs- most notably crack cocaine**…Crack hit the streets in 1985, a few years after Reagan's drug war was announced, leading to a spike in violence as drug markets struggled to stabilize, and the anger and frustration associated with joblessness boiled. Joblessness and crack swept inner

cities precisely at the moment that a fierce backlash against the Civil Rights Movement was manifesting itself through the War on Drugs.

Once elected, Reagan's promise to enhance the federal government's role in fighting crime was complicated by the fact that fighting street crime has traditionally been the responsibility of state and local law enforcement. After a period of initial confusion and controversy regarding whether the FBI and the federal government should be involved in street crime, the Justice Department announced its intention to cut in half the number of specialists assigned to indentify and prosecute white-collar criminals and to shift its attention to street crime, especially drug-law enforcement. (The Bernie Madoff's and Ivan Boesky's of finance could breathe sighs of relief; anybody remember Drexel Burnham Lambert's Michael Milken?)

In October 1982, President Reagan officially announced his administration's War on Drugs. **At the time he declared this new war, less than 2 percent of the American public viewed drugs as the most important issue facing the nation. <u>This fact was no deterrent to Reagan</u>, for the drug war from the outset had little to do with public concern about drugs and much to with public concern about race.** By waging a war on drug users and dealers, Reagan made good on his promise to crack down on the racially defined "others"- the undeserving….Practically overnight the budgets of federal law enforcement agencies soared…By contrast, for agencies responsible for drug treatment, prevention, and education was dramatically reduced.

In his campaign for the presidency, **Reagan mastered the "excision of the language of race from conservative public discourse"** and thus built on the success of earlier conservatives who developed a strategy of exploiting racial hostility or resentment for political gain without making explicit reference to race. Condemning "welfare queens" and criminal "predators," he rode into office with the strong support of disaffected whites- poor and working-class whites who felt betrayed by the Democratic Party's embrace of the civil rights agenda. As one political insider explained, Reagan's

appeal derived primarily from the ideological fervor of the right wing of the Republican Party and "the emotional distress of those who fear or resent the Negro, and who expect Reagan somehow to keep him 'in his place' or at least echo their own anger and frustration. To great effect, Reagan echoed white frustration in race-neutral terms through implicit racial appeals. His "colorblind" rhetoric on crime, welfare, taxes and states' rights was clearly understood by white (and black) voters as having a racial dimension, though claims to that effect were impossible to prove. The absence of explicitly racist rhetoric afforded the racial nature of his coded appeals a certain plausible deniability. For example, when Reagan kicked off his presidential campaign at the annual Neshoba County Fair near Philadelphia, Mississippi- the town where three civil rights activists were murdered in 1964- he assured the crowd **"I believe in states' rights,"** and promised to restore to state and local governments the power that properly belonged to them. His critics promptly alleged that he was signaling a racial message to his audience, suggesting allegiance with those who resisted desegregation, but Reagan firmly denied it, forcing liberals into a position that would soon become familiar- arguing that something is racist but finding it impossible to prove in the absence of explicitly racist language.*

* As a former governor of California, a free state and being ethnically diverse from inception, Reagan could have had ample opportunities to claim the same during his own state political campaigns at speaking engagements with donors and at rallies. Reagan rings suspicious in Mississippi claiming "states' rights" and out of character if he never was on record through in his home state of California by not saying the same if either running for office or actually installed as governor in Sacramento- for years. It has quite a disturbing Southern accommodation. Certainly, if anyone wanted to dig into the record of the importance of state's rights for Reagan- an important issue for Southern interpretations of laws- it should not be absent from Reagan's campaign speeches in California in the 1960s or even when he running for President regardless of state he was visiting, such as Nevada, Washington or Iowa in the 1970s. Was the admission ordinary in his a stump speeches or was it, in fact, a bit too extraordinary and dependent on ingratiating himself with the local audience in Mississippi and/or other Southern states?

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Crime and welfare were the major themes of Reagan's campaign rhetoric. According to the Edsalls, one of Reagan's favorite and most-often-repeated anecdotes was the story of a Chicago "welfare queen" with "80 names, 30 addresses, 12 Social Security cards," whose "tax-free income alone is over $ 150,000." The term "welfare queen" became a not-so-subtle code for "lazy, greedy, black ghetto mother." The food stamp program, in turn was a vehicle to let "some fellow ahead of you buy a T-Bone steak," while "you were standing in a checkout line with your package of hamburger." These highly racialized appeals, targeted to poor and working-class whites, were nearly always accompanied by vehement promises to be tougher on crime and to enhance the federal government's role in combating it. Reagan portrayed the criminal as "a staring face- a face that belongs to a frightening reality of our time: the face of a human predator." Reagan's racially coded rhetoric and strategy proved extraordinarily effective, as 22 percent of all Democrats defected from the party to vote for Reagan. The defection rate shout up to 34 percent among those Democrats who believed civil rights leader were pushing "too fast."

The transformation from **"community policing" to "military policing," began in 1981,** when President Reagan persuaded Congress to pass Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act, which encouraged the military to give local, state, and federal access to military bases, intelligence, research, weaponry, and other equipment for drug interdiction…It was followed by Reagan's National Security Decision Directive, which declared drugs a threat to US national security, and provided for yet more cooperation between local, state and federal law enforcement….Generally, the financial incentives offered to local law enforcement to pump up their drug arrests have not been well publicized, leading the average person to conclude reasonably (but mistakenly) that when their local police departments report drug arrest have doubled or tripled in a short period of time, the arrests reflect a surge in illegal drug activity, rather than an infusion of money and an intensified enforcement effort…And although the paramilitary units were often justified to city councils and skeptical citizens as essential to fight terrorism or deal with

hostage situations, they were rarely deployed for reasons but instead were sent to serve routine search warrants for drugs and make drug arrests. In fact, the Times (Madison, Wisconsin) reported that police departments had an extraordinary incentive to use their new equipment for drug enforcement: the extra federal funding the local police departments received was tied to antidrug policing.

As if the free military equipment, training, and cash grants were not enough, the Reagan administration provided law enforcement with yet another financial incentive to devote extraordinary resources to drug law enforcement, rather than more serious crimes: **state and local law enforcement agencies were granted the authority to keep, for their own use, the vast majority of cash and assets they seize when waging the drug war. This dramatic change in policy gave state and local police and enormous stake in the War on Drugs- not in its success, but in its perpetual existence.** Law enforcement gained a pecuniary interest not only in forfeited property, but in the profitably of the drug market itself….Suddenly, police departments were capable of increasing the size of their budgets, quite substantially, simply by taking the cash, cars and homes of people suspected or drug use or sales (notice not convicted). At the time the new rules were adopted, the law governing civil forfeiture was so heavily weighted in favor of the government that fully 80 percent of forfeitures went uncontested. Property or cash could be seized based on mere suspicion of illegal drug activity, and the seizure could occur without notice or hearing, upon an ex parte showing of mere probably cause to believe that the property had somehow been "involved" in a crime. The probable cause showing could be based on nothing more than hearsay, innuendo, or even the paid, self-serving testimony of someone with interests clearly adverse to the property owner. Neither the owner of the property nor anyone else need be charged with a crime, much less found guilty of one. Indeed, a person could be found innocent of any criminal conduct and the property could still be subject to forfeiture. Once the property was seized, the owner had no right of counsel, and the burden was placed on him to prove the property's "innocence." Because those who were targeted were typically poor or of moderate means, they often lacked the resources to hire an attorney or pay the considerable court costs. As a result, most people who their cash or

property seized did not challenge the government's action, especially because the government could retaliate by filing criminal charges- baseless or not.

In United States v. Reese, for example, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals described a **drug task force completely corrupted by its dependence on federal drug money.** Operating as a separate unit within the Oakland Housing Authority, the task force behaved, in the words of one officer, "more or less like a wolfpack," driving up in police vehicles and taking "anything and everything we saw on the street corner." The officers were under tremendous pressure from their commander to keep their arrest numbers up, and all of the officers were aware that their jobs depended on the renewal of a federal grant….

- Michelle Alexander
  The New Jim Crow

Just as alcoholics can always rationalize absurd reasons to drink ('Let's celebrate the sunrise, let's celebrate the moonlight") Southerners bend reasons on why the flag can be defended. The war was not fought over who makes a better barbeque sauce or which Northern states were dictating what markets in Europe Southerners could ship their cotton to. The New South has modified its original call for segregation forever into a softer celebration of Southern heritage under Stars & Bars. This is as insulting as the prolonged revisionism in Japan for war atrocities and denial. Let's compare the current demands for humane immigration with productive Americans who know a thing or well over 100,000 about getting a raw deal which is insightful:

Resistance to Syrian Refugees Calls to Mind Painful Past for Japanese-Americans

26 November 2015 New York Times by John Eligon

Before the attack that changed the country, a group of girls would meet their 14-year-old friend, Yuka, at her house every morning. They would walk to school together and discuss their plans for the day.

But the morning after the bombs were dropped and people lost their lives, Yuka waited and waited. Her mother urged her to go school on her own. No Yuka, insisted, they'll be here.

They never came.

So she went to school by herself, only to discover that classmates she had considered friends close friends were suddenly ignoring her.

It was Dec. 8, 1941. The day after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. A Monday.

This week, Yuka Yasui Fujikura, who was born in Oregon to Japanese parents, reflected on the backlash against Syrian refugees after the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. And her thoughts drifted back to one of her country's most shameful chapters: when the American government indiscriminately criminalized tens of thousands of people of Japanese descent – most of them born in the United States – and forced them into detention centers during World War II.

"To judge someone by ethnicity or their religion," said Ms. Fujikura, now 88, "it was wrong then, it's wrong today, too."

The dark memories of seven decades ago have bubbled to the surface in recent weeks for many other people who were sent to Japanese internment camps.

Since gunmen and suicide bombers with the Islamic State killed 130 people in Paris, they has been an outcry in some quarters to stop Syrian refugees from coming into the country. More than two dozen Republican governors have said they do not want Syrians escaping that country's civil war to enter their states, fearing that terrorists would hide among them. Public officials have floated ideas that include surveillance of mosques, registering Muslims and setting up refugee camps.

What really disturbed Japanese-Americans was when the mayor of Roanoke,VA (Virginia), David Bowers, a Democrat, suggested that barring Syrian refugees was prudent in light of the Japanese internment. **"It appears that the threat of harm to America from ISIS now is just as real and serious as that from our enemies then,"** he said. He as since apologized.

For Japanese-Americans of that era, it was a reminder of the days when the government forcibly removed them and their families from their farms, boarded up their businesses, put them on trains with the blinds drawn and shuttled them to remote prisons where they were held behind barbed wire, under the watch of armed guards.

It was a time, several said, when the news media propagated fear by reporting conspiratorial rumors- such as that Japanese farmers were plowing their fields in a certain manner to send messages to the enemy.

"Such blatant lies started to turn the tide against us," recalled George Ikeda, 93, a California native who was sent to an internment camp on Independence Day in 1942.

By order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, about 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, most of them born in the United States, were detained without charges during WWII. People shouted slurs at them. They were forced to fill out questionnaires to test their loyalty to the United States. The government set a curfew for people of foreign ancestries, but it was mostly enforced against the Japanese because they looked different.

Out of that discrimination emerged leaders like Ms. Fujikura's brother, Minoru Yasui, who purposely had himself arrested to challenge the curfew. His conviction was eventually vacated. Though Mr. Yasui died in 1986 and the United States Supreme Court has never ruled on the constitutionality of the law he was fighting, his efforts receive the ultimate honor on Tuesday when President Obama posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom….

Ms. Fujikura's father was among Japanese citizens detained by the authorities after the Pearl Harbor attack, with law enforcement saying "he's potentially dangerous enemy alien," Ms. Fukikura recalled.

He came to the United States nearly four decades earlier, she said, settling in Hood River, Oregon. The family owned land and orchards, she said, and her father also co-owned a general store with his brother. Ms. Fujikura recalled a sign that was placed on the door of the store: **"Alien Property closed for business."**

…When you're 14 years old and somebody says, 'Oh you're going to be shipped to a camp,' in my head I had envisioned something like a Campfire or Girl Scout camp," Ms. Fujikura said.

But she quickly learned it was not like that.

Several people sadi they recalled being held on fairgrounds and smelly animal stables before being sent to permanent camps. Some remembered sweltering temperatures in their barracks. **At Tule Lake, Ms. Fujikura said, she lived in a tar paper dwelling, and the walls between the units did not go all the way to the ceiling, so everyone could hear what was going on in the neighboring dwellings. The communal toilets and showers did not have doors.**

By the time the last camp was closed in 1946, many families had lost their homes, land and all their belongings. They were generally discouraged from returning to the West Coast, so many settled elsewhere. Tensions surrounding Japanese-Americans remained high.

Ms. Fujikura said that she was accepted at the University of Oregon, but that the university sent her a letter warning she could "return at her own risk," she said.

The camps left lingering anguish for some. Marielle Tsukamoto, 78, who lives in suburban Sacramento and was interned with her family about two years, recalled the complete darkness of the camps at night, but for the occasional spotlight check. She had a hard time over her fear of darkness, she said, even after childhood….

Mr. Yasui's family noted that the Supreme Court's 1944 ruling in Korematsu v. United State, which endorsed the executive order requiring Japanese detention, has never been formally overruled. And there is great concern among some Japanese-Americans that the sentiment regarding Syrian refugees has the country headed down a grimly familiar path.

"It's people reacting in hysteria because of fear," Ms. Tsukamoto said. "We're better than that. This is a country that is based on welcoming immigrants."

Donald Trump's Muslim US ban call roundly condemned
8 December 2015, BBC

Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump has provoked condemnation from across the political spectrum, by saying Muslims should be banned from entering the US. Republicans, Democrats, Muslim leaders, the UN and foreign leaders criticised the call as dangerous and divisive. Mr Trump said many Muslims nursed a "hatred" towards America. He said they should be banned "until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on".

His campaign manager said that would apply to "everybody" - would-be immigrants and tourists. But Mr Trump told Fox News it would "not apply to people living in the country", adding that Muslims serving in the US military would "come home".
Mr Trump's statement was delivered as the US comes to terms with its deadliest terror attack since 9/11.

Last week a Muslim couple, believed to have been radicalised, opened fire and killed 14 people at a health centre in San Bernardino.

Mr Trump's proposed ban prompted a horrified reaction from Republicans and others. Rival candidate Jeb Bush called Mr Trump "unhinged", while former US Vice-President Dick Cheney said it "goes against everything we stand for and believe in".
"Just foolish," said Republican Arizona Senator John McCain.

Mr Trump's comments were contrary to US values and its national security interests, a statement from the White House said. The UK's Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron said they were "divisive, unhelpful and quite simply wrong".

"Donald Trump sounds more like a leader of a lynch mob than a great nation like ours," said Nihad Awad, national executive director of the Council on American-Islamic

Relations. "These are not just words... Trump and Carson's mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the election is inciting discrimination, hate crimes, violent attacks against Muslims and mosques."

The pro-Jewish Anti-Defamation League said the plan was "deeply offensive and runs contrary to our nation's deepest values."In the Jewish community, we know all too well what can happen when a particular religious group is singled out for stereotyping and scapegoating."

Meanwhile, the Democratic mayor of St Petersburg, Florida, announced to Twitter plaudits that he was "hereby barring Donald Trump from entering St Petersburg until we fully understand the dangerous threat posed by all Trumps".

Mr Trump took part in heated interviews on several US television networks on Tuesday, defending the proposal and saying it was temporary measure to prevent "many more World Trade Centers".

On ABC's Good Morning America, **he said "what I'm doing is no different than FDR," referring to policies implemented by President Franklin Roosevelt during World War Two against Japanese, German and Italian people in the US. Some of those measures saw over 100,000 people detained in government camps.**

At one point during a lengthy interview on MSNBC, presenter Joe Scarborough forced the network into a commercial break after the candidate repeatedly talked over journalists, refusing to answer questions. Some of his Republican rivals - mindful, perhaps, that Mr Trump's more outlandish proposals only appear to have bolstered his poll ratings - were more nuanced in their criticism.

Carly Fiorina used her response to take simultaneous aim at President Barack Obama, saying his "overreaction is as dangerous as President Obama's under-reaction" - while Ted Cruz said: "Well, that is not my policy."

Ben Carson said visitors to the US should be monitored, but added: "I do not and would not advocate being selective on one's religion."

Mr Trump's plans were not universally derided. **He garnered loud cheers when he repeated his ban pledge at a South Carolina rally hours after his initial statement.** A handful of supporters backed Mr Trump online, with controversial conservative commentator Ann Coulter tweeting: "GO TRUMP, GO!"

The BBC's Anthony Zurcher, in Washington, says Mr Trump, whose poll ratings have risen after other hardline statements, has set down a marker that will force his fellow candidates to stand with him or risk his ire.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR said it was concerned that the rhetoric was putting an "incredibly important" resettlement programme for vulnerable Syrian refugees at risk. Spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said remarks not just by Mr Trump but by a number of US state governors could undermine a programme designed to help the most vulnerable refugees.

The US currently accepts several thousand refugees for resettlement each year, following a rigorous security screening which lasts around two years. Mr Trump's statement to reporters on Monday said polling by the Center for Security Policy, a conservative think-tank, suggested that 25% of Muslims in the US believed violence against America was justified. "Without looking at the various polling data, it is obvious to anybody the hatred is beyond comprehension. Where this hatred comes from and why, we will have to determine. "Until we [do]... our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in jihad."

On Sunday, President Obama made a rare Oval Office address in response to the San Bernardino attack and warned against the US falling prey to divisiveness.

The Japanese Women Who Married the Enemy
16 Aug. 2015, BBC

…But other Japanese war brides found it harder to fit in to segregated America.

"I remember getting on a bus in Louisiana that was divided into two sections - black and white," recalls Atsuko Craft, who moved to the US at the age of 22 in 1952.

"I didn't know where to sit, so I sat in the middle."

But despite graduating in microbiology and getting a good job at a hospital, she says she still faced discrimination.

"I'd go to look at a home or apartment, and when they saw me, they'd say it was already taken. They thought I would lower the real estate value. It was like blockbusting to make sure blacks wouldn't move into a neighbourhood, and it was hurtful," she says.

The Japanese wives also often faced rejection from the existing Japanese-American community, according to Prof Spickard.

"They thought they were loose women, which seems not to have been the case - most of the women [in Toyko] were running cash registers, stocking shelves, or working in jobs related to the US occupation," he says.
About 30,000 to 35,000 Japanese women migrated to the US during the 1950s, according to Spickard.

Generally speaking, the Japanese women that married black Americans settled more easily, Spickard says.

"Black families knew what it was like to be on the losing side. They were welcomed by the sisterhood of black women. But in small white communities in places like Ohio and Florida, their isolation was often extreme."

Atsuko, now 85, says she noticed a big difference between life in Louisiana and Maryland, near Washington DC, where she raised her two children and still lives with her husband.

And she says times have changed, and she does not experience any prejudice now.

"America is more worldly and sophisticated. I feel like a Japanese American, and I'm happy with that," she says.

Sadly, it took a wicked act from a young white man to bring this living flag relic to light in this late day. I don't tolerate he's a loner- whitewashing- because he does have friends who were interviewed that he was drinking with the same afternoon of the murders. If you're white and go off the chain you get the loner tagging to distance the crime from other white people. The killer is re-packaged to be different than other whites. I have yet to hear any blacks involved in murder called loners. He is white with plenty of other whites right along with him with socially abhorrent obsolete values. He is just the kernel in the hot oil of hate that popped off. Any notions of the killer being a loner is purely poppycock, to be polite. Klansmen and Nazis are not loners nor was the church killer as many other non-affiliated racist whites.

The Stars & Bars is a disingenuous symbol far less for Confederate valor for a failed war but as a living symbol and reminder of ignorant white supremacy, fear and hate. If white Southerners were secure in their history and what they were about, they would not cling to this relic of the past. This is the same symbol used by the KKK

because they are so dense that their wizards couldn't conjure up anything on their own in modern times, the flag of losers. Consider how far away since 1861 the Variation, the Lie, since the flag was first flown has moved on away from South Carolina! Pair the year with the Lie to come to grips with how far away from True North Southerners actually are by maintaining this wicked position. The Variation value of the South at that time is so long gone and the bearings have changed tremendously. It would seem that the old mariner's charts to slave ports such as Richmond, Charleston and Savannah are of no value and make for only chasing jagged reefs and sea cut rocks. The charts of their time would steer the present course astray undeniably and murderously.

White Southerners have been doing their best to change with the times with soft talk of holding onto their Southern heritage and honoring their military heroes. They need to come to grips and recognize their plight is a lot more about holding tight on a lifesaver in a hurricane with their tired myths sinking. The so-called New South is clinging to the Old South. The charts they cling to are only good in maritime museums with manifests for African slaves, cotton, tobacco, bourbon and rice to be included. The era has long been gone and holding onto this false sentiment categorically serves the South terribly as whites are chained by not a glorious heritage such as the Renaissance in Florence with its high academics, magnanimous artistic contributions and architecture paired with mathematics nor the French Revolution stoked by scientific inquiries and philosophical debates which propelled the American Revolution for an Atlantic colony to take destiny into its own hands to be proud of; instead, the South falls back on a heritage of white supremacy and oppressive crimes against humanity- an impoverished heritage of greed, high illiteracy, pretense, backwardness and cruelty assuaged by bourbon, moonshine and cornbread. Think that the daily bread was baked with the salt of mother's tears who had their babes torn away from them. Is this really a heritage to be exalted and praised about? I could understand why actor Ben Affleck had a bit of a problem finding out his family owned slaves -not proud of their past property nor his family's

involvement. These words sum up the essence of what the South holds dear and true, not the changed contrived trash modified for our implicit acceptance:

On March 21, 1861, Stephens gave his famous Cornerstone Speech in Savannah, Georgia. In it he declared that slavery was the natural condition of blacks and the foundation of the Confederacy. He declared,

"Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition."

Alexander Stephens
Vice President of the Confederacy

Forty-two delegates from South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida met in convention at Montgomery, AL on Feb. 4, 1861. They adopted a provisional constitution of the Confederate States of America and elected Jefferson Davis (MS) and Alexander H. Stephens (GA) as provisional vice president.

A permanent constitution was adopted Mar. 11th. It abolished the African slave trade, but it did not bar interstate commerce in slaves. On July 20th the Congress moved to Richmond, VA. Davis was elected president in October and was inaugurated on Feb. 22, 1862.

The Congress adopted a flag, consisting of a red field with a white stripe, and a blue jack with a circle of white stars. Later the more popular flag was the red field with blue diagonal crossbars that held 13 white stars, for the 11 states of the Confederacy plus Kentucky and Missouri.

- The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1998

"From up Sussex way," I said, "about ten, eleven years ago, mastah, when they broke up one of the old plantations." I paused for a moment, half wondering to myself why I was proffering all this information. "Hark's all forlon now," I went on, "heartsick and forlorn. On the outside he's very cheery, but inside he's just all torn up. He can't keep his mind on anything. That's how come he forgets his chores, and how come he gets punished. Poor old Hark…."

"Why is that, preacher?" said Cobb. Putnam had fetched a ladder now from the barn, and we watched the procession as it made its way across the windswept lot, bleak and gray in the fading autumnal light-Miss Maria in the lead, grim, hands clenched, her back stiff and straight as a poker, Putnam behind the ladder, and between them Hark in his dusty gray denim, shuffling along with his head bent in total dejection, looming over the two of them like some huge Goliath, a giant towering above a pair of vengeful, hurrying dwarfs. In Indian file, straight as an arrow, they made their way toward an ancient and enormous maple whose lower-most branch, leafless now, stretched across the pale sky like a naked arm twenty feet above the earth. I could hear Hark's bare feet scuffing across the ground, scuffing like the feet of a reluctant child. "Why is that?" Cobb said again.

"Well, mastah, I'll tell you," I said. "Couple years ago, afore I became Marse Joe's property, Marse Joe had to sell off most all of his niggers. Sell them off down to Mississippi, where you know they are planting considerable cotton. Hark told me Marse Joe was in misery about this, but he just couldn't do anything else. Well, amongst these niggers was Hark's wife and Hark's child- little boy about three or four years old he was then. Hark cared for that little boy almost more than anything.

"Yah, yah, yah," I could hear Cobb murmur, making little clucking sounds beneath his breath. "So when that little boy was gone, Hark near about went mad with grief, couldn't think about anything else."

"Yah, yah, yah, yah."

"He wanted to run away and follow them all the way down to Mississippi, but I talked him out of it. See, he'd already run off once years ago and hadn't gotten anywhere. Besides, it's always been my idea that a nigger should follow all the rules and regulations so far as he was able."

"Anyway, I went on. "Hark ain't been quite right ever since then. You might say he's just been distracted. That's why he does things – or doesn't do things – that get him punished. And I'll be quite truthful with you, mastah, he doesn't do his chores, but I tell you he just can't help it."

"Yah, yah," Cobb muttered, "yah, great God, the logical outcome….*the ultimate horror!*" He had begun to hiccup again and the sound came forth in intermittent gasps, almost like sobs. He started to say something else, thought better of it, turned away, whispering over and over again: "God, God, God, God, God."

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

Oddly perhaps, the geniuses who still make the beautiful epoch loved outside of Francophonia – Manet, Monet, Pissaro, Renoir, Sisley, Berthe Morisot, Rodin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne and other painters and sculptors- remained untouched by the narcotic tide: even Gaughin, social rebel living in faraway Tahiti, disdained drugs. And Degas grumbled about *morphihomanie* 'ruining the best cafes.' Was it the smell of turpentine which kept the *fée* at bay? Or the common sense which visual artists have always claimed to possess in greater measure than scribblers, thespians or musicians? Whichever, the tradition would survive into the 20th century.

Yet, despite formal and mostly ineffectual bans, the *fin de siècle* blossomed in France into one of the literary golden ages of the drug. A palmful of the avalanche of novels, short stories, biographies and verse remain literary gems. Guy de Maupassant experimented with morphine (among other drugs) in his struggle with syphilis and his descent into

madness; and his hauntingly beautiful Sur l'eau is among them. A few, like Alphonse Daudet's *L'Evangeliste* and Maurice Taine's *La Comtesse* Morphine have literary merit. The satire by Meg Villars and Willy, *Les imprudences de Peggy*, sheds malicious light on Colette and her morphine-addicted lover, Missy. Jean Lorrain was a tragic and not entirely unworthy disciple of Baudelaire who styled himself 'l'ambassadeur de Sodom a tout Paris.' It was the sad conceit of a dying consumptive. 'I have a forgiving soul,' he wrote in a less grandiloquent mood, 'of a man who must die soon. These injections of morphine must end.' He was 39 when an intestinal perforation ended his sufferings. Edouard Dubus, co-founder of the *Mercure de France*, lived a debauched life and died from an overdose in a *chalet de nécessité* in the place of Maubert. He was 31. His friend, Victorien du Saussay's La Morpheine, is stark even for the age of Zola, mixing addiction, incest, adultery and sadism in about equal proportions. As usual, the vast bulk of the avalanche was titillating trash.

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

The Southern states appears vacant compared with a pantheon including the likes of luminaries such as Voltaire, Émilie du Châtelet, Condorcet, Montesquieu, Diderot, d'Alembert , Rousseau, Descartes, Laplace, Lagrange, Buffon, D'Holbach, Meslier, Rameau, Maupertuis, Clairaut, Fourier, Deluc, Du Fay, Lavoisier, Reaumur, Bossuet, Louis Guillaume to name only a few, beacons at the salon at the summit of intellect that quickly come to mind. Where are the South's titans such as Titian and Michelangelo? Can't seem to find a Newton, Pasteur, Edison or Marie Curie; however, to be fair, it does have Eli Whitney for the cotton gin to propel the need for more African slaves in field for more production. The South, because of the Civil War, was forced to be creative and designed and built the first armored warship, the CSS Virginia (also known as USS Merrimack but renamed after major ironclad modification) which, incidentally, made every other warship around the world obsolete. The Confederacy understood that what it did not have in fleet numbers could be balanced with technological improvements to overwhelm the North. Certainly it could be assumed that this significant development would have occurred

in Europe. The concept of the ironclad was much like propellers being pushed to the side by jet propulsion. The Royal Navy's HMS Royal Oak could now be transformed into piles of driftwood looking for new homes after a few cannon barrages up close. The Union of the North, responded by developing its version with the USS Monitor. The great naval battles of WWI and WW2 owe their roots to the South; indeed, all shipping was to eventually change to power and steel in the future without reliance on wind and rigging.

CSS *Virginia* was the first steam-powered ironclad warship built by the Confederate States Navy during the first year of the American Civil War; it was constructed as a casemate ironclad using the raised and cut down original lower hull and engines of the scuttled steam frigate USS *Merrimack*. *Virginia* was one of the participants in the Battle of Hampton Roads, opposing the Union's USS *Monitor* in March 1862. The battle is chiefly significant in naval history as the first battle between ironclads.

- Wikipedia

I want to resist by refraining from stereotyping; however, Southern lighthouses to show us the way into the future do seem both far and meager. Ubiquitous container ships, and indeed their ocean containers, can be considered as a southern invention by the trucking-turned- shipping magnate Malcolm McLean. Did the highest of minds silently cross the river to Ohio and go to New York therefore can't be found before the Civil War? Oh, I'm sorry, the South has generals who lost the war that white Southerners love to drink and reminisce about. Beauregard, Forrest, Jackson, Hood, Johnston and most famous of all, Lee. Lee, the Marble Man, had over 250 slaves on his plantation and was married to the step great-granddaughter of Gen. Washington, the First of the Fathers of America. It can only be logical America could never escape issues of race when so many of its Founding Fathers were beholden to the institution of slavery. It's been a corrupt deal since the birth of a young nation. It all gets to Tobacco Road real quick when you take the Confederate generals off the table for the South. Southern whites default to this nonsense

because they have no other past idols to honestly glorify. Ironically, many of the cultural heroes are black from the blues. They adore Stonewall (paraphrasing) "my own men shot me" Jackson. There is no Napoleon just capitulation and starvation. Pickett's charge failed; however, Lee had backbone enough to admit his own fault for ordering the open field slaughter. Coincidentally, Andersonville POW camp in Georgia was a view of things to come in Europe; its warden was a Swiss-German immigrant who claimed he was just following orders before being hung for basically crimes against humanity. If the South won the war, he would have been commended for his dedication of authority. Eighty years later men would be pleading the same nonsense before Allied courtrooms in Nuremberg.

Do we Americans praise Westmoreland's illustrious career paving the way for defeat in Southeast Asia with over 500,000 men and more tonnage dropped than in Europe in WWII or do we praise Eisenhower, Bradley, MacArthur and Patton? I don't imagine newly commissioned officers are aspiring to be Westmoreland but more like Schwarzkopf. All this contrived Southern military sentiment is for losers of a lost cause from about 150 years ago. If the game you play is war, the only true option is winning or don't play at all.

The Generals by Winston Groom

New York Times, Bookshelf, Review by Walter R. Borneman

27 November 2015

He is a good storyteller, and after a chapter devoted to the ancestors and early years of each, he weaves together their exploits on the Western Front in World War I. There are gripping tales of Patton urging tanks forward and MacArthur assuring his superiors that he will take an enemy position or his name will head the casualty list. Marshall, meanwhile, was learning the intricacies of operational planning, initially with the 1st Infantry Division and later with **Gen. John J. Pershing's headquarters in France.** Pershing, commanding the American Expedtionary Forces, had ties to all three men,

including romantic interests in Patton's sister and the heiress Louise Cromwell Brooks, MacArthur's future first wife.

Between the wars, all three men had moments of success as well as despair. MacArthur served a high-profile tenure as superintendant of West Point. Patton, frustrated by a lack of promotion, drank too much and had an affair with a niece…

Both MacArthur and Patton defied their superiors in ways that would have sunk other careers, but Marshall handled them firmly and deftly. "Few people fully realize," Mr. Groom writes, "the efforts he expended trying to rein in the likes of Patton and MacArthur, both of whom often behaved as though they were a thing unto themselves." Yet "The Generals" is hardly a warts and all account. Mr. Groom is effusive in his praise- for example, calling MacArthur "one of the most remarkable and gifted officers ever to grace the United States Army"- and he readily admits that the book is not intended as "full-blown biography." **Rather, he writes, "it is nice being able to 'cherry-pick' " his stories.**

Such cherry-picking occasionally results in oversimplifications and gaps in chronology. Mr. Groom underplays MacArthur's failure to stock Bataan with provisions and instead claims that his "tenacious defense…upset the Japanese timetable for military conquest of the Southwest Pacific." Patton's story progresses through the soldier-slapping incidents of 1943 before Mr. Groom backtracks to pick up MacArthur on Corregidor early in 1942…**That said, historians will wish that Mr. Groom had been more through in his documentation: The sources for many quotes and details are not readily at hand.**

…Patton had written his wife that "the best end for an officer is the last bullet of the war." He died just before Christmas 1945 from injuries suffered in an auto accident.

..One thing that is difficult to argue with is Mr. Groom's assertion that, during the war, generals "become as close to gods on earth as we are ever likely to see."

—

But in all this vocal theatre of memory, in all the waves or sound and fury, one rather remarkable fact has been completely ignored: Thomas Jefferson singed as Act prohibiting the slave trade to the United States, and by American traders, into law three whole weeks before George III gave the British equivalent the formal royal assent…

It's important to remember that many of the most forthright and articulate assailants of Jefferson's Act- or rather those who wanted to amend it into harmlessness- were actually either Virginians like John Randolph or Virginians by origin like Peter Early, even though he had moved to and spoke for the Lower South. What the debate- such as it was- at the end of the 1806 implied was an early fracture within the leadership of the South itself, and not always just along regional lines. Madison was, as usual on this issue, uncomfortably in the middle - endorsing the Act, provided it did not cause too much 'inconvenience' to his fellow plantation owners like the President, who sustained his moral schizophrenia to the end. Not least, of course, because Jefferson and Madison- to mention their faithful correspondent in Massachusetts, former President Adams- well knew that the price, first of Confederation, then making of a Union, then of enacting a constitution, had been deferring to the Lower South on both the trade and the institution of slavery itself. Postponing the legislation concerning the slave trade for twenty years had been the condition of making the constitution possible (and there were in 1807 those who refused to accept the law as valid, considering that Jefferson had anticipated by a year the end o that moratorium even though the law was not to come into effect until 1808). This had been the Faustian bargain that had made the United States, and (to mix metaphors) the poisoned chalice that the temporizing Virginians- Jefferson and Madison – knew very well would be along to their posterity.

Jefferson had a peculiarly corrupted and tortured conscience about all of this. His original draft of the Declaration of Independence had included a ferocious paragraph attacking the slave trade- 'cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people….captivating and carrying

them to slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportations thither.' That paragraph had been duly stricken from the final draft, 'in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia', but Jefferson had in any case made this one of the colonists' grievances against Britain by blaming the whole trade on the King- 'the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain'! Responsibility for the glaring inconsistency between the 'self-evident' truth that 'all men are created equal' and the fact of slavery thus was conveniently displaced onto the person of the offending monarch and his culpable ancestors….

Behind this rich exercise in historical disingenuousness lay the nagging anxiety of the Founding Fathers that to face squarely up to the contradiction between the promises o the Declaration and the reality of the slave economy was to bring the Union down before it had a chance of consolidation. This was, of course, merely to postpone what Jefferson and Madison and Adams and many others predicted would be the inevitable conflict, which indeed came to pass a half-century later. It's a matter of deep poignancy, as Pauline Maier was in her book the Declaration, that subsequent pragmatists like Stephen Douglas contorted themselves in knots to make the promise of equality like a utopian principle – a nice idea – never actually to be implemented, or intended for whites only, while for the young Abraham Lincoln, even in his law-practice days in Springfield, it always meant precisely what it said. Not only did Jefferson, as it were, move on to other matters – the Louisiana Purchase – while hoping for the best, but was during his presidency that an all-time record number of slaves were imported into the United States (many of them on British ships) precisely in anticipation that perhaps the trade would be subject to eventual prohibition.

…Attendance in the House of Representatives and Senate when the abolition of the slave trade was discussed was thin, and the debates themselves were almost never over moral fundamentals, but rather skirted the ethics for intensive examination of the pragmatic details of enforcement. Was slave trading to be felony or a misdemeanor (with very different penalties prescribed as a result)? What was to be the fate of slaves taken from

apprehended ships? Were they to be automatically manumitted? Or treated, in effect, as contraband? Would the measure extend the prohibition to coastal inter-state traffic? On all these questions, exactly as you would expect, representatives of the Lower South were militantly intransigent. Government interference with inter-state trade was taken to be an extension of federal power so gross as to be tantamount to a violation of the constitution, and provoking from John Randolph an explicit threat – in 1806 – of secession. If trading in slaves was to be treated – as northern proponents like Senator Row Bradley from Vermont, and Representative John Smilie of Pennsylvania wanted – as felony, the implication was that convicted persons might be subjected to the death penalty. No southerner, said Randolph and others, would ever assent to the execution of one of their number for committing a deed which they would never consider a crime. And since, of course, the vast majority of likely illegal trading ventures would take place at southern ports and in southern waters, the outlook for enforcement was not auspicious. Most ominously of all, for the fate of the Bill, southern representatives set their face against any possibility of liberating slaves taken from the captured ships, thus releasing large numbers of black freedmen in their own slave societies.

- Simon Shama
Abolishing the Slave Trade in Britain and America:

Sound and Fury or Deafening Silence?
Stanford University Presidential Lecture, 2007

...His movie (Steven Spielberg's Amistad) boils the speech down to a five-minute appeal to the Founding Fathers, and, in particular, a cheerful assertion of the compatibility of liberty and equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. When Jefferson duly appears (in bust form), we are evidently not meant to think of the unrepentant Virginia slave holder. In fact, since the closing speech does little else but make that ringing appeal to ancestor worship, we're asked to believe that is was enough to sway the justices (the majority of them slave-holders) into upholding the decision of the Connecticut court, thereby freeing the captives.

As a clinching argument about the legality of treating the Africans as born slaves or born free, this makes no sense, not least because the case turned neither on the morality nor the legality of slavery in America, but on the slave trade on the high seas…

- Simon Shama
Clio at the Multiplex

New Yorker Magazine, 19 January 1998

Kaepernick anthem protest: Player had 'death threats'

Sep. 21, 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37426031

American football player Colin Kaepernick says he has received death threats over his refusal to stand for the national anthem, **in protest against the plight of black people in the US.**

The San Francisco 49ers quarterback has silently boycotted The Star-Spangled Banner in games, sitting or kneeling. The threats came from different avenues, he added.

He said the killing of Terence Crutcher by police in Tulsa was a "perfect example of what this is about".

Video showed the 40-year-old had his hands in the air when he was shot next to his car during a police operation on Friday.

"It will be very telling about what happens to the officer that killed him. They shot and killed a man and walked around like it wasn't a human being," the player told journalists.

Death threats

When asked about the possibility of the threats being acted upon, he said: "If something like that were to happen, you've proved my point.

"It'll be loud and clear why it happened." Kaepernick's protest has stemmed from the racial tensions that increased across the nation this year amid a string of police killings and subsequent revenge attacks.

It has drawn strong reactions both in opposition and support.

"I knew there were other things that came along with this when I first stood up and spoke about it. It's not something I haven't thought about," he said.

Meanwhile, he said he would donate $1m (£770,000) to local communities over the next 10 months.

Colin Kaepernick, Tulsa Police-Shooting & Jerry Rice

by Nancy Armour

USA TODAY Sports 2:37 a.m. EDT September 21, 2016

http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/columnist/nancy-armour/2016/09/20/colin-kaepernick-tulsa-police-shooting-jerry-rice/90752254/

The silence is deafening.

Trent Dilfer, Kate Upton, Tony La Russa, Drew Brees, Rodney Harrison — they and many, many others were quick to criticize Colin Kaepernick and other athletes for kneeling during the national anthem in protest of police brutality and inequality. **It was disrespectful to the country. Or the flag. Or the military. Or law enforcement and first responders. Or … something.**

Besides, Kaepernick and Co. are ungrateful, self-absorbed millionaires. What could they possibly know? If they were that concerned, they should be doing something in the community rather than making spectacles of themselves when the country really just wants to watch football.

So where are they now, the Dilfers, the Uptons, the La Russas and all the other Kaepernick critics? **Where is the outrage and the indignation for Terence Crutcher, the unarmed black man who was killed by Tulsa police late last week after he was gunned down and lay bleeding in the street for almost two minutes before anyone went to help him?**

"This is a perfect example of what this is about," Kaepernick said Tuesday.

Where is the disgust and concern for the death threats Kaepernick has gotten? Where is the acknowledgment that, uncomfortable as these past three weeks have been, these are conversations this country needs to have?

The silence speaks volumes.

Maybe Brees will get to it after he's done promoting his business interests on Twitter, as he did Tuesday. Maybe Upton will now that she's done lecturing us on that addendum to the Constitution that requires standing at rapt and solemn attention for the national anthem – unless you're busy taking a photo, that is, or responding to a text message.

"There's a lot of racism disguised as patriotism in this country," Kaepernick said, "and people don't like to address that and they don't like to address what the root of this protest is."

Jerry Rice, he of the "All Lives Matter" tweet after Kaepernick's protest initially came to light, seems to have come around. On Tuesday afternoon, he tweeted that he supports Kaepernick "for bringing awareness for injustice !!!"
"As Americans we all have rights!" the Hall of Fame receiver said. "I'm hoping we all come together #solution"

Try as so many have to brush off the protests by athletes, to frame them in such a way so as to distort or ignore the message, Kaepernick and the others who have so bravely taken a stand refuse to be denied. The discrimination they are protesting is too damaging to all of us to go unchallenged.

It is telling that, each week, their numbers grow. What started with one person has spread to at least seven other NFL teams and Megan Rapinoe of the U.S. women's soccer team. It has trickled down to colleges and high schools.

And for those who say the athletes should be doing more, they're doing that, too. **Kaepernick announced Tuesday he will donate $100,000 a month for the next 10 months,** with a website allowing the public to track where the money is going. Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall spent a day last week with the city's police chief.

"**It had nothing to do with necessarily disrespecting the flag or not representing the country,**" Philadelphia Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins said after he and at least two other teammates raised their fists during the national anthem before their *Monday Night Football* game against the Chicago Bears.

"The issue is about the treatment of African Americans and minorities in this country, when you talk about social injustice."

All Kaepernick and the other athletes are asking is that people hear them out. That we at least consider that reality for so many others does not resemble our own, and examine how to bridge the divides.

“It’s simply to continue the conversation about social injustice and keep that relevant,” Jenkins said.

But that conversation has grown decidedly one-sided. **So many of those who were so quick to criticize Kaepernick and the other athletes are now noticeably silent.**

And that says it all.

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The following opinion is a lame idea to ‘stand and pay it forward’ by gliding over not just confronting past grievances but by also not recognizing persistent murders by police and a host, a plethora of social inequities driven *presently by race.* Let’s start from the beginning and talk about reparations before dare leaping forward! The general took this as an opportunity to walk a wimpy line to say a patriotic point that keeps his hands clean by not dealing properly with the disgraceful shame of America’s social blight of racial injustice and disharmony especially by others in uniforms. I think it was a typical craven response of the mentality of many, if not most, of white Americans to try to feel good and assuage white social and economic superiority by whitewashing that the world needs the USA. He is trying to distract readers that the world is a better place with America as opposed to honestly grappling and getting rope burns dealing within America’s racial fault lines. Old strategy: when getting ugly inside, look outside for bluer skies. This is a diversion. This opinion is so creamed and buttered over, it is insipid and heart clogging. He never shows the healthy courage in his opinion to categorically deal- let alone dare mention the issue of race- which by his omission, is more than telling. People are not standing for the flag at sporting events because of deceptive misguided wars, lack of employment, stock market worries, spotty medical care or Mexicans calling the police on threatening white men that become abusive then violent at their food trucks complaining about cash only payment policies because the trucks don’t have Apple Pay yet. The general would have been prudent to come directly at the crux of

the problem and not try to out-flank it with the same tired archaic maneuver grasping desperately for inspirational words about coming together without really delving to touch the ugly gnarled root cause that he left conspiculously mum. He should have just eaten All-American apple pie à la mode with extra serviettes and chewed quietly with a full mouth and shut-up:

Why we stand for the flag: Gen. Dempsey

http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/09/18/kaepernick-patriotism-flag-anthem-military-football-respect-general-dempsey/90429784/

Martin E. Dempsey 1:11 p.m. EDT September 18, 2016

I don't agree with everything America has done, but the world is a better place because it exists.

In the course of everyday life, there are very few opportunities for the people of the United States to come together, pause and reflect on the hope that is only possible with freedom and democracy. Our national anthem is a statement of respect for this hope, not a declaration that those present agree with everything our nation does or fails to do.

That's why members of the military and other public servants love sports and why sports love them. As the 18th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I witnessed the public ritual of playing the national anthem at sporting events dozens of times and saw Americans rise above their own self interests and celebrate something that is greater than themselves. More recently, I was in Rio de Janeiro for the Olympics and stood with enormous pride as our flag was raised and the anthem played when outstanding athletes across a variety of sports were moved to tears by the honor of representing their country.

Life presents plenty of opportunities for us to disagree with one another and seemingly fewer opportunities on which we agree. Standing together during the national anthem at

sporting events should be one of those times when we agree, when we focus on the things that bind us together, even as we prepare to let our voices be heard in disagreement about which team is the better team.

It's important to remember that our military is composed entirely of volunteers. It obviously takes a special kind of patriotism for people to volunteer to risk their life for their country. Theirs is not blind patriotism that pretends there is nothing wrong with the country. Every man and woman in uniform knows we still have work to do to achieve the equality, opportunity and justice for all to which we aspire. But every member of the military also knows that what is right about America is worth defending. And if it's worth defending, it's worth honoring.

I spent my professional life defending individual rights, and I did so with the knowledge that sometimes people would use those rights in ways that might be hurtful or insensitive. I just hope that the athletes who are using the anthem as a protest understand why people like me intend to keep standing during the national anthem. We do so not because we agree with everything America has done, or everything that has been done in America's name, but because despite all of that the world is a better place because America exists. That seems to me to be worth the honor of respect during the national anthem.

What's wrong about America can't be fixed unless we acknowledge, protect and, yes, honor what is right about America. **For those who don't like standing because they disagree with what America has done, stand and pay it forward for what you think America should do.** Then, as the last echoes of the anthem fade away, go back to arguing for change from that foundation of promise that is the national anthem.

Martin E. Dempsey is a retired Army general, a Duke University Rubenstein Fellow and chairman of the Jr. NBA Leadership Council.

Confederate flag: Why it is so potent in the US
25 June 2015, BBC

The whole family was astounded by what we found in Tuskegee.

The town in Alabama is important in American history for several reasons: the university founded by Booker T Washington is there, so was the all-black air force squadron and it was the site of an awful medical experiment on black men.

So we thought it was worth a stop on our holiday through the Deep South.
There, bang in the centre of this town with a 95% black population was a memorial to the Confederate war dead, the men who fought to keep black people as property.
It is the crux of a current debate. What is an affront to some is, for others, a mere matter of pride in their past. Or so they say. The trouble is the past is not neutral territory.
For decades, rows have erupted every once in a while over Confederate symbols.

Most potent is the Confederate flag.

Now, after the Charleston killings, by a man who celebrated that flag and denigrated the Stars and Stripes, it could be a big issue in the 2016 US presidential elections.
To some, the Civil War battle flag of the breakaway Southern states is as tainted as the swastika and allowing it to fly over the State House in South Carolina, where one-third of the population is black, is akin to hoisting the Hakenkreuz in Jerusalem.

As I wrote last autumn, to others, it is as innocent as the St George cross - occasionally waved by racists but not their exclusive property.

Rejection of the past

This could be the Republican Party's Clause Four moment - a deliberate rejection of the past - akin to the UK's Labour Party, in 1995, dropping its commitment to the state ownership of industry.

The shunning of the Confederate battle flag might be as potent a symbol as the flag itself. The Republican Governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley - whose parents, incidentally, are originally from India - has changed her mind and now says it should go, as a "deeply offensive symbol of a brutally offensive past".

Mitt Romney, the Republican candidate in 2012, tweeted last weekend: "Take down the #ConfederateFlag at the SC Capitol. To many, it is a symbol of racial hatred. Remove it now to honor #Charleston victims."

He ignited a debate.

The Republican frontrunner for 2016, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, said: "In Florida, we acted, moving the flag from the state grounds to a museum, where it belonged."

Rick Perry has tweeted removing the flag would be an act of "healing and unity".
But fellow Republican presidential candidates Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and Scott Walker, who is thought likely to run, have suggested it is up to South Carolina.

Long-term problem

This is really important because it plays into the Republican Party's big, long-term, political problem. Despite recent successes, its vote is predominantly white, rural, and elderly. **The growing force in US politics is the Hispanic vote - that minority has become the largest single ethnic group in California and soon will be in Texas too.**

Some Republicans worry the harsh tone of their debate over illegal immigration from Central and South America has poisoned their image with people whose family come from that part of the world.

I have long thought it would be a pivotal moment when - or if - a Republican candidate found the right language - and politics - to challenge this perception.
But the fury about the Confederate flag provides them with another opportunity to, as Americans put it, "reach out" beyond their core vote. Only 6% of black Americans voted Republican in 2012. You could just assume it is not surprising that a conservative party does not appeal to a group statistically less well off than other Americans. But that is very far from the truth, and alien to the party's origins. The US parties have only recently moulded themselves into the left-right divide familiar to the UK. The Republican Party, the party of Abraham Lincoln, the victor of the Civil War, the Grand Old Party, was the party that campaigned against slavery, and fought a war that liberated black Americans.

Their decision to shed that heritage was strategic and deliberate. American politics underwent a stunning convulsion, an earthquake in the wake of the tsunami of civil rights.

The Democrats under Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960s abandoned their traditional and uncomfortable split between northern liberals and trade unionists on the one hand and highly conservative Southern racial supremacists on the other.

The Dixiecrats had ruled the South like a one-party state, and with about as much toleration of black dissent as any dictatorship. The Republicans deliberately pursued what was known as "the Southern strategy" to pick up disgruntled white voters in the South with a harder racial politics.

Morally questionable, it was strategically stunningly successful.
The South is now overwhelmingly Republican - but this now feels like winning a race by speeding down a cul-de-sac.

This is, of course, is not only about one party's fortunes but also a deep wound that still divides a nation.

The trouble is many white Americans believe that the scars are fading, while many black Americans feel the injury is turning septic.

The Dixiecrats and the 1948 election:

- Formed as the States' Rights Democratic Party as a reaction to the liberal policies - particularly on civil rights - of new Democratic President Harry Truman
- Put up its own nominee at the election - the Governor of South Carolina, Strom Thurmond
- At a convention in Oklahoma City, it adopted a party platform that stated: "We stand for the segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each race"
- Thurmond carried the previously solid Democratic states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina. However, it did not stop Truman winning the presidency

The problem is a different view of history.

To some, slavery was a very long time ago, civil rights battles were won a generation ago and equality is the law and the norm. As I've heard people put it: "They should get over it." This complacent view ignores what actually happened after the Civil War.

Reconstruction, as the period is known, saw hundreds of black politicians elected and black Americans appointed as lawmen, and the growth of black businesses.
These modest baby steps towards equality were smashed. The Ku Klux Klan was set up deliberately to destroy this progress. It is no accident that "uppity" is the adjective attached to the familiar insulting description of black people - the violent politics of the time was about keeping a people down, destroying aspirations, keeping them from rising to the economic and political levels of even the poorest whites.

And the Confederate flag was their flag.

It was made part of Mississippi's state flag only in 1894 - some 30 years after the Civil War, but a couple of years after Congress made it easier to disenfranchise black people. **Georgia got rid of the Confederate flag from its state flag in 2001. But it was not there as some deep historical hangover - it was put there only in 1956, as the arguments about civil rights raged.**

The Confederate flag can be seen as a symbol of the tattered dignity of a proud people who lost a war. But undeniably it has also been the rallying banner of an active and successful resistance to racial equality, a celebration of the renaissance of white power, a symbol that the struggle did not end in 1865.

The most subtle observer of the South, novelist William Faulkner, wrote: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

But it might be less present if Republicans adopt a new strategy for a New South.

University of Mississippi to remove US rebel flag
26 Oct. 2015, BBC

The University of Mississippi has stopped flying the state's flag on its campus because it features the Confederate battle emblem. Mississippi students had urged for the removal of the flag from campus because of its associations with slavery. The university chancellor ordered the flag to be lowered and said it was being sent to the archives.

It has been the state's flag since 1894, and residents opted to keep the flag during a 2001 state-wide vote. The student body senate voted to request removal of the flag, then was joined by two other student groups in the call. "The University of Mississippi community came to the realisation years ago that the Confederate battle flag did not represent many of our core values, such as civility and respect for others," said chancellor Morris Stocks.

The murder of nine parishioners at a historical black church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June renewed a debate about the place of the flag in US culture.

The suspect, Dylann Roof, has appeared in many photos holding the flag.
A month after the tragedy, the flag was removed from South Carolina's capitol grounds. The Confederate battle flag became a potent symbol for the southern states fighting the Civil War as they sought to break away from the union.

It is seen by some as an icon of slavery and racism while others say the banner symbolises their heritage and history

Rebel flag supporter 'bombs Mississippi Walmart'
3 November 2015, BBC

A man apparently angered by Walmart's decision to stop selling Confederate battle flags has been accused of bombing one of the retailer's stores. Marshall Leonard is being held by police after throwing a bomb into one of the department stores in Tupelo, Mississippi, early on Sunday.

Mr Leonard is known in the city for the 4ft (1.2m) flag he flies over his car.Nobody was hurt or injured by the improvised device that produced only a loud bang but no damage. "An employee was sitting in the vestibule taking a break. He told the employee to run - that he was going to blow the place up," said Police Chief Bart Aguirre.

The suspect then threw the newspaper-wrapped package into the store - around 0130 local time (0630 GMT).

Walmart, along with several other retailers, pulled the battle flag and other memorabilia from their shelves following the killing in June of nine black worshippers at a church in Charleston, South Carolina. The man charged with the killings was pictured holding the flag.

Explosives experts said that the package contained enough explosive material to damage the store, but its poor assembly rendered it ineffective. He was arrested by police about a half-hour later when his silver Mazda adorned with stickers of battle flag and the Mississippi state flag - which itself features an inset Confederate battle flag - was seen running a red traffic light.

"He's a strong supporter of keeping that flag flying," the police chief said. "This is his way of bring attention to that". Mr Leonard, who lives alone and is unemployed, does not currently have a lawyer, but will be appointed one by a judge if it is deemed he cannot afford one.

The Confederate battle flag became a potent symbol for the southern states fighting the Civil War as they sought to break away from the union. It is seen by some as an icon of slavery and racism while others say the banner symbolises their heritage and history.

Was William Faulkner of Oxford, Mississippi born in 1820 before the first cannon was shot in South Carolina and we didn't know about it? This sentimental heritage is ringing hollow because the accomplishments are few and far between other than white oppression and tyranny of a people at any cost. The South's greatest contributions are arguably demonstrated through the powers of miscegenation expressed with cuisines amalgamated and music drawn from African rhythms which have been exported and continue to influence popular culture the world over. I hope citizens in the south of Vietnam aren't holding onto the old flag of a weak and corrupt regime that was propped up, now driving BMWs, Mercedes and KIAs and saying one day we'll take Hanoi and the French will be there with some Bur-*guns*-dy to help us. It would be ludicrous and pitiful if anyone did. The past is done and buried yet the skeletons are always conjured up by the South's wizards of lies.

However, we can gain perhaps a bit of perspective about Southern values by taking a glance at its Noble Laureate son in Faulkner to substantiate the absolute brilliance of white ideology:

…In "A Word to Virginians", a speech delivered at the University of Virginia, Faulkner begins cautiously and tentatively. Perhaps "the Negro is not yet capable of more than second-class citizenship. His tragedy may be capable that so far he is competent for equality only in the ratio of his white blood. So how is the Negro's freedom to be achieved? White men of the South must teach them to be "worthy" of freedom, a process involving the Blacks learning to think like the best of white men and ceasing "forever more thinking like a Negro and acting like Negro… Negroes may not learn their a-b-c's or common fractions; but they must learn the hard things- self restraint, honesty, dependability, purity; to act not even as well any white man, but to act the best of white men."

To gather up the Southern past, Faulkner told the writer Robert Cantwell that he did not read history. He saturated himself by talking to Southern white people, who had lived through the Civil War. He and other boys would play Civil War games, and the old men "would tell us what it was like." One, of course, recalls the numerous legends and myths that once passed for Southern "history" … The sources are often the memories of veterans and "prominent citizens" concerning such issues as the overthrowal of Reconstruction in various Mississippi counties. Complex issues become simply a struggle between the Anglo-Saxons sons of Light and the Manichean forces of Chaos and the Void. A Miss Julia Kendal wrote the history of Reconstruction in Faulkner's Lafayette County- a lurid story in which the black sons of darkness and the Northern fallen sons of Light do deeds that make angels weep. Eventually, the long-suffering rage of virtuous white Anglo-Saxon manhood breaks loose, and the heads of blacks bob in the Mississippi Yocana River.

George Kent
Blackness and the Adventure of Western Culture
University of Chicago

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Miss Emmeline was the last, the youngest. At the time I am speaking of she was twenty-five, perhaps a little more, and I worshiped her – from a distance, of course- with the chaste, evangelical passion that could only be nurtured in the innocent heart of a boy like myself, reared in surroundings where women (at least white ladies) seemed to float like bubbles in an immaculate effulgence of purity and perfection. With her lustrous rich auburn hair parted at the center and her dark intelligent eyes and sweet gravity of her mouth which lent to her face such an air of noble calm, she would have been a great beauty even in a society far removed from this backwater, where work and isolation and the weather tended to harshen a white mistress's charms. Perhaps city life had had something to do with this, since after attending the seminary nearby in Lawrenceville she had gone north to Baltimore, and they she had spent several years in the home of a maternal aunt. During that time she had fallen victim (or so it was rumored- and so it was bruited about the kitchen by Prissy or Little Morning or one of the house servants, all of them by training chronic snoops) or an unhappy love affair- so grievous that if had threatened a physical decline- and thus Marse Samuel had summoned her home, where she now helped Miss Nell in the management of the household. Eventually it seemed that her spirits were restored, and she fell without strain into the routine of a young plantation mistress, attending to the ill and the feeble in the cabins, laying up preserves and making fruit cakes, and in the spring and and summer taking are of the cultivation of a large vegetable garden not far from the carpenter's shop…

Then one night in late summer about a year after Miss Emmeline's return to the plantation from Baltimore, there was a party at Turner's Mill- and this in itself was an event worthy of note. Social affairs at the plantation were rare (at least within the memory of my time at the big house), not only because of the remoteness of the place but because of the perilous conditions of transportation- deep fords, fallen trees, and washed-put roads making intercourse between the various Tidewater estates in each case a major venture, not be be considered lightly or to be taken in an impetuous mood. Once in a great while, however – every two years or so, usually in late summer when the crops were laid by-

Marse Samuel would decide to have what he called, humorously, an "assemblage," and a score of people would come from miles around, planters and their families from the James and Chickahominy rivers and from down in North Carolina, people with names like Carter and Harrison and Byrd and Clark and Bonner arriving in elegant coaches and accompanied by a hustling, noisy entourage of black nursemaids and body servants. They would stay for four or five days, sometimes as long as a week, and daily there would be fox hunts with the hounds of Major Vaughn, whose plantation was not far away, and turkey shoots and contests in horsemanship, pistol matches and picnics and great deal of contented, somnolent, easy palaver among the ladies on the veranda, and at least two fancy balls in the great hall, bedecked for each evening's merriment in yards of pink and blue bunting.

It became my duty on these occasions (after I had reached the age of sixteen or thereabouts) to act in the capacity of "chief usher," a title which Marse Samuel bestowed upon me and which involved my supervision of all the Negro help outside the kitchen. (It is possibly a measure of Marse Samuel's confidence in me that he entrusted me with this position, as young as I happened to be; doubtless on the other hand I simply was quicker and smarter than all the rest.) Caparisoned for a week in purple velvet knee-length pantaloons, a red silk jacket with buckles of tiny brass, and white goat's-hair wig which culminated behind in a saucy queue, I must have presented an exotic sight to the Carters and the Byrds, but I reveled in my role and took great pleasure in bustling about and lording it over the other black boys- most of them enlisted from the fields, dumb callow kids all thumbs and knobby knees and popping eyes- even though each day I was kept feverishly busy from dawn to dusk. It was I who greeted the carriages and coaches and helped the ladies dismount, I too who rode herd on Lucas and Todd and Pete and Tim, making certain that they polished each night each gentleman's boots, that they cleaned up the litter on the lawn, that they hurried about ceaselessly, fetching ice from the ice cellar, retrieving a lady's lost fan, tethering horses, untethering them, doing this, undoing that. I was the first the first to arise long before dawn (to help Little Morning prepare daily a stirrup of whiskey for the fox hunt was one of my most important chores) and nearly always the last to retire, and the fact that I was up and about at a truly unearthly

hour was the only reason that caused me one morning, between ball and hunt, to nearly stumble over Miss Emmeline and someone else in the moonless and murky dark.

It was not a loud whisper of her voice that shocked me so much – though I instantly distinguished it- but the Lord's name in her mouth, uttered in a frenzy, the first time in my life I had heard blasphemy on a woman's tongue. As so astonished was I by the words that as I stood there rooted in the dark it did not just then occur to me to consider the event which occasioned them, and I thought she was in some great and nameless: Oh Mercy….Oh God…Oh Jesus…wait! ….oh Jesus….quick….put it back…now then…slowly….oh Jesus Christ…..slowly!.....wait!

A man's soft groan from the lawn behind the hedge now made me aware of the other presence, and I remained half paralyzed, fascinated yet suddenly sick nearly unto death at the sound of the Saviour's name spoken thus, as if He has been stripped shamelessly naked by the hot urgency of her lips. "Wait, wait!" she again implored, and a gentle sigh came from the man's throat, and once more she continued her rhythmic whispering: "Oh mercy…mercy…wait now, slowly!...Oh Jesus…Oh Christ…oh Christ….Ooh yes, now…Oh mercy…mercy…mercy…."

Abruptly then, in a prolonged and dwindling little sob, the voice died and all was silent, and I could hear nothing but the piping of frogs in the millpond and dull thumping of horses against the stable stalls and the sound of my own heart racing madly, so loud that I thought surely it must he heard above the soughing of a night wind in the sycamore trees. I stood there unable to move, my spirit in shambles from chagrin and shock and fear. And I recall thinking wretchedly: This is what becomes of being a nigger. It ain't fair. If I wasn't a nigger I wouldn't find out about things I don't want to find out about. If ain't fair.

Then after a long silence I heard the man's voice, impassioned, tremulous: "Oh my love Em, my love, my love, Em my love!"

But there was no reply from Emmeline and time crept by slowly and painfully like something crippled and old, causing my mouth to go dry and numbness, premonitory with the clammy touch of death, to spread a tingling chill through my legs and thighs. At last I heard her voice again, placid now, composed, but edged with contempt and bitterness. "Finally you've accomplished what you've been after for ages. I hope your satisfied."

"Oh Em, my love, my love," he whispered. "Let me…"

"Stay away from me! she said, her voice rising now in the darkness. "Stay away from me, do you hear! If you touch me, if you say another word to me I'll tell Papa! I'll tell Papa and he'll shoot you for ravishing your own cousin."

"But oh my darling Em!" he protested. "You consented to- Oh Em, my love, my dear.."

"Just stay away from me!" she repeated, and again she fell silent and there was no sound for a long while until suddenly I heard her burst out in words touched with raw and abandoned despair: "Oh God, how I hate you. Oh God, how I hate this place. Oh God, how I hate life. Oh God, how I hate God!"

"Oh don't, Em!" he whispered in a frantic voice. My love, my love, my love!"

"This God damned horrible place. I would even go back to Maryland and become a whore again, and allow the only man I ever loved to sell my body on the streets of Baltimore. Get your God damned hands off me and don't speak another word to me again! If you do I'll Papa! Now leave me, leave me, leave me, leave me alone!

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

There is a poignant reason identified for the legacy of a simplistic good over evil, white over black construct in Western culture:

Hunter explains that, since Europeans nations largely shared the same theological assumptions down through the Renaissance, they did not appear to each other as separate and contrasting images….The Elizabethan author, therefore, went beyond Europe and drew upon ancient oppositions- the conflict between God and Devil, between Christian and anti-Christian. Such oppositions were represented by the Jew, the Turk, and the Moor.

With the Moor, we come closer to the mythic responses that hemmed in the blacks of Faulkner, the South, and America. The Moor was considered foolish or wicked prior to the appearance of exist as to whether the Moor was a human being or a monster. Othello is apparently an "inversion if expected racial values." But he is seen variously as "the thick lips," the Devil with collied complexion"- in short, Hunter concludes, as a coal-black Negro." In general, the Moors represented the opposite values to those of the "European norm of civilized white Christian," and offered special advantage "for the presentation of a priori wickedness." For "however large was the 'bottle nose'" that Henslowe used to present the Jew on the stage, it could not have had "the impact of the damnation, as the natural livery of the Devil." The Devil frequently appeared to Europeans, in their religious fantasies, in the body of a Moor.

- George Kent
Blackness and the Adventure of Western Culture
University of Chicago

We need to consider this sage quotation from antiquity which certainly bears fruit for digestion from past ages bearing to our present:

Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; Thracians give their blue eyes and red hair. Yet if oxen and lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and fashion

images, as men do, they would make the pictures and images of their gods in their own likeness; horses would make them like horses, and oxen like oxen.

Xenophanes (c. 570-475 BC)
Greek Philosopher

Ideas of The Great Philosophers by William & Mabel Sahakian

One can notice that the Buddha, who was Indian in or near present day Nepal, the image morphs to accommodate the culture on where his statues are locally produced to appear more like the cultural majority. The statues and images of the Buddha in China looks quite different than the images in Sri Lanka, Nepal, or Thailand. Taking a cue, perhaps this is why images of Jesus of flowing blond hair and blue eyes is clearly at odds with the ancient demographics of the ancient Near East just north of Africa and in stark contrast to the Bible's own ambiguity on appearance. Originally the Word and the deeds were to take precedent in the Church but with societies that were mostly barbaric, backward and illiterate for conversion in Dark Ages – desperate for any ray of light since populations were encountering ruins from unmistakably a higher and more productive culture in the past than their own- the Church compromised with images and spectacular rituals to strengthen a tenuous position over competing paganism in Europe. William Manchester, heralded American historian in his book

A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance—Portrait of an Age

illuminated the complexities of this dark past in the continent which, unfortunately, has led to ramifications into our perspectives of the present world.

By and large, caught with the embattled Encylopedists in a war against the Catholic Church in France, emphasized the faults of Christianity in history. He minimized the persecution of Christians by Rome, and anticipated Gibbon in reckoning this as far less

frequent and murderous than the persecution of heretics by the Church. He gave another lead to Gibbon lead to Gibbon in arguing that the new religion had weakened the Roman state. He thought that priests had usurped power by propagating absurd doctrines among ignorant and credulous people, and by giving the hypnotic power of ritual to deaden the mind and strengthen these delusions. He charged that popes had extended their sway, and had amassed wealth, by using documents such as the "Donation of Constantine," now generally admitted to be spurious. He declared that the Spanish Inquistion and the massacre of the heretical Albigenses were the vilest events in history.

The Middle Ages in Christendom seemed to him a desolate interlude between Julian and Rabelais; but he was among the first to recognize the debt of European thought to Arab science, medicine and philosophy. He praised Louis IX as the ideal of a Christian king, but he saw no nobility in Charlemagne, no sense in Scholasticism, no grandeur in the Gothic cathedrals, which he dismissed as "a fantastic compound of rudeness and filigree." His hunted spirit could not be expected to appreciate the work of the Christian creed and priesthood in forming character and morals, preserving communal order and peace, promoting nearly all the arts, inspiring majestic music, embellishing the life of the poor with ceremony, festival, song, and hope. He was a man at war, and a man cannot fight well unless he has learned to hate. On the victor can appreciate his enemy.

…In the Essai and elsewhere Voltaire suggested rather than formulated his philosophy of history. He wrote a "Philosophie de l'histoire," and prefixed it to an edition of the Essai in 1765. He had an aversion to "systems" of thought, to all attempts to squeeze the universe into a formula; he knew that any philosophy of history should follow and derive from, rather than precede and decide, the recital of events….that chance and accident (within the universal rule of natural laws) paly an important role in generating events; that history is made less by the genius of individuals than by the instinctive operations of human multitudes upon their environment; that in this way are produced, bit by bit, the manners, morals, economies, laws, sciences, and arts that make a civilization and produce the spirit of the times, since it is that which directs the great events of the world. "My

principal end is to observe the spirit of the times, since it that which directs the great events of the world."

- Will & Ariel Durant
Age of Voltaire

Various theories about the race of Jesus have been advanced and debated. By the Middle Ages a number of documents, generally of unknown or questionable origin, had been composed and were circulating with details of the appearance of Jesus. Now these documents are mostly considered forgeries. While many people have a fixed mental image of Jesus, drawn from his artistic depictions, these images often conform to ethnic-European stereotypes which are not grounded in any serious research on the historical Jesus, but are based on second- or third-hand interpretations of spurious sources….

By the 19th century, theories that Jesus was non-Semitic, and in particular Aryan, were developed. However, as in other cases of the assignment of race to Biblical individuals, these claims have been mostly subjective, based on cultural stereotypes and societal trends rather than on scientific analysis. For two millennia a wide range of artistic depictions of Jesus have appeared, often influenced by cultural settings, political circumstances and theological contexts. There is no major disagreement that he was ethnically Middle Eastern-Jewish. Though some question what exactly that looked like at that time, there is a general scholarly consensus that first century Jews from Judea were Levantine Middle Easterners.

- Race and Appearance of Jesus, Wikipedia

Today the term is typically used in conjunction with prehistoric or ancient historical references. It has the same meaning as Syria-Palestine or the region of Syria (Arabic: الشام /ʔaʃ-ʃaːm/), that is, it means an area bounded by the Taurus Mountains of Turkey in the North, the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and the north Arabian Desert and Mesopotamia in the east.

It does **not include** Anatolia (the former Asia Minor, now Asian Turkey; although at times Cilicia may be included), **the Caucasus Mountains**, or any part of the Arabian Peninsula proper. The Sinai Peninsula (Asian Egypt) is sometimes included, though more considered an intermediate, peripheral or marginal area forming a land bridge between the Levant and northern African Egypt.

- Levant, Wikipedia

The original concept of dualism originally came from Zoroastrianism which later influenced Jewish theology in Persia. Cultures that make contact and interact will always dispense with any ideas of purity in their respective cultures; Judaism in this regard, is absolutely no different than any other culture or religion. I was struck with images of the Hajj in Mecca this year that there is a clock tower at the very heart of Islam, no doubt modeled on Big Ben – complete with Roman numerals – in where numerals in the West are Hindu/Arabic in origin! This is the direct proof of the power of cultures – like atoms in a collider – smashing into each other and irreparably changing each other into new found particles; neither can return to being what they once purely were. In fact, on another note, when Islamic armies where overwhelming Christian dominions, they encountered domes on cathedrals and, being astute, sent for their architects to study how these Christian domes could be incorporated into Islamic architecture. Therefore, the elegant domes we now witness on many mosques, Islam can thank for the ancient engineering from the unheralded Brunelleschi's of the Roman world. It all comes together.

By the 7th century, the West had withered with the fall of Rome, but the East was flourishing. India's growth was eclipsed by another Eastern civilization. As the star of the West sank below the horizon, another star was rising: Islam. Islam would take zero from India – and the West would eventually take it from Islam. Zero's rise to preeminence had to being in the East.

The very word zero smacks of its Hindu and Arabic roots. When the Arabs adopted Hindu-Arabic numerals, they also adopted zero. The Indian name for zero was

sunya meaning "empty" which the Arabs turned into *sifr*. When some Western scholars described the new number to their colleagues, they turned *sifr* into a Latin-sounding world, yielding *zephirus*, which is the root of our word zero. Other Western mathematicians didn't change the word so heavily and called zero *cifra*, which became cipher. **Zero was so important to the new set of numbers that people started calling all numbers <u>cipher</u>s, which gave the French their *chiffre*, digit.**

…Even the Muslim world, with its Eastern traditions, was heavily contaminated by the teachings of Aristotle, thanks to the conquests of Alexander the Great. However, as Indian mathematicians made quite clear, zero was the embodiment of the void. Thus, if the Muslims were to accept zero, they had to reject Aristotle.

A 12th century Jewish scholar, Moses Maimonides, described the Kalam – the beliefs of Islamic theologians- with horror. He noted that instead of accepting Aristotle's proof of God, the Muslim scholars turned to the atomists, Aristotle's old rivals…

…the church would cling to Aristotle for a few more centuries, but the fall of Aristotle and rise of the void and infinite were clearly beginning. It was a propitious time for zero to arrive in the West. In the mid-12th century the first adaptations of al-Khowarizmi's Al-jabr were working their way through Spain, England, and the rest of Europe. Zero was on the way, and just as the church was breaking the shackles of Aristotelianism, it arrived.

Before Arabic numerals came around, money counters had to make do with an abacus or a counting board. The Germans called the counting board a Rechenbank, which is why we call moneylenders *banks*. At that time, banking methods were primitive. Not only did they use counting boards, they used tally sticks to record loans: a money value was written along the stick's side, and it was split in two. **The lender kept the biggest piece, the stock. After all, he was the *stockholder*.**

Italian merchants loved the Arabic numbers. They allowed the bankers to get rid of the of their counting boards. However, while businessmen saw their usefulness, the local

governments hated them. In 1299, Florence banned Arabic numerals. The ostensible reason was that the numbers were easily changed and falsified (A 0 could be turned into a 6 with a simple flourish of a pen, for instance.) **But the advantages of zero and other Arabic numerals were not easily dispensed with**; Italian merchants continued to use them, and even used them to send encrypted messages- which is how the word cipher came to mean "secret code."

In the end the governments had to relent in the face of commercial pressure. The Arabic notation was allowed into Italy and soon spread throughout Europe. …The Aristotlelian wall was crumbling, thanks to the influence of the Muslims and Hindus, and by the 1400s even the staunchest European supporters of Aristotelianism had their doubts.

- Charles Seife
Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea

During the reign of Cyrus the Great, who was tolerant of Jewish beliefs and customs, Jews were granted a return to the Holy Land. Christianity, being drawn directly from the Judean tradition, was the recipient of this philosophical aspect which migrated and consequently centuries later embraced by the Roman Empire with the emperor Constantine. This was a complete reversal of ingrained Roman policy of savaging Christians in previous centuries to then incorporating Christianity as the state religion into the compressed eastern Empire in Byzantium before the ultimate collapse and fall. Going full circle, the last emperor of Rome was name Romulus Augustus.

His deposition by Odoacer traditionally marks the end of the Western Roman Empire, the fall of ancient Rome, and the beginning of the Middle Ages in Western Europe.

What is sometimes referred to as the Edict of Restoration (actually two edicts) described in the Bible as being made by Cyrus the Great left a lasting legacy on the Jewish religion, where, because of his policies in Babylonia, he is referred to by the Jewish Bible as Messiah (Isaiah 44:24, 26–45:3, 13, lit. "the anointed one"), and is the only non-Jew to be called so:

So said the Lord to His anointed one, to Cyrus

— *Isaiah 45:1-7*

- Wikipedia

It is a human phenomenon that what is good or divine needs to look like ourselves if that society, that is if it has not been colonized and re-programmed, to believe in what is entirely foreign. I am sure any credible anthropologist could share incredible amounts of facts and data on this subject worldwide.

For the South, the holding onto this peculiar banner is not about battling states up North again but keeping first African, then other races suppressed, in check. This is not about "we remember and Virginia goin' after New York again but we goin' do it right this time," or "That was Gettysburg No. 1; I'm goin' get you good wit' G'burg No. 2- this like a champion-*ship* ball series." "You know Supreme Court said Dred Scott still a slave even up North so we comin' back up to get y'all 'n' bring ye back down home 'n' bake some hot buttermilk biscuits right quick where you b'long." No.

This is about we detest black people who were involuntarily imported and we need to keep an obvious grip on you because you might do things that white people do to black people in retribution and that's unacceptable. It scares us terribly in fact. We are in fear because the grip is slipping now.

Proof is these flags started to be raised in brazen defiance of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-50's to early 60's, coincidentally we presume, after the rapid rise of flags of convenience in the '50s for maritime tonnage. **Scratching temple, does it seem strange – *a la convenient* -with voting rights and boycotts kicking off at the same time to start incorporating Confederate flags into existing state flags or on state houses? Black people having the audacity to organize against a systematically unjust and racist systems finally?** Were white Southerners losing their cool with these new developments? Nearly a hundred years after the emancipation of the Civil War? Rosa Parks really got under their skin when she

refused to go to the back of the bus after a long day at work. Rosa who as a seamstress, was the original needle swinging the way North in the bowl for not just black dignity and rights but human dignity in all our flavors.

The Stars & Bars was not flying in the South on government properties at the turn of the 20th century, WWI or WWII. Blasted things came up around when Obama was born in '61 in South Carolina. That fact tears a hole in the fabric of the lame argument that it's sweetly about mint sprigged Southern hospitality or 'our way of life.' The flag serves as the Southern declaration for the open registration of state sponsored open season to kill and maim the state's black citizens by common poor white trash with its own unique interpretations of laws applied to its own constitutionally guaranteed citizens. That is not a legacy to uphold and be proud of.

The flag has class and status inclinations because if you are poor and white, at least you have the comfort of being white: lil' more ice in the lemonade. Asians run over you academically; many educated and wealthy whites- Patrick Henry whites- they can compete in the world, scorn your backward ways. So all poor whites have is a long gone misty memory of war long lost but so backward and ignorant that they vilify blacks. Latinos are growing in population and political power whilst poor Southern whites are still worried about black Frederick Douglass and white John Brown, both heroes in their own capacities who were instrumental in igniting the powder keg of the Civil War. I am saddened black people went to sleep again in the late 70's and didn't demand a long time ago that those sick crossed colors get dropped, trampled and burned in public sans apologies.

The next morning, the sea was still Very High, but Professor Schama, due to deliver a lecture at eleven-fifteen, was Very Low (and, for that matter, Very Rough). But I was billed to talk about the man who had given the very first lecture aboard a Cunarder, the Cambria, in August 1845: the African-American author and orator Fredrick Douglass. Douglass was en route to what turned into a triumphal lecture tour of Britain and Ireland and had been befriended but the Hutchison Family Singers (Asa, Jess, Abby John, and

Judson), from New Hampshire. Staunch abolitionists, the Hutchisons had the inspired idea that Douglass might give a lecture on the iniquities of slavery, notwithstanding the fact that among the passengers were several slave owners from Georgia and Cuba. Douglass – with mixed feelings, one suspects – agreed, subject to permission of the captain, the famously capable Charles Judkins. Judkins, as it happened, was a former slave owner (perhaps a slave trader) who had seen the light, and was happy to oblige. Standing on the saloon deck, Douglass began to read from the brutal slave laws of the South, when, predictably, he was drowned out by heckling and threats of physical assault from the outraged slave owners. The Hutchinsons weighed in with inspirational songs but, until Captain Judkins called for the bosun and vowed to put the rioters in irons unless they desisted, the situation looked ugly. The captain's gesture amazed Douglass, who began his tour of Britain (as he would end it) with an unrealistically awestruck view of British racial tolerance. About Cunard, however, he felt less charitable on the return journey, also on the Cambria, in 1847, since it accepted his forty guineas and assured him that he would be accommodated in cabin class, only to demote him to steerage when he boarded, a scandal that made the correspondence columns of The Times and drew from Samuel Cunard himself a public guarantee that this sort of thing would not happen again.

- Simon Schama
Sail Away: Six Days to New York on the Queen Mary 2;
New Yorker Magazine, 31 May 2004

The Confederate battle flag is far less than about maintaining a Southern way of life and respecting their war veterans with US federal currency circulating in their banks. The defense of the flag is denial of crimes against humanity, circumventing the responsibility for heinous brutality in its worst integrated commercial form in their history and yet, exalting it as a symbol of hate and white supremacy as a further insult to injury. It is well documented that many in law enforcement and justice systems have been and, indeed now, are involved in terrorist hate groups in the South. One can only be respected by being true to their beliefs. If you are a true terrorist don't make apologies but say if you had a chance, you would do it again.

That is the real South: The South will rise again! The flag is about preserving slavery and maintaining white domination categorically not the soft *changed* story of a Southern way of life with all the commiserate co'n pone pellagra with it. Firefly porch ice tea is far different than getting whipped, clipped and sold down river. Someone should demonstrate to somebody's bare pink back so they can get a better understanding of the raw pain to fathom the twain between the two.

Could we dare delude ourselves and defend those who would say that a German U-boat with Swastika painted on the conning tower with a sepia portrait of magnetic Uncle Adolph - a gentle vegetarian, aspiring artist, architect, philosopher, orator and statesman who was a bit misunderstood in his day because of the Depression and with latent PTSD from the Great War- was a Baltic Sea family amusement park ride with a Liberian flag aft therefore Germany has no liability or complicity as the submarine operates with a different set of core values and regulations? Would we let literature run on about it was a lonely ship fighting for its peculiar rights as a just cause because the Allies were crowding the Third Reich? Should we get bleary eyed that Das Boot bearded crews were whistling Horst Wessel-Lied while valiantly keeping up the fight against overwhelming odds on hardtack and stale pumpernickel bread? That Germany as a nation-state was only defending itself and getting a raw deal because the French in Alsace were jealous of the rave reviews for their green colored bottles of Mosel Rieslings? I have doubts if that would fly, damn serious doubts. I believe international condemnation would be swift and irrevocable; the US federal government should have challenged and sought the removal of the flags soon after the Confederate flag was embraced and adopted by politicians in the 50's to early '60s with their calls for segregation forever. Not this year but for half a century this affront on flagpoles displayed on government grounds- state registered tax-exempt public property- were a declaration to make a mockery of real justice for all but declaring openly government and laws working for Just Us: state sanctioned segregation, oppression and even murder of blacks.

I made a review of flags of the Old South and the most blatant was the state flag of Mississippi with Confederate flag inserted. Other state flags that imply the Confederacy are Florida and Alabama with distinct crossed stripes as an homage. Both states in the not too distant past were directly cut with the Agonic Line before it moved further west in the Gulf to Louisiana. These three states need to sorely change their flags and lose the link to Confederacy driven by their false sense of pride. One would hope that with the aftermath of being broken and weaned off an addiction, they could see clearly just how wrong they were conducting themselves and want to make amends for their shameful behavior- not celebrate it!

If people wish to have Stars & Bars paper towels in their own homes to show their patriotism to a lost cause, that's fine with me. In your private space, do as you please in your own trailer with your own toilet paper. Southerners talk about Stars but the allegiance is often muddled about the other important half, the Stripes or the Bars. The Bars are crossed lines of negativity to foment the widest swings in Variation from the Truth. Consider they are subtle yet the same as the Skull and Crossbones of the SS, the Nazi Schutzstaffel. Both are symbols of hate that default to tilted angles being built on tilted values. For those under their erring influence, they fight to preserve their destructive course and never correct for their Deviations. They are proud to continue on this course of being lead like lemmings going astray to their graves. The isogonic lines of their culture are twisted, so much so that the abnormal for them *seems* normal.

It is ironic that many, in their peculiar hypocrisy, claim to be enlightened God-fearing Christians yet they are the very first lost in the dark when the blanketing curtain of race drops. For the litany of crimes committed against people of color and enlightened whites who lost their lives to the cause too, not just blacks, many more should be behind bars! The South is called the Bible Belt with the distinct caveat of a handgun and black baton menacingly hanging off its holster to keep order- with a distinct inclination that favors whites.

Pray tell, patriot Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association, a distant American comrade-in-arms perhaps of Reign of Terror Robespierre- whose murderous methods were studied by Lenin and expanded by paranoid Stalin to control the masses; you so gifted in twisting of liberal concepts of maintaining safety and defense for the good of all that steeply devolve and torque into a status quo of maintaining domestic carnage by advocating open registration permits of assault weapons and handgun Terror upon the land, which have no place in an advanced civilized society and are no longer remotely competitive with the weight of government grade weaponry and professional soldiers pledged to defend enemies inside and out, what ammo would have Jesus approved: mil-grad armor piercing or soft compassionate neighborly alloy hollow-tips to spread more than just love?

After the fall of the monarchy, France faced troubles as the war and the civil war continued. A stable government was needed to quell the chaos. On 11 March 1793, a Revolutionary Tribunal was established by Jacobins in the Convention. On 6 April, the nine-member Committee of Public Safety replaced the larger Committee of General Defense. On 27 July 1793, Robespierre was elected to the Committee, although he had not sought the position.

The Committee of General Security began to manage the country's internal police. Terror was formally instituted as a legal policy by the Convention on 5 September 1793, in a proclamation which read, "It is time that equality bore its scythe above all heads. It is time to horrify all the conspirators. So legislators, place Terror on the order of the day! Let us be in revolution, because everywhere counter-revolution is being woven by our enemies. The blade of the law should hover over all the guilty."

As an orator, he praised revolutionary government and argued that "terror" – at least as he defined it – was necessary, laudable and inevitable. It was Robespierre's belief that the Republic and virtue were of necessity inseparable. He reasoned that the Republic could be saved only by the virtue of its citizens, and that a

Robespierrist Terror was virtuous because it attempted to maintain the Revolution and the Republic.

For example, in his *Report on the Principles of Political Morality*, given on 5 February 1794, Robespierre stated:

If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is virtue combined with terror: virtue, without which terror is destructive; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice prompt, severe and inflexible; it is then an emanation of virtue; it is less a distinct principle than a natural consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing wants of the country ... The government in a revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny.

Robespierre's speeches were exceptional, and he had the power to change the views of almost any audience. **His speaking techniques included invocation of virtue and morals, and quite often the use of rhetorical questions in order to identify with the audience. He would gesticulate and use ideas and personal experiences in life to keep listeners' attentions.** His final method was to state that he was always prepared to die in order to save the Revolution.

Doyle says, "It is not violent fulminations that characterise Robespierre's speeches on the Terror. It is the language of unmasking, unveiling, revealing, discovering, exposing the enemy within, the enemy hidden behind patriotic posturings, the language of suspicion." Because he believed that the Revolution was still in progress, and in danger of being sabotaged, he made every attempt to instill in the populace and Convention the urgency of carrying out the Terror.

Robespierre saw no room for mercy in his Terror, stating that "slowness of judgments is equal to impunity" and "uncertainty of punishment encourages all the guilty". Throughout his *Report on the Principles of Political Morality*, Robespierre assailed any stalling

of action in defense of the Republic. **In his thinking, there was not enough that could be done fast enough in defence against enemies at home and abroad**. A staunch believer in the teachings of Rousseau, Robespierre believed that it was his duty as a public servant to push the Revolution forward, and that the only rational way to do that was to defend it on all fronts. The *Report* did not merely call for blood but also expounded many of the original ideas of the 1789 Revolution, such as political equality, suffrage and abolition of privileges.

- Wikipedia

Thirty years later, a correspondent of *Le Monde* reported a surrealistic encounter in the jungles north-western Cambodia…, who assured him that '**Prime Minister Pol Pot and I were profoundly influenced by the spirit of French thought- by the Age of Enlightenment, of Rousseau and Montesquieu.**

Robespierre's personality impressed me. His radicalism influenced me a lot. He was incorruptible and intransigent. Perhaps it was the intransigence of youth that made me feel that way. If you do something, you must do it right through to the end. You can't make compromises. That was my personal philosophy, my personal ideology**. You must always be on the side of the absolute – no middle way, no compromise.** You must never do things by halves… Suong Sikoeun- CPK

The whole problem of the French Revolution, in Krotopkin's view, was that it never went far enough. He warned of the ambivalence of the bourgeoisie, which tried to damp down the revolutionary élan of the masses whenever it sensed its own interests were threatened. **A revolution, he explained, occurred when those in power resisted change until blood ran in the streets. It must never stop half way, for then it will surely fail**…Rather, once a revolution has broken out, it must develop to its furthest limits. Inevitably at its highest point, countervailing forces will combine against it…and it will be forced to yield…Reaction will set in…But the end result will be better than before.

No other communist party- whether in China, Vietnam or North Korea- has gone so far in its attempts directly to remold the minds of its members. Under Pol's leadership, the CPK was unique in its determination to create a 'new communist man' by pushing the logic of egalitarianism, co-operative self-management and the withering away of the state to its uttermost limits. **The ideals of the French Revolution, the practice of Maoist China, the methods of Stalinism, all played their part. But the specificity of Pol's revolution lay in its Khmer roots.**

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Some news you can read or hear, and know instantly because of the deplorable involvement of handguns & semi-automatic rifles, it must be Made in America, not proudly either:

Oregon college shooting: Gunman 'targeted Christians'
2 October 2015, BBC

The gunman who killed nine people and wounded seven others in Oregon had targeted Christians, the father of one of the victims says. Named as Chris Harper Mercer, the gunman opened fire on Thursday inside a classroom at Umpqua Community College. Mercer was shot and killed by police officers who arrived at the scene.
President Barack Obama has expressed frustration over the "routine" response to mass shootings, saying the US had become "numb" to such attacks.

Stacy Boylan, whose daughter survived the shooting, told US television network CNN that his daughter described to him how the gunman asked his victims to state their religion before shooting them.
"'Are you a Christian?' he would ask them, 'and if you are a Christian stand up,'" the father recalled.

Mr Boylan said the gunman told the victims: "because you're a Christian you're going to see God in just about one second". Another student who survived the shooting, Kortney Moore, gave a similar account to a local newspaper, The News-Review.

The attacker was identified by unnamed officers, as local police refused to release his name. Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin said he did not wish to give the gunman "the credit he probably sought prior to this horrific and cowardly act". However, the sheriff has come under fire for his stance opposing gun control measures in the past.

Hours after the attack, President Obama reiterated demands for tighter gun laws, saying prayers are "no longer enough".

"We are not the only country on Earth that has people with mental illnesses or want to do harm to other people. "But we are the only advanced country on Earth that sees these mass shootings every few months."

Referring to a BBC interview in which he talked about this, he said countries like the UK and Australia showed that effective legislation was possible. Candidates vying to replace Mr Obama in office have begun to weigh in as well.

Shortly after the shooting, Republican front-runner Donald Trump called the Washington Post and described the "terrible tragedy" as sounding like "another mental health problem". He added that it appeared mass shootings were more frequent.

The Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton said "we are seeing these mass murders happen again and again and again" and called on people in the US to "get the political will to do everything we can to keep people safe".

Roseburg, Oregon shootings: How common are such attacks?
2 October 2015, BBC

The killing of nine people in an Oregon college is the 294th "mass shooting" in the US this year, according to one definition of such tragedies.
The 26-year-old gunman opened fire at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg on Thursday morning and was killed in a police shootout.
But how often do such attacks take place?

BBC Washington correspondent Rajini Vaidyanathan has been finding out.

Unfortunately, we had a prompt answer only eight days later in two other states:

Two die in two US university shootings
10 October 2015, BBC

Two people have died after two separate university shootings in Texas and Arizona, just hours apart.

One person was killed and three injured in the first shooting at Northern Arizona University early on Friday, which involved fraternity members. Later that morning a shooting at a student complex near Texas Southern University left one person dead.

The attacks came as President Barack Obama visited families of victims of a college shooting in Oregon. On arriving in Oregon, he was jeered by gun-rights activists who oppose calls he made for tougher gun laws after nine people were killed at Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, last week.

After a private meeting with families, Mr Obama said he had "strong feelings" about gun control, adding: "We are going to have to come together as a country to see how we can prevent these issues from taking place."

On the edge of this little American timber town, a few hundred protestors gathered to tell their president he was not welcome. Many were openly carrying handguns to hammer home their message.The demonstrators blamed the massacre here last week on two things: a failure to treat mental health problems and the designation of Umpqua Community College as a gun-free zone. Many of those we spoke to said they had travelled to Roseburg from elsewhere in Oregon to make their voices heard.

They had no shortage of complaints. Mr Obama wanted to take away their guns, they said. He was interfering in state business. He favoured "Muslim immigration". Several signs said he should go home "to Kenya". One proclaimed "Christian Lives Matter", an apparent reference to the Black Lives Matter campaign against police brutality. The hostility to the Democratic president here in Republican rural Oregon was not just political, it was personal.

In Arizona, police named the gunman there as Steven Jones, an 18-year-old first year student at Northern Arizona University. Mr Jones has been charged with first-degree murder and three counts of aggravated assault.

The four victims are members of Delta Chi fraternity, but Mr Jones told police he was approached by a group of men and assaulted. **He fled, retrieved a gun from his car and opened fire when the men caught up with him, Arizona police said. Witnesses told police that the victims were unarmed.**

The university has identified the student who died as Colin Brough and said the three students who were wounded are being treated in hospital.

The second shooting in Texas happened later on Friday morning at the University Courtyard Apartments on the edge of the Houston campus. One student was killed, the university confirmed, and another person was wounded. Two people have been detained as suspects and a third is still at large, said Houston police spokeswoman Jodi Silva.

In Arizona, the university president expressed shock at the tragedy. "This is not going to be a normal day at NAU," said Rita Cheng. "Our hearts are heavy. "Representatives from the Delta Chi fraternity's national organisation said its members were involved in the confrontation.

Maria Gonzalez, a student at Northern Arizona University, said that she initially thought that she was hearing fireworks. "I was studying for an exam so I looked out the window and see two people running, and that's when I realised they weren't fireworks they were actually gunshots," she said. **"How am I supposed to feel safe where I'm learning?"**

The Mountain View Hall dormitory where the shooting took place houses the "majority" of students participating in fraternities and sororities, according to the school website.

Arizona law prohibits guns from being carried on campus, but they are permitted inside of a locked vehicle.

Arizona Senator John McCain released a statement to say that he is praying for all those "impacted by this terrible tragedy".

Texas university students in dildo protest over gun law
12 October 2015, BBC

Texas students are planning to hang sex toys from their bags in protest at a law allowing people to carry concealed weapons on university campuses.

"You're carrying a gun to class? Yeah well I'm carrying a HUGE DILDO," Jessica Jin, organiser of Campus (DILDO) Carry, wrote on Facebook. About 3,000 people have signed up for the protest, which is planned for next year when the law takes effect.

Gun rights supporters have criticised the rally on the group's Facebook page.
Texas Governor Greg Abbott enacted the campus carry law in June. Under the law, university presidents are permitted to create so-called "gun-free zones".

"The State of Texas has decided that it is not at all obnoxious to allow deadly concealed weapons in classrooms, however it DOES have strict rules about free sexual expression, to protect your innocence," wrote Ms Jin, a student at the University of Texas at Austin.

"You would receive a citation for taking a DILDO to class before you would get in trouble for taking a gun to class. Heaven forbid the penis," she added.
Some students at the Austin university have appealed to University President Gregory Fenves to impose limits on the new law. Daniel Hamermesh, an economics professor at the university, said last week he was resigning over concerns about his personal safety.
Supporters of gun rights have argued that mass gunmen target "gun-free zones" such as university campuses and cinemas so they do not meet resistance when they commit their crimes.

Others say encouraging armed civilians to engage an attacker could lead to more chaos and deaths. A student was armed during a recent college shooting in Roseburg, Oregon, but he did not use his weapon. He was not in the building where the shootings occurred, and he also said he feared police could have mistaken him for the gunman, putting his life in danger.

Gun rights supporters have flooded the protest's Facebook page, mocking the organisers. "A grand example of the decline of value in American university education," read one of the responses.

"As a parent I feel more comfortable with my children having a weapon on campus rather than a dildo," read another.

Revenge of the Nerds
The Economist, Pg. 26
7 November 2015

Austin: Texas's new campus carry law may yet, er, backfire

In June, Texas became the eighth state to adopt legislation allowing guns to be carried on university campuses. (In a ninth, Arkansas, only faculty are permitted to bear arms while wandering about the quads.) "Campus carry" has been a priority for gun-rights groups since the shootings in 2007 at Virginia Tech. It was bound to get a hearing in Texas, even in the absence of a grim precedent: in 1966 and engineering student at the University of Texas at Austin took half a dozen guns to the top of the clock tower that marked the centre of campus, and began what is now considered to be America's first school shooting.

By the time it was over he had left 14 people dead, more than 30 wounded, and a generation of students with terrifying memories of the day. One of them Jeff Wentworth, was among the legislators who filed a bill proposing campus carry in Texas, back in 2009. Over the next several sessions the legislature debated the subject at length. The arguments against it have been laid out exhaustively. UT Austin has held two public forums on the subject this term, at the student union, in the shadow of the clock tower. Most of the students who spoke were opposed to having guns on campus, but that would have been old news to the university administrators, who also opposed the law, and to the legislators, who passed it over to their objections.

A wrinkle has emerged from these discussions, however. **Although the legislature clearly passed a campus-carry law, it seems that lawmakers may not have read it first.** On closer examination, Texas law now required the heads of public universities to come up with "reasonable rules" about guns on campus, "after consulting with students, staff and faculty". The strictest injunction in the law itself is a vague phrase stating that public colleges cannot "generally prohibit" Texans licensed to carry a gun from so on campus.

The question of whether that means universities can ban guns in classrooms, for example, is fiercely contested. Brian Birdwell, the Republican senator who drafted the bill, says his counting on universities to adhere to the "letter and spirit" of the law. It would be surprising and generous if any university president whose stated opposition to campus carry was ignored by the legislature were to adhere scrupulously to its wishes. And besides, in the event of a court case, it is the letter of the law that will be put on trial.

Despite widespread enthusiasm for guns in Texas, public opinion on the subject is not as clear-cut as the politics of guns on campus might imply. Republicans have controlled Texas politics for almost 20 years. That they were mysteriously thwarted by Democrats over the measure for three legislative sessions in a row suggests that some compromise may still be possible, if only behind closed doors-and, perhaps, among the university working groups that right now are hammering out what campus carry- a phrase that almost everyone seems to have a strong view on- actually means.

Arizona shooting: Girl, 9, kills gun instructor
27 August 2014, BBC

A nine year-old girl in the US has killed her shooting instructor by accident while being shown how to use a high-powered submachine gun. The instructor was giving the girl a lesson at a shooting range in Arizona when the recoil from the automatic fire caused her to lose control of the Uzi. Charles Vacca, 39, was shot in the head and died after being airlifted to a hospital in Las Vegas.

The girl was at the shooting range with her parents, who filmed the lesson. The footage shows the instructor coaching her as she fires a single shot at a target at the Last Stop shooting range in White Hills, Arizona. The Uzi then appears to be switched to automatic as the girl pulls the trigger and loses her grip of the weapon.

The video, edited and released by the Mohave County Sheriff's office, ends abruptly before the instructor is shot. The website of the shooting range, called Bullets and Burgers, says children aged eight and older can shoot a weapon if they are accompanied by a parent and an instructor.

Range operator Sam Scarmardo told the Associated Press news agency the rule was industry standard but the range is reviewing its safety procedures.

Todd Watkins, Atlanta, Georgia

I am pro-gun and I own 112 guns. I have hunting firearms and defensive firearms. I use an AR-15 for protection.

For me the issue is that this child was firing an automatic weapon. I would not have my child training with automatic weapons. Automatic firearms are harder to control.

Brianna Grocholski, Richmond, Virginia

With all of the mass killings and violence that children are regularly exposed to, I do not find it necessary to advocate for children to shoot.

Children should be preoccupied with what is important: their education. Academics is our priority and the longer our children can remain innocent, the better.

Arizona shooting: America reacts

The facility has not had a safety accident in the 12 years it has been open, he added.

"We really don't know what happened. Our guys are trained to basically hover over people when they're shooting," he told a local broadcaster. "If they're shooting right-handed, we have our right-hand behind them ready to push the weapon out of the way. And if they're left-handed, the same thing."

A similar incident in 2008 killed an eight-year-old boy who accidentally shot himself in the head during a gun expo in Massachusetts. Correspondents say it is common in parts of the US for children to be taught how to use firearms.

Many firing ranges have strict safety rules on instructing children, Arizona firearms safety expert Ronald Scott told the Associated Press. But instructors usually also have their hands on a high-powered firearm while children are firing such weapons.

"You can't give a nine-year-old an Uzi and expect her to control it," Mr Scott said.

Father suspected of shooting six dead near Houston
10 July 2015, BBC

A gunman has surrendered to police in the United States after allegedly shooting dead six people, including four of his own children, near Houston.
One of the suspect's daughters is in a critical condition after being shot in the head, but she was able to direct police to him.

After a 20-minute chase, the man's car was surrounded and he gave himself up following a two-hour stand-off. Police said the incident appeared to have started over a domestic dispute.

"It appears this stems from a domestic issue with a breakup in the family, from what our witness has told us", a police press spokesman said.
The gunman and his wife were estranged and she was not in the state of Texas at the time, police said. Police described the suspect as a man in his 30s with a beard who was "cool as a cucumber".

When approached by officers he was "just sitting in his car looking out at us," said Sgt Thomas Gilliland. There followed "two hours of constant talking with a man armed with a pistol to his head and who had just killed six people".

Critical condition

Police had been called to a house about 18:00 (23:00 GMT) and found three children and two adults dead, a Harris County Sheriff's Office statement said.

A fourth child died in hospital. The children ranged in age from 4 to 13. The two adults are also believed to be related to the suspect. Two of the children who died had been adopted. The suspect's 15-year old daughter, who alerted police to the shooting, is currently in critical condition in hospital. She warned police that her father was heading for her grandparents' home, allowing them to intercept him on the way.

Mom Killed in Wal-Mart Accidental Shooting
Kept Gun in Special Pocket

01 Jan, 2015 , CBS News

SPOKANE, Wash**. -- Concealed weapons are part of everyday life in Idaho**, and that's unlikely to change in the Mountain West state despite a shocking accident in which a 2-year-old boy reached into his mother's purse, got a hold of her gun and shot her in the head inside a Wal-Mart.

Veronica J. Rutledge, 29, was shopping Tuesday morning with her son and three nieces in Hayden, Idaho, when the small-caliber handgun discharged one time, killing her.

Terry Rutledge, Veronica's father-in-law, told The Spokesman-Review that the boy unzipped the special gun compartment in the woman's purse where the weapon was kept while she was looking at clothing.

Terry Rutledge said his daughter-in-law did not put the weapon "loosely into her purse."

Victoria Rutledge had a concealed weapons permit, and guns were a big part of Rutledge's life, her father-in-law said.

Victoria Rutledge had a concealed weapons permit, and guns were a big part of Rutledge's life, her father-in-law said.

"She was not the least bit irresponsible," Terry Rutledge said in a brief interview with The Associated Press. He complained about people using the incident to attack his daughter-in-law.

Meanwhile, the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office on Wednesday afternoon released a few more details about the incident. The boy removed the 9mm semi-automatic handgun from his mother's purse and shot her once in the head, killing her instantly, the sheriff's office said.

The manager of the store, who was nearby when the shot was fired, stepped in and took the firearm from the child, the sheriff's office said. The manager and other employees secured the scene and evacuated customers.

The woman's purse was new and was designed to carry a concealed firearm, the sheriff's office said. Detectives continue to analyze video from the store, examine the weapon and interview witnesses, the sheriff's office added.
Terry Rutledge told The Washington Post that Veronica Rutledge and her husband practiced at shooting ranges and each had a concealed weapons permit. He said for

Christmas this year, her husband gave her the purse with a special zippered pocket for a concealed weapon.

About 7 percent of adults in Idaho had concealed weapons permits at the end of 2012, according to the Crime Prevention Research Center in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. That ranked Idaho among the top third of states. Kootenai County, which has about 140,000 residents, has issued close to 16,000 concealed weapons permits, Kootenai County sheriff's spokesman Stu Miller said Wednesday. **"It's very commonplace in northern Idaho for folks to have a concealed weapons permit," Miller said, and most businesses do not prohibit firearms.**

Veronica Rutledge lived in Blackfoot, in southeastern Idaho, and her family had come to the Hayden area to visit relatives for Christmas.

She was an employee of the Idaho National Laboratory near Idaho Falls, Idaho, where she was a nuclear scientist. The laboratory supports the U.S. Department of Energy in nuclear and energy research and national defense."We're deeply saddened by this tragedy," said Nicole Stricker, a spokeswoman for the lab.

Rutledge graduated from high school in Harrison, a lakeside town in the Idaho Panhandle. She was the valedictorian of her class. She graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in chemistry. She had taken the children to Wal-Mart on Tuesday morning to spend their Christmas gift cards, family members said. Her young son, her only child, was in a shopping cart.

Responding deputies found Rutledge dead in the electronics section of the Wal-Mart in Hayden, a rural town of about 12,000 people 40 miles northeast of Spokane.

Colt Rutledge, 32, arrived at the store in Idaho's northern panhandle shortly after the shooting around 10:20 a.m. Tuesday, Miller said. All the children were taken to a relative's house. Officers viewed surveillance video provided by the store to determine what happened, Miller said.

Like other Western states, gun rights are a big issue in Idaho. State lawmakers passed legislation earlier this year allowing concealed weapons on the state's public college and university campuses. Despite facing opposition from all eight of the state's university college presidents, lawmakers sided with gun-rights advocates who said the law would better uphold the Second Amendment. Terry Rutledge told the AP that his daughter-in-law "was a beautiful, young, loving mother." "She was taken much too soon," he said.

Three killed in Colorado street rampage
2 November 2015, BBC

Police are saying little about why a man killed three people at random on the streets of Colorado Springs. The unidentified gunman was shot dead by police after roaming the streets with a rifle and a revolver in broad daylight on Saturday.

Officials have released few details but accounts by friends and witnesses suggest the victims were not connected. The dead include two women relaxing outside an addiction recovery centre and a cyclist who begged for his life. The gunman shot the cyclist first before moving on to kill the two women.

"His last words were 'Please God, no,'" said Teresa Willingham, a witness to the first shooting. "He was just at the wrong place at the wrong time."

The cyclist was left lying face down in the street with his bike, while the gunman walked approximately half a mile (0.8km) to a home for women recovering from addiction.
It was there that the two women were shot while relaxing on the porch of the home.

"He walked calmly and collectedly. His demeanour was like he was having a stroll in the park," said Matthew Abshire, who heard the shots and followed the gunman down the street.

Police confronted the man outside a nearby burger restaurant. An eyewitness told a local television station that police instructed the gunman to drop his weapons, before they "shot at him a good 20 times".

Neighbour warned Colorado police before triple shooting
5 November 2015, BBC

Colorado police did not heed a warning from a woman who reported seeing her neighbour outside with a rifle before he killed three people.

Naomi Bettis called emergency services before the shootings, but the dispatcher, citing the state's gun laws, said Noah Harpham had a right to carry the rifle outside and hung up. Ms Bettis called back when Harpham killed a bicyclist outside her door. Harpham went on to kill two more people on the streets of Colorado Springs.

Police later confronted him and shot him dead. Officials told the Colorado Spring Gazette that the dispatcher "did not deviate from policy".

The dead included two women relaxing outside an addiction recovery centre and the cyclist, who begged for his life. "His last words were 'Please God, no,'" said Teresa Willingham, a witness to the first shooting. "He was just at the wrong place at the wrong time."

Ms Bettis said she was not sure if the threat of violence was real or not because it was on Halloween, but she wanted to tell the 911 dispatcher what she saw.

"I don't think she probably thought it was an emergency until I made the second call, and that's when I said, 'That guy I just called you about, he just shot somebody,'" Ms Bettis told the The Washington Post. The dispatcher's response "blew me away, like she didn't believe me or something," said Ms Bettis.

Carrying a firearm in public is legal in many states in the US.

The gunman had suffered from alcoholism, which his mother, Heather Kopp, outlined in her book entitled "Sober Mercies: How Love Caught Up with a Christian Drunk".
He posted a strange video online two days before the shooting talking about his anger at his father, but did not indicate any violence to come.

A motive for the attack remains unknown.

In the wake of the **2012 Aurora theatre massacre**, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper signed laws banning the sale of ammunition magazines with more than 15 rounds and broadening the requirements for background checks before gun purchases.

Twenty months after that controversial law went into effect, the magazine ban seems not to be working as intended.

And in a western state where guns are said to be part of the way of life, the politicians who called for gun control are on the defensive.

Oregon shooting: Statistics behind 'routine' US gun violence
2 October 2015, BBC News

For the 15th time since he was sworn in as US president, Barack Obama attempted on Thursday to make some sense of an act of mass gun violence and the laws that allowed it

to happen. Nine people had been killed and seven injured in a shooting at an Oregon school before the assailant was shot dead by police.

The president was at turns angry, weary and apparently resigned to the intractable opposition he faces in tightening gun regulation." Somehow this has become routine," he said. "The reporting is routine. My response here at this podium ends up being routine."

US gun crime in 2015
(Figures up to 1 October)

294	mass shootings
45	shootings at schools
9,956	people killed in gun incidents
20,000	people injured in gun incidents

Source: Shooting tracker, Gun Violence Archive

A list of some of the statistics on US gun violence reveals just how routine mass shootings and other firearm incidents are in a country with nearly as many guns as people.
Over the course of his presidency, Mr Obama has spoken publicly or issued a statement in the wake of 15 mass shootings. But the deaths in Oregon were the 994th mass shooting of his second term alone - since November 2012.

There have been 294 mass shootings - defined as an incident in which four or more people are killed or injured by gun - so far in 2015, more than one per day.

Over the same period, there have been 45 shootings at schools, and 142 such incidents since the massacre at Sandy Hook elementary on 14 December - although those figures include occasions when a gun was fired but no-one was hurt. **And while it is the school shootings and other mass shootings that capture the world's attention, the vast majority of gun deaths in the US occur in smaller, often**

unreported incidents. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 9,956 people have been killed by firearms so far this year and more than 20,000 have been injured.

So many people die annually from gunfire in the US that the death toll between 1968 and 2011 eclipses all wars ever fought by the country. According to research by Politifact, there were about 1.4 million firearm deaths in that period, compared with 1.2 million US deaths in every conflict from the Revolutionary War to Iraq.

Once again, Mr Obama compared America's response to that of countries such as the UK and Australia, where strict gun laws were put in place in the wake of mass shootings. "We know that other countries, in response to one mass shooting, have been able to craft laws that almost eliminate mass shootings," he said. "Friends of ours, allies of ours - Great Britain, Australia, countries like ours. So we know there are ways to prevent it."
And the statistics bear that out: the number of per capita gun murders in the US in 2012 - the most recent year for comparable statistics - is nearly 30 times that in the UK, 2.9 per 100,000 compared with just 0.1. Of all the murders in the US, 60% were by firearm, compared with just 10% in the UK.

No official figure exists for the number of guns in the US but there are thought to be about 300 million, concentrated in the hands of about a third of the population. That's nearly enough guns for every man, woman and child in the country to own one. **The right for citizens to own those guns is protected by the Second Amendment of the US Constitution and fiercely defended by lobby groups such as the National Rifle Association, which boasted that its membership surged to around five million members in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shooting**.

Faced with such staunch opposition to his desire for tighter gun laws, President Obama asked the media on Thursday to compare the number of US citizens killed by terrorism to those killed by gun violence. **The US spends more than a trillion dollars per**

year defending itself against terrorism, the president said, which kills a tiny fraction of the number of people killed by ordinary gun crime.

According to figures from the US Department of Justice and Council on Foreign Affairs, 11,385 people died on average annually in firearm incidents in the US between 2001 and 2011. In the same period, an average of 517 people were killed annually in terror-related incidents. Removing 2001, when 9/11 occurred, leaves an annual average of just 31.

Man shoots self in penis, blames 'black guy'

29 Sep. 2015, San Francisco Chronicle

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — A man who suffered a gunshot wound to his penis when a pistol he stuffed in his pants went off told police that he was shot by a "black guy (who) tried to rob him."

Donald Anthony Watson, a 43-year-old convicted felon, showed up at a local emergency room bleeding profusely from his genitals in the early morning of Sept. 6, according to the Argus Leader.

When police asked him how a bullet happened to strike him in the crotch, Watson — who is white — said he had been putting out the trash at a dumpster outside his apartment when the robber shot him during an attempted mugging.

In a city where fewer than one of 20 residents is black, Watson's account of an African American gunman staking out dumpsters after midnight to rob people might have given officers pause.

In any event, police went to the dumpster to corroborate his story, but they found no evidence of a shooting. They, however, did find a witness who had heard screaming coming from the apartment about 1 a.m.
A search warrant of the apartment yielded bullet fragments, blood and an empty gun case, but no gun.

Watson later admitted to officers that he had shot himself while examining a pistol he was considering buying, according to the Leader. He told them that as he placed it in his pocket, the gun discharged, wounding him. Apparently it did not come with a holster.

Watson reportedly would not say who the seller was or what happened to the gun.

He was arrested on charges of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and other charges.

American history is littered with whites blaming blacks, especially black men for crimes committed, especially in the South. The gunshot victim's claim recalls an infamous case now over twenty years ago unsurprisingly from South Carolina. Unfortunately many black men have been incarcerated and lynched from false claims from white women simply for one reason: it works because it preys on the tacit fears of white society to raise alarm and activates the ingrained racism in law enforcement for rapid results.

Susan Leigh Vaughan Smith (born September 26, 1971) is an American who was sentenced to life in prison for filicide. Born in Union, South Carolina, and a former student of the University of South Carolina Union, she was convicted on July 22, 1995, of murdering her two sons, 3-year-old Michael Daniel Smith and 14-month-old Alexander Tyler Smith. **The case gained worldwide attention shortly after it developed, due to her claim that a black man carjacked her and kidnapped them**. …The biggest breakthrough of the case was her description of the carjacking location. She claimed that lights at the intersection where she stopped only turn red when a car

approaches on the intersecting road. However, since she also claimed that no other cars were on the road at the time, she would have had no reason to stop at the intersection.

On October 25, 1994, Smith reported to police that she had been carjacked by a black man who drove away with her sons still in the car. For nine days, she made dramatic pleas on national television for the rescue and return of them. However, following an intensive investigation and a nationwide search, on November 3, 1994, she confessed to letting her 1990 Mazda Protegé roll into nearby John D. Long Lake, drowning them inside. Her motivation was reportedly to be able to have a relationship with a local wealthy man, even though the latter had no intention of forming a family.

Her defense attorneys, including Judy Clarke presented expert testimony that she suffered from mental health issues that impaired her judgment when she committed the crimes.

According to the South Carolina Department of Corrections, Smith will be eligible for parole on November 4, 2024, after serving a minimum of thirty years. She is incarcerated at South Carolina's Leath Correctional Institution, near Greenwood.

-Wikipedia

Blacks at the time joked that if a black man did carjack, he would have stopped the car immediately and ordered the boys out the car. There is a line drawn between committing a crime and perhaps doing time than committing suicide!

Conjured criminals: A history of imagined perpetrators
Olivia Lace-Evans BBC News, Washington
5 November 2015, BBC

A US policeman thought to have been shot dead in the line of duty turned out to have staged his own death - and invented his would-be attackers. He's one of many who have conjured up criminals to cover their own misdeeds.

Illinois police officer Lt Joe Gliniewicz was regarded as a hero following his death in early September. Police believed he had been killed while in pursuit of three suspects, and there was a big manhunt for his killers.

But investigators have discovered this was all an elaborate lie and declared it a "carefully staged suicide" and the work of an officer who had been stealing money from the department for years.

It's not the first time someone has invented a perpetrator to deflect the blame from themselves. Here are some of the more notorious examples.

Susan Smith

On 25 October 1994, Smith told South Carolina police her two sons had been taken by a carjacker. In the following nine days, she made passionate appearances on national television pleading for her children, aged three and 14 months, to be returned. **She sat with a police sketch artist, and the image was broadcast around the country (black male).**

She later confessed to rolling her car into a lake, drowning the two children who were strapped inside. The case caused outrage and though prosecutors demanded she receive the death penalty, she was sentenced to life in prison.

Part of the poet Cornelius Eady's 1995 book Brutal Imaginations was told from the point of view of the imagined carjacker.

David Houser

Police Sergeant David Houser filed a report to Arkansas authorities claiming he had been shot during a traffic stop in October. He told officers that while on patrol, he exchanged gunfire with **a Hispanic suspect** who then fled. Houser had been shot in his bulletproof vest. A manhunt ensued as police searched for the man and a silver sport utility vehicle.

"We went after it as if we were going after someone who had just tried to kill a police officer," England Police Chief Nathan Cook told KTHV-TV. After investigation, it became clear the story was fabricated and the motivation for the lie remains unclear.

Jennifer Wilbanks

In the run-up to her impending 2005 nuptials to John Mason, Wilbanks suddenly disappeared from Duluth, Georgia. The media exploded over speculation that Mason had killed his bride-to-be, and the country was engulfed in a nationwide search to find her.

Wilbanks had in fact escaped to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and called Mason claiming she had been abducted by **a Hispanic man** and a white female accomplice before being released after four days.

In her report she said she had been sexually assaulted and that Spanish music had been playing in her captors' van. As the FBI delved into her case, it became clear the story was fabricated and she was forced to pay the sheriff's department for the search costs.

Brittany Norwood

Washington DC was rocked by controversy after it was revealed a vicious attack on two women in a yoga shop was a hoax. Brittany Norwood was found injured and bound at the Bethesda Lululemon Athletica store in March 2011, with her colleague Jayne Murray brutally beaten, choked and stabbed to death. Norwood said that the store had been attacked by a pair of masked intruders and she had been sexually assaulted.

Later reports showed that she had fabricated the whole story, presenting the scene as an intrusion when in fact Norwood had killed her co-worker after being caught trying to steal a pair of yoga pants.

Charles Stuart

Charles Stuart's pregnant wife Carol was found fatally shot in Boston in 1989. He told police that they had been returning from a birthing class, lost their way and found themselves in a dangerous part of town near a housing project.

According to Stuart, as they attempted to find their way, **a black mugger** shot her and wounded him.

Dozens of men were brought in by police and homes were raided as police sought to find the killer. William Bennett was arrested and jailed for the murder.

It was later discovered that Stuart was guilty, and he killed himself.

Bonnie Sweeten

In May 2009, authorities received an alarming call from Sweeten saying that she and her nine-year-old daughter had been carjacked by **two black men**, and that they were stuffed in the boot of a car.

A second call was placed to her husband, sparking a search that spanned the entire country. In fact, Sweeten and her daughter were on their way to the airport to board a flight for Disney World in Florida.

She was arrested in the theme park, and it was discovered that she had stolen $1m from her boss and an elderly family member. As the hoax was picked apart, it was discovered that Sweeten was behind 2,000 fraudulent acts in the five years leading up to her arrest.

Scott Lattin

When Lattin's truck was found vandalised in September 2015, he immediately blamed **anti-police vandals** for the damage.

The truck had been found with **Black Lives Matter** emblazoned in graffiti on the side, and the seats slashed. He argued his property had been targeted because he had publicly shown support for the police**,** displaying ribbons with "police lives matter" on his fence.

After a television interview revealed inconsistencies in his story, Lattin admitted to police that he had vandalised his own truck for insurance money.

New Orleans park gunfight leaves 16 injured
23 November 2015, BBC

At least 16 people have been wounded in a gunfight at a park in New Orleans, police say. Police spokesman Tyler Gamble said officers were on their way to break up a big crowd at the city's Bunny Friend Park when shots were fired.

Ambulances took 10 people to hospital, Mr Gamble said, and others were taken by private vehicles.

It is yet not known what started the shooting or how severe the injuries are.

According to Mr Gamble, there were two groups at the park - one had walked there as part of a neighbourhood parade, while others were watching or participating in a video being made in the park.

Witnesses told local TV station WWL that there were several hundred people at the park and that two gunmen opened fire in the crowd.

"At the end of the day, it's really hard to police against a bunch of guys who decide to pull out guns and settle their disputes with 300 people in between them," New Orleans Mayor, Mitch Landrieu, said.

"That's just not something you can tolerate in the city."

Doesn't a first degree murder charge require a year to process? Wheels of justice are supposed to turn slowly we already observed. What an outrage! Investigation needed on why the reckless lightning speed to file charges even in different states. Something is rank and smells patently fishy when compared to Chicago police shooting of black teenager with the decency of at least a year to get to charges:

National Briefing
New York Times
28 November 2015

Louisiana : Police Identify Suspect in Shooting of 17

The New Orleans police on Friday said they were looking for Joseph Allen, 32, in a shooting that wounded 17 people last Sunday at a playground. **He will be charged with 17 counts of attempted first-degree murder once he is located, they said**. The police believe several other suspects were involved in the shooting and are asking people to come forward with information. Two groups of people opened fire at

each other in a crowded park as hundreds gathered for a block party and a music taping video.

Mississippi: Diner Worker Killed Over Smoking Policy

A customer shot and killed an employee at a Waffle House restaurant on Friday after **she asked him not to smoke**, the police said. Sgt. Donnie Dobbs of the Biloxi police identified the customer as Johnny Max Mount. He was outside the restaurant when the police arrived and surrendered without incident. Mr. Mount was **charged with first degree murder** and is being held on $ 2 million bond at the Harrison County Adult Detention Center, the police said. The victim's name was not released. Kelly Thrasher-Bruner, a spokeswoman for Waffle House, said the restaurant has since reopened.

Ohio: Man Accused of Murder in Infant's Shooting

A 19 year old man was arrested Friday in the **fatal shooting of a 5-month-old girl** who who was in the back seat of a car while her mother and grandmother drove to a grocery last month for birthday cake supplies, the authorities said. Members of a fugitive task force led by the United States Marshals Service arrested the man, Davon Holmes, on Cleveland's East Side on an aggravated murder warrant in the killing of Aavielle Wakefield. The police have not said why someone might have shot at the car. Aavielle 8-year-old sister was also in the car, along with the children's grandmother. **The car was struck by multiple rounds of gun fire, but only Aavielle was injured.**

Planned Parenthood: Three die in shooting at Colorado clinic
28 November 2015, BBC

A shooting at a family planning clinic in Colorado Springs *has left two civilians and a police officer dead,* with the suspected gunman under arrest. *Nine other people were injured* during the standoff at the Planned Parenthood clinic, which lasted five hours before the suspect surrendered.

A number of people were trapped inside the building as shots were exchanged. The motive remains unclear. The Planned Parenthood group has drawn anti-abortion protests in the past.

Colorado Springs Police Department identified the suspect as Robert Lewis Dear, from North Carolina. "I want to convey to the loved ones of the victims, this is a terrible, terrible tragedy that occurred here in Colorado Springs today," Mayor John Suthers told a news conference. "Obviously, we lost two civilian victims. We mourn the loss of a very brave police officer."

The dead policeman was named as Garrett Swasey, 44, who was married with two children.

President Barack Obama said: "We have to do something about the easy accessibility of weapons of war on our streets to people who have no business wielding them. Enough is enough." He has previously expressed his frustration after other fatal shootings about not being able to do more on gun control.

Colorado Springs Police Chief Peter Carey said five police officers were among the injured, who were being treated in local hospitals. Police had sealed off streets around the centre as officers tried to make contact with the suspect. "We did get officers inside the building," police Lt Catherine Buckley said.

The manager of a nearby hair salon, Denise Speller, said she had heard as many as 20 gunshots in under five minutes.

She told a local newspaper she had seen one of two police officers appear to fall to the ground and the other attempt to get the wounded officer behind their police vehicle. Police had told shoppers at a nearby centre to stay indoors.

In a statement, Planned Parenthood said it was not yet clear "if Planned Parenthood was in fact the target of this attack."

Minneapolis protests: Four charged in 'racially motivated' shooting
1 December 2015, BBC

Four men have been charged in a shooting at outside a Minneapolis police station that left five protesters wounded. Police said the attackers - **three white men and one Asian man - were racially motivated. The victims were black.**

Protesters have been gathered since 25-year-old Jamar Clark was shot during a struggle with police on 15 November. People who claimed to witness the incident said that Clark was handcuffed, though police dispute this.

Around two dozen tents and canopy shelters have been erected around the 4th Precinct police station. Demonstrators have also barricaded the roads with wood and pallets and lit campfires.

According to criminal complaints, the four men went to the camp on 23 November. After a group of protesters attempted to escort them away, eight shots were heard.

Staying put

The city's mayor, Betsy Hodges, said the camp has become unsafe and has asked people to disband their week-long protest. These request have been rejected by protesters, who have vowed to continue camping out despite cold weather and attacks. One of the shooting victims, Wesley Martin, said they refuse to leave.

"They can have the street. We can take the sidewalk," said Martin. "To be honest, we're not going nowhere."

San Bernardino shooting: Explosives found at California attackers' home
3 December 2015, BBC

The attackers who killed 14 people and wounded 21 at a social services centre in California had an arsenal of weaponry in their home, police said. Bomb equipment, weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition were found by police in a raid after a shootout that killed the two suspects.

Authorities still have not found a motive in the attack by Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and Tashfeen Malik, 27.

Police said the attack indicated there had been "some degree of planning"**.** San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan said it appeared that the duo was prepared to carry out another attack.

"There was obviously a mission here. We know that. We do not know why. We don't know if this was the intended target or if there was something that triggered him to do this immediately," said David Bowdich, assistant director of the FBI's Los Angeles office.
In the shootout with police hours after the attack, Farook and Malik fired 76 rounds of ammunition at the officers and the officers fired 380 rounds back.

Two police officers were injured during the pursuit.

It marks the deadliest mass shooting in the US since 26 people were killed at a school in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012.

The issue at hand is that flags of convenience have no place, in this day and age hence going forward, to be on any federal or state property. We know who you are, your Middle Passage brutality, and painful plantation whippings beyond general rape and carnage that went unabated for centuries. Our ancestors not lived, but

suffered mightily with your Jim Crow laws and savage screams about segregation forever. It shouldn't have even required a serious debate in the South about if its wrong or right!

The ridiculous piece of Southern history is that a majority of whites were poor and they did not own any slaves. The majority of those that were slave owners had probably less than five. Slaves were commercial property and therefore taxable, thereby compulsory to being registered with counties. The American Founding Fathers were community slave owning Southerners. The first president and Revolutionary War hero, George Washington, was a Virginian just as much as Patrick Henry. They shared more in common than being white: they were both plantation owners, hence slave holders. These men are guilty of buying and selling flesh, working Africans to death to extract the most out of their investment. Proud of it too! Love your country but don't modify its history. Whites will uncomfortably go to lengths to mitigate the crime of slavery from those Founders who were compelled to break from the British. It clearly establishes they were suffering with a bipolar bent of enlightened ideals of humanity drawn on French philosophical influences; however, not entirely, since their wealth was built on hands & backs of blacks and tampering with bank accounts could be bad for business and joie de vivre.

Wine making Thomas Jefferson drowning in debt in Monticello was a slave holder and an American president. He had a private black family produced from his slave & mistress, in contrast, to his public face white family. In the South they say, "the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice" and he couldn't resist this apple of temptation. Few could. This was the land owning class. **White women, in their minds, shouldn't vote...nor white men *without property*.** Being white originally was not just good enough for suffrage. This was about an aristocracy based on the British model. That's why Patrick Henry had approximately 10,000 acres and over 80 slaves, like Jefferson, in Virginia. He was a founding father and a hypocrite about freedom because he and his class were the ruling gentry.

While white Southerners want to defend the glory of the South and the memory of white men with guns protecting their way of life on the backs of slaves, Patrick Henry and his peers would have spat and abruptly would have dashed them with their Johnny Walker scotch walking canes if they did not know their rightful place. People lose sight that *class* was as important second only to race in the South. We need to recognize as best as we can the context of those times. You could measure a person's status by the cut of their clothes. We would not measure one old pick-up truck competing with a fleet of clean corporate Mack and Freightliner trucks, a simple plot sharecropper to an exponentially vast plantation owner. These were not egalitarian times and in greater contrast to social status in comparison to our own.

Likewise, we would not measure a Red Baron biplane with a B-52 bomber. The Red Baron inclined prefer to get misty and idealize the scarf and goggles like it was a park ride with the independent excitement of kill-or-be-killed air duels over French vineyards as an honorable personal endeavor. I'll ask next time I am in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia if they can get sweet and sentimental over B-52s and their helmeted oxygen-masked industrial flight crews. If they could paint Charley Brown, Lucy and Snoopy next to the jet's call numbers, could we all assume it had friendly and peaceful intentions good for healthy growing families and communities?

America's iconic war machine
By James Morgan BBC News, Barksdale, ***Louisiana***
10 December 2015

The most feared bomber plane of the 20th Century is still going strong after 60 years in service in the US military - from Vietnam to Afghanistan. And she will keep on flying until 2044. How does this 1950s behemoth survive in the era of drones and stealth aircraft?

We are sweltering in the Louisiana summer. The baking hot tarmac of Barksdale runway feels like burning coals.A huddle of young mechanics - exhausted, perspiring - take shelter under the shady belly of a hulking, battered-looking bomber. Its guts hang open. The

battle-worn paint under the wings is peeling away to expose yellow primer underneath. Her name is "Cajun Fear" - painted on her nose with a snarling alligator.

Parked alongside her: the Grim Reaper, Apocalypse, Global Warrior, and the Devil's Own, the pride of the 96th bomb squadron - the "Red Devils". They call it "the Buff" - an acronym whose first three words are "Big Ugly Fat". This bomber was built in 1960 - the year JFK won the US presidential election, Hitchcock's thriller Psycho was released in cinemas and the USSR successfully sent two dogs into space.

Two years later, in 1962, at a factory in Wichita, the last ever B-52 nuclear bomber rolled off the assembly line, fired up its eight engines, and took off to play its role in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Today, more than half a century later - after Vietnam, two Iraq Wars and Afghanistan - the ol' granddaddy of the US Air Force is showing its battle scars. The pilots joke that if you flew upside down "chicken bones from Saigon would fall out."

But these senior citizens still proudly patrol the skies for the United States**. When the US wants to deliver a message, it sends a B-52. In November, to Beijing's fury, two B-52 bomber planes flew near disputed islands in the South China Sea**. "It is a symbol of American might," says Capt Erin McCabe. "Wherever we go in the world, people take notice."

The US puts such faith in these historic machines that they will keep on patrolling the skies until 2044 - well into their 80s. In the era of drones, stealth aircraft, and cyberwarfare, a chunky old behemoth sketched out on a napkin three years after the end of World War Two still strikes fear into the enemy.

"This plane is the iconic war machine for the United States Air Force," says Col Keith Schultz, 2nd Bomb wing vice-commander, who has piloted B-52s for more than 30 years.

"When we load these weapons, the world takes heed. It's always the first aircraft in there in a conflict. We knock down the door - and let all the other aircraft in to do their job."

"Knocking down doors" in an aircraft this size - 159ft (48.5m) long, and with a wingspan of 185ft (56.4m) - is a team sport, performed by a crew of five.

Sitting downstairs in the dark, with no windows, targeting and releasing the bombs, is Capt Ryan Allen, a weapons systems officer ("wizzo"). "Think about the amount of political power this aircraft has," he says. "When an F-16 shows up in your country - big deal. But when a B-52 shows up… they start singing a different tune."

We hear a roar and look up. A dark bird is looming heavily over us, blocking out the sunlight. Plumes of smoke from eight engines fill the sky and eardrums vibrate to a distinctive sound. Not just a rumble but almost a scream from the turbofans. "The sound of freedom" as Schultz likes to say.

Cruising at 650 mph at up to 50,000 feet (commercial airliners fly around 35,000 feet) the colossal bomber's 70,000lb payload includes hundreds of conventional bombs and 32 nuclear cruise missiles. It can refuel in mid-air - giving it a potentially unlimited strike range. This created a "nuclear umbrella" for the United States during the Cold War, back in the era of Mutually Assured Destruction.

The Boeing B-52 Stratofortress

- First flight: 1952. **In military service since 1955**. Planned to remain active until 2044.
- A total of 744 B-52s were built with the last, a B-52H, delivered in October 1962.
- 85 planes currently active.
- Designed to carry nuclear weapons but has never launched one in war.
- Crew: five - aircraft commander, pilot, radar navigator, navigator and electronic warfare officer.

- Wingspan: 185 feet (56.4m); length: 159 feet (48.5m); height: 40 feet (12.4 meters); weight: 185,000 pounds (83,000kg).
- Range without refuelling: 8,800 miles (14,000 km).

"Those engineers who drew it on a napkin in Ohio that first night, I think they knew they had a sweet, successful architecture that was gonna last the duration," says Schultz. "And in that era you're not talking computers - you're talking slide rules.
"They built in a lot of durability to withstand a lot of take-offs, turbulence. It's over-engineered - and that's its staying power."

Col Warren Ward, a veteran pilot of Operation Desert Storm, also admires the Buff's sturdiness. "It's gonna bring you home," he says. "It's ugly but it gets the job done. Other aircraft have come along that were supposed to replace it. The B-1 was gonna replace it... didn't happen. Then the B-2… that didn't happen either."

The exterior of the aircraft has changed little since the 1950s. But internally, over the years it has been refitted with computers and GPS/INS (Inertial Navigation System).
It may have been designed with just one thing in mind - to rain bombs from a great height - but over the years the Buff has been adapted to carry almost any weapon in the US inventory, including laser-guided cruise missiles, and to conduct low-level bombing raids in Afghanistan.

As enemy technology has advanced, so too have the defence and disguise tools employed by the electronic warfare officer. Sitting upstairs, facing backwards with no windows, he or she uses radar jammers and false target generators to help the B-52 dodge anti-aircraft missiles and fighter jets. "We're as big as a barn on the radar. We're not going to hide from anybody. So what I do is very important," says McCabe.

Captain Erin McCabe, electronic warfare officer:

I first heard about the B-52 on the History Channel. Because it is historic. It's older than my parents. Usually the first question I get - "Is that thing still flying?" But that's the beauty - it's so old and the enemy is thinking about the new thing - not the old B-52 any more. So all our tricks are still viable. It's just as lethal as when it was first made.

Versatility is our strength - we can carry almost any weapon in the US inventory.

My favourite is flying low-level and feeling the percussions of the weapons. It burbles the aircraft, and you can feel how fast they hit - boom, boom, boom - the loud noises. I want to be part of the pointy tip on the spear - the first person out there to knock on the door.

But as enormous as the B-52 is on the outside, once you fold down the hatch and clamber up the ladder into the dark interior, it is anything but spacious. The crew rub up against each other with little room for privacy.

"The airplane was not designed for people. It was designed for bombs," says Ward.
He should know, having once made a flight that lasted 47.2 hours.

"We took off here at Barksdale, flew east… and landed at Barksdale again - all the way around the world." And of course there are no creature comforts. "You can't even stand upright, except on the ladder if you want to stretch your back. Though if you're creative you can sling up a hammock, he says. The ejection seats are "like sitting on a concrete sidewalk".

And as for the odour… "It does not have a new-car smell," says Ward. "You get in and it's hot and you're pouring sweat into your seat cushion. "But then when you climb to altitude it's freezing, and your clothes are still all wet, and you shiver…"

To get an uncensored flavour of what it smells like to steer a 100-tonne hulk of 1950s design, it's worth reading the blogs of a former pilot, alias Major Kong, named after the bomb-riding B-52 commander in Stanley Kubrick's 1964 classic Dr Strangelove.

"Every B-52 I flew in smelled like stale sweat, piss and engine oil," he writes. The "facilities" for the crew consist of a can with a lid on it, which sometimes leaks. "And if you have to go the other way, it's the 'honey bucket'," laughs Ward. "But he who uses that is banished forever. On that round-the-world flight we had a bet going - whoever breaks first buys the beers. "We made it all the way to the Aleutian Islands before our co-pilot broke out in a sweat and bolted up.

"A voice came over the intercom: 'We have a winner!" Then everybody went full oxygen..."

So it's uncomfortable to fly in. Maybe it's a joy to manoeuvre?You can forget that idea, says Ward. "It is a pig to fly. It's a dump truck. I equate it to herding buffalo.
"You turn the yoke… nothing happens. Turn it again… nothing happens. You turn it the third time, and the first instruction is kicking in. "It's not nimble. But you come to respect it."

From this sleepy corner of Louisiana, Ward took part in one of the longest and most devastating bombing raids of the 20th Century. One night in December 1991, he was woken in the middle of the night and called urgently to the briefing room. He and 56 other crew entered seven bombers - his was the Grim Reaper, with a painting of Bugs Bunny carrying a sickle on its nose - and flew 14,000 miles to Baghdad to drop a wave of cruise missiles, which obliterated Saddam Hussein's air defences. A day-and-a-half later (35 hours) they landed again, without their wheels having touched the ground.

The global strike range of the B-52 also created a new phenomenon in warfare - a new kind of psychological experience. "It's very unique, to fight a war thousands of miles away and return home to a normal lifestyle," says Schultz. "And at 35,000 feet you don't hear

the battle cries. You don't hear the 200lb bomb going off. If you sneezed you'd miss it." Ward agrees: "I could wake up here in my own home, take off and fly to a war half-way across the world, come home and sleep in my own bed. That's a pretty strange concept in the whole history of war. "I can reach out and touch my family, which is a beautiful thing. But you're conflicted because you can't tell them anything. You can't decompress." Instead the pilots rely on their comrades for support.

"It's not like a fighter pilot mentality where you're invincible and you do everything on your own," says Allen. "It forces you to co-operate. I wouldn't trade that camaraderie for anything else in the world. "When we're dropping bombs on the training range there's always cheering. "Usually we have a contest to see who gets the closest bomb. The loser buys the beers." It's awesome. It's a rush. We thump our chests a little bit."

This pride and affection for the beloved Buff transcends all ranks at Barksdale.
The engineers for instance have a tradition of "patting the aircraft as she goes", says maintenance crew chief Jacob Dunn. "All our planes are 'shes'. It's just a superstition we have."

And what about the bombs - does he ever hug them, like Major Kong?
"Of course! Who doesn't wanna hug a bomb?" he grins. He is joking… at least, I think he is. Crude gags and devilish humour are the oil that holds these crews together.

But don't let that fool you into thinking they are relaxed about their duties. They scrutinise and inspect every last bearing. "Is that a crack up there? No, just dirt. OK, phew!"

In this age of "smart" new devices which break and cannot be repaired, the remarkable endurance of a mechanical 1950s bomber - and the Air Force's "don't discard, reuse" mentality - feels almost heartwarming. That is, until you remember the destruction it has wrought. Seen from the ground, 60 years of the B-52 is a very different story.

Its future will include an improved weapons system, better data links for communications, and the re-engining of the aircraft to reduce fuel consumption. But for the crews who fly it, it will still and always be the Buff. No technology can replace what makes it special, as Allen explains." I'm sitting in a jet that probably went to downtown Hanoi in the 60s, or shot cruise missiles into Iraq in the 90s.

"I'm sitting in an aircraft that's survived the ages and adapted to all kinds of mission sets… and it's still looking to go to 2040 and beyond.
"My kids and even my grandkids could fly it.
"That's awesome. That's huge."
That's a B-52.

Col Warren Ward (ret), deputy director of programming, USAF Global Strike Command**:**

I got into B-52s in 1988. Back then we had the Soviet menace, before the Berlin Wall came down. From my perspective, we just thought we were in a flying club.
I thought great - the government's paying me to fly and I'm never going to have to use it! There's no big Armageddon war coming. Then all of a sudden Iraq rolls into Kuwait and the reality started sinking in... Oh my God what are we doing? The squadron I was in - 596 Bomb Squadron - we got put on a mission called Senior Surprise. But that was classified so we had to call it something else. We called it Secret Squirrel.
We had a new cruise missile that was a variant of a nuclear missile.

While the rest went out into the field we stayed back in Barksdale. Our families asked, "Why are you staying back?" We couldn't tell them anything.

On the night of 15 January, we stayed up late watching the news, waiting. I remember going to bed at midnight, tired, and at 3am the loudspeaker comes on for all the Secret Squirrel crew to get into the briefing room.

I was tired, I don't wanna get up. The colonel is there - all the weather report, enemy warnings, where the bad guys are. We took off at 6.30 in the morning. Seven jets taxiing out of the airport. I was in number three jet. We fly non-stop from Barksdale to the Middle East. We never landed... 35.4 hours.

I'm not gonna stand here and act cocky. I was scared. I didn't know what I was getting into. It was the first time I'd dropped live ordnance against anybody. We launched them cruise missiles from the airplane and when they go you think, "Somebody's gonna have a bad day." The longest combat mission prior to that was the RAF flying Vulcans. We beat their record.

After 17 hours over there I was able to dial into the BBC on shortwave radio and find out what we did.

We asked you to share you thoughts - here are some of your emails:

David Meigh, Jakarta: I spent five years building irrigation systems in Vietnam for peasant farmers whose one million relatives were killed by these weapons of terror - old people, women and children. I have stood in craters made by them near Dau Tieng whilst our project had to clear vast quantities of unexploded bombs to build canals.

John McDonald, Nottingham, UK: About a million dead people have shared the B52 experience. They can't speak for themselves.

Dave Volker, Minnesota: I flew B-52s during the early 1970s. Stateside we stood ready to defend the US with nuclear capability. **In South East Asia we flew combat missions over Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam while stationed in Thailand and on Guam**. I accumulated 42 combat missions as co-pilot and pilot in command. I am proud to say that I flew these aircraft as a volunteer; I chose this aircraft and to fly it to defend the US. We faced down the Russian Bear and won the Cold War. We in the Strategic Air Command prevented a global apocalypse with one of the finest war machines ever made. Sometimes it takes a large and imposing sword to keep the peace.

Wayne, Wigan, UK: I was fortunate enough to maintain B-52G aircraft in Guam from 1988 to 1990. It was pretty mind blowing to later talk to my dad back home and to realise that some of the airframes that I worked on were the very same ones that he had maintained in the early 60s in Michigan. No surprise to me that they are scheduled to continue their mission for another 30 years.

Artem, London: Millions of people [have experienced B-52s] - these raids destroyed their countries infrastructures, killed their families and maimed them for life, something you clearly fail to make notice of.

Anonymous, Decan, Kosovo: I was blessed to live in the era of B52 and Nato who stopped ethnic cleansing of Albanians from Kosovo.

Alan, Essex, UK: In January 1991, at the start of the first Gulf War, I lived in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. We were woken in the early hours to the sound of B-52s flying over the house very low, on a long slow approach to land at the airport. The noise was unbelievable, but the impression of power was awesome. We knew then that the war had started. Over the next few days, I watched further streams of bombers on approach intermixed with Hercules C-130s and KC135 and KC10 tankers, using any one of the airport's three runways. After the uncertainty following the invasion of Kuwait we realised that the kingdom had massive support.

Anonymous, Florida, US: As a kid growing up in Orlando, Florida in the early 1960s, I remember hearing the roar of the eight-engine B-52's overhead at 30-second intervals. McCoy AFB in south Orlando was one of the initial B-52 bases until the Cuban missile crisis changed that. About once every month SAC scrambled the B-52 wing for practice bomb runs against the Russian menace - usually at night. The lumbering giants were still relatively low as they crossed over north Orlando on their way to the Soviet Union via the Arctic Circle. I would stand outside the side door of the house watching the navigation lights pass with a roar and thick smoke visible. The precise timing of the 30-second

interval of lumbering giants seemed to go on forever. Then the skies fell silent as the bomber flight continued its way north over the continental USA. One lumbering giant was not so lucky on a hot, late afternoon when Col McCoy guided his failing B-52 into a cow pasture and away from populated areas, just a few miles from where I lived. The ground shook when he hit. For his bravery the AFB was renamed McCoy AFB, home of his B-52 squadron. Eventually those massive parallel twin runways became Orlando International Airport. Several of the old nuclear bomb bunkers still remain to this day as a testament to the Cold War and the threat of communism. These days they quietly serve as a home to giant wasp nests near the reinforced steel doors guarding the entrance where nuclear bombs were once stockpiled. To this day the airport code for Orlando International Airport is still proudly written on baggage tags as MCO in honour of what Col McCoy did on that fateful afternoon. A picture of Col McCoy and a dedication can still be found inside the terminal.

If hypothetically, conglomerate producers developed a high-protein environmentally sound organic product named Soylent Green and put it into upscale oriented supermarkets in the freezer section, would we not to be outraged if we were made aware of the truth? Could we defend its value when we knew it was toxic for consumption and unwholesome being re-packaged as a nutritious heritage food that unites communities and keeps young bodies strong enough to kill in cold blood? No, that is if you don't have a flag of convenience outside over your doorstep next to the kitchen window sill with an apple pie cooling.

The English journalist Jon Swain has provided a dramatic account of what it was like to travel from Saigon to Phnom Penh by river in his book River of Time. With much of the river bank in the hands of the Khmer Rouge, every voyage was a highly dangerous affair. Each ship that made the trip risked an ambush from shore artillery which was inevitably sited along the areas where the most damage could be inflicted. At the time Swain made his journey in 1974 several ships and barges had already been sunk by the Khmer Rouge and the fact that his and other ships made the journey through to Phnom

Penh was a tribute to courage and **to the high rewards waiting for crews prepared to take their chances in flags-of-convenience rustbuckets.**

…The war fought in Cambodia before the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975 was marked by extraordinary savagery, with routine mutilation of enemy bodies and instances of cannibalism. Part of this savagery was linked to the Mekong. The key river-crossing town of Neak Luong was constantly a target for the Khmer Rouge, for if they captured it the could prevent vital supplies being brought by road from Saigon to Phnom Penh. Overrun by the Khmer Rouge in early May 1970, it was recaptured by South Vietnamese forces later in the month and was to remain in government hands until the final days of the war. But before it fell the Khmer Rouge it suffered terrible casualties as the result of a bombing error. **On 7 August 1973, a B-52 bomber failed to follow proper procedures in launching its payload and an entire stick of bombs fell on the hapless town. One hundred and twenty civilians died as a result. The American pilot was later fined $ 700 for his mistake.***

* Approximately $ 4,500 in 2015;
$ 38 per head or, should we say politely, skull.

HOW TO SAVE FACE
WHEN WITHDRAWING GROUND FORCES
WHILE PROPPING UP DERELICT DEMOCRACIES
BOUND TO FAIL

One may legitimately wonder whether, behind the rhetoric, Nixon's objective all along was not to spread the war to Cambodia **in order to divert attention from the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam**. Certainly it worked out that way. One senior American general said later that the US aim in Cambodia was to mount 'a holding action. You know…the troika's going down the road and the wolves are closing in, and so you throw them something off and let them chew it.' By mid-1969 Cambodia was being

sucked into a conflict it had done everything to avoid, and which, until Nixon's election, Sihanouk's see-saw diplomacy had managed to keep at arm's length….

How wide of the mark they both were (French colonial and British Singapore officials) was shown by a secret memorandum which the King drafted in Thailand for the American and British Legations:

I am asking the USA and Great Britain if, just for once, they will kindly consider the problem of Cambodia from the viewpoint of the Khmers instead of that of the French…My people will tell you: 'We don't know what communist slavery means. ***But the slavery imposed by the French we know well, for we are now living under it****. If we fight alongside the French against the Viet Minh and the Issaraks, we are simply strengthening the chains of that slavery…The question is: Does French military power on its own have any chance of defeating communism in Indochina? To fight without the population on one's side makes no sense…****What is at stake in this struggle, and what will determine its outcome, is the native population****…If France does not boldly face up to this..then one day, sooner or later, it will be forced to abdicate from Indochina.*

Had the United States been willing to understand the message Sihanouk was trying to convey- had it been able, in his words, 'to consider the viewpoint from the Khmers' – twenty five years of ware in South-East Asia might have been avoided. **But Great Powers are by definition blind to the concerns of lesser peoples. Decades later, after America had been forced to leave mainland Asia, the lesson was still imperfectly learnt and just as quickly forgotten.**

The French understood better, not because they were cleverer but because they were a minor power and circumstances left them little choice.

In the first half of the 1970s, the Khmer Rouges fought not one war but four.

The first was waged by the United States, using heavy bombers which flew in from Guam. **Their targets were Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge troop concentrations, but the bombs fell massively and above all on the civilian population.** Bill Harben, a disaffected political officer at the US Embassy in Phnom Penh, made a simple experiment. He took a cardboard delineating the 'box', a half a mile wide by two miles long, that represented the area of devastation from a B-52 bomb-load, and placed it on a large scale map. In much of central and eastern Cambodia, he discovered, the was nowhere the box could be placed which did not include hamlets or village.

…The air war was by far the most dramatic.

In March 1969, President Nixon ordered the US air force to begin secretly bombing the Cambodian sanctuaries. **Over the next twelve months, B-52s would fly more than 3,000 sorties over the eastern part of the country in an operation named 'Menu'.** Sihanouk chose not to protest, not because he agreed with the bombings but because, at a time when his priority was to mend relations with America, all the alternatives were worse. In April, with beguiling cynicism, the United States finally accorded its long delayed recognition of Cambodia's borders.

B-52 raids resumed on July 27 1970 after the Pentagon realized that the 'limited incursion' during the spring had resolved nothing. They were directed at targets throughout the Eastern Zone and later in much of the rest of Cambodia as well – necessarily so, since the incursion had spread the Viet Cong over a much larger area. Truong Nhu Tang, the Viet Cong Justice Minister, wrote later:

> *Nothing the guerrillas had to endure compared with the stark terrorization of the B-52 bombardments…It was as is an enormous scythe had through the jungle, felling the giant teak and go trees like grass in its way, shredding them into billions of shattered splinters…It was not just that things were destroyed; in some awesome way, they had ceased to exist…There would simply be nothing there, in an unrecognizable landscape gouged by immense craters…*

The first few times I experienced a B-52 attack it seemed, as I strained to press myself into the bunker floor, that I had been caught in the Apocalypse…The concussive whump-whump-whump came closer and closer…Then, as the cataclysm walked in on us, everyone hugged the earth, some screaming quietly, others struggling to suppress attacks of violent trembling. Around us the ground began to heave spasmodically, as were engulfed in a monstrous roar…The terror was complete. One lost control of bodily functions as the mind screamed incomprehensible orders to get out.

On one occasion a Soviet delegation was visiting our ministry when a particular short notice warning came through. When it was over, no one had been hurt, but the entire delegation had sustained considerable damage to its dignity – uncontrollable trembling and wet pants the all-too-obvious signs of inner convulsions. The visitors could have spared themselves their feelings of embarrassment; each of their hosts was a veteran of the same symptoms…

Sooner or later, though, the shock of the bombardments wore off, giving way to a sense of abject fatalism. The veterans would no longer scrabble at the bunker floors, convulsed with fear. Instead people just resigned themselves…The B-52s somehow put life in order…It was a lesson that remained with me, as it did with many others.

The United States dropped three times more bombs on Indochina during the Vietnam War than were used by all the participants in whole of the Second World War; on Cambodia the total was three time the total tonnage dropped on Japan, atom bombs included. Party cadres, committed to the cause, might rationalize the dread inspired by the B-52s. The peasants lapsed into blind terror. 'Their minds just froze up and they would wander around mute and not talk for three or four days,' one young villager remembered. 'Their brains were completely disoriented…They couldn't even hold a meal.

…It would be wrong to suggest that the intensity of the bombing brutalized Cambodians and thereby contributed to the nature of the regime which Pol and his colleagues installed. **A far greater quantity of high explosives fell on Vietnam, yet the Vietnamese did not establish a system like that of the Khmer Rouges. The bombing may have helped to create a climate of extremism.** But the ground war would have done that anyway. The Khmers Rouges were not 'bombed back into the Stone Age'. Even had there been no B-52 airstrikes at all, it is unlikely that Democratic Kampuchea would have been a significantly different place.

Instead, the B-52s placed a millstone round the government's neck by inundating the cities with a demoralized detritus of human misery that the authorities could not relieve, and **gave the Khmer Rouges a propaganda windfall which they exploited to the hilt – taking peasants for political education lessons among the bomb craters and shrapnel, explaining to them that Lon Nol had sold Cambodia to the Americans in order to stay in power and that the US, like Vietnam and Thailand, was bent on the country's annihilation so that, when the war was over, Cambodia would cease to exist.** 'What they said was credible because there were just so many huge bombs,' one man remembered. 'That was what made it so easy for the Khmer Rouges to win people over.' In warfare, destruction breeds hatred; hatred is assuaged by more destruction. Villagers who had lost family members or seen their homes destroyed in bombing raids were filled with hatred. **The ranks of the Khmer Rouges grew – to an estimated 12,000 regular soldiers at the end of 1970 and four times that number two years later-** while on the government side, as corruption escalated to levels unheard of even in Sihanouk's day, the moral high ground was definitively lost.

…In these circumstances, the American panacea was to bomb, until Congress ended that option too. But bombing without ground support was no more effective in Cambodia than it had been Vietnam, or would be any of the conflicts American presidents would

subsequently launch, claiming they could win easy victories without body-bags flying home.

…To the Nixon administration, **Cambodia was a means of gaining time to extract troops from Vietnam.** Time was vital for the Khmer Rouges too. Nixon's endgame was exactly what they needed.

…President Nixon announced that the US and South Vietnam would launch what as officially termed 'a limited incursion'. For the next two months, 30,000 Americans and more than 40,000 South Vietnamese swept through Svay Rieng and Kompong Cham ostensibly seeking, and long since departed COSVN headquarters, but actually trying to keep Lon Nol's flailing government afloat….The invasion ratcheted up still further domestic US opposition to the Vietnam War and triggered a first of a long series of congressional amendments, restricting the US government's freedom of military action….To silence criticism at home, Nixon had had to promise that all US units would be pulled out by the end of June and that the invasion force would not penetrate more than 21 miles into Cambodian territory. The effect was to complete what the **'Menu'** bombings had started; the Vietnamese communists were spread all over Cambodia.

…The secret '**Menu'** bombings had not only failed in their primary mission – neither COSVN headquarters nor the Viet Cong bases had been destroyed – **but had driven the Vietnamese communists further and further into Cambodia interior.**

…There, in May 1972, Pol summoned another meeting of Central Committee, at which he spoke of his impressions during his journey and the conclusions he had drawn.

It was a turning point.

The Khmer Rouge army by then numbered 35,000 men, backed by an estimated 100,000 guerillas, more than enough to hold their own against Lon Nol's increasingly demoralized troops even if the Vietnamese did one day withdraw. They had sufficient

weaponry. The five million dollars in cash which China provided each year for buying arms from government forces (Lon Nol's) was supplemented by income from sales of rubber produced at the former French plantations in the Eastern Zone, now under communist control – which was exported with the connivance of corrupt officials in Phnom Penh. At the same time, Chinese weaponry flowed down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, enlarged a year earlier by Chinese engineering teams and equipped with flexible petroleum pipeline which reached as far south as the Laotion border. Throughout the 'liberated zones', a stable administration was in place. A third of the population, more than two million people, was living under communist control.

…For all its aura of guerilla chic, the US had stopped Vietnam and Laos but not Cambodia, and the day after the Prince's party started back, the road they had taken was obliterated by B-52s. In propaganda terms, it was a coup, and when the first photographs emerged in April, flabbergasted American diplomats insisted they must be fakes.

All that stood between Lon Nol and defeat, one American military historian commented bleakly, 'was US aid, Allied airpower and 11,000 South Vietnamese troops in south-eastern Cambodia', the latter being in any case a mixed blessing, given their propensity for slaughtering Cambodian civilians.

On February 9, two days after Sihanouk and the Vietnamese leaders had proclaimed that the Cambodian resistance would fight on, the United States resumed bombing. **Over the next six months, until Congress imposed a halt, B-52s and other aircraft dropped 257,000 tons of high explosive on Khmer villages, nearly half the total in five years of war.** In part this was because Cambodia, in the words of the CIA Director, William Colby, was now 'the only game in town.' **As a result of the Paris accords, the US was hamstrung in Laos and Vietnam. Cambodia was the one place in Indochina where it could flex military muscle and show that, *even in retreat,* it was still capable of something. Bombing became a virility symbol.** ' The President wanted to send a hundred more B-52s,' the Air Force Secretary, Robert Seamans, recalled. 'This was appalling. You couldn't even figure out

where you were going to put them all.' In the event, **B-52 sortie rates peaked at eighty-one a day, a third higher than in Vietnam, and air traffic congestion became so acute that bomb-loads sometimes fell dozens of miles off target.**

The deluge of fire from the sky saved the Lon Nol government, which most observers, including Americans, had expected to fall that year. It also sent tens of thousands of new recruits to join the ranks of the resistance or to become refugees in Phnom Penh and other government-held towns, as peasants fled devastated villages in far greater numbers than ever before. More importantly, it provided the conditions for a mutation of Khmer Rouge policy, which would have come about anyway over time but now occurred more quickly. The outcome was a harsher, more repressive regime under which the suffering of individuals became unimportant because there was so much of it.

Ostensibly to avoid the bombing, whole villages were uprooted and moved to new locations. …Now they were sent to remote mountain and jungle areas. Their original homes, if not already destroyed, were burned down to stop them returning…

The urban deportees, the jetsam of the Cambodian revolution, tried in different ways to make sense of the sudden implosion of their lives. Many saw the evacuation, and the brutality with which it was carried out, as reflecting the Khmer Rouges' numerical weakness, where 'two or three brainwashed teenagers with rifles' had charge of thousands of displaced town-dwellers.

Others regarded it as an act of collective revenge by a neglected underclass against anyone who by birth, education, official position or wealth, had been priviledged under the old regime. Revenge is the timid man's weapon and, in Cambodia, where people flee open confrontation, it is a weapon of choice. *Kum*, that 'particular Cambodian mentality of revenge', one deportee wrote, 'is the infection that grows on our national soul….If I hit you with my fist and you wait five years and then shoot me in the back one dark night, that is kum….Cambodians know all about *kum*. To yet others it was a practical measure,

designed to disorientate the town-dwellers and place them in a position of dependency vis-à-vis the country's new rulers.

…Mao, who presided over slaughter on a far greater scale than Pol Pot, did not glory in the destruction caused by the Chinese revolution. To him it was a necessary evil, not an index of revolutionary virtue.

By the time the US bombing raids ended, refugees fleeing the country-side had swollen the population of the capital to nearly two million, three times the pre-war level**. Around the city and along the banks of the Mekong as far as the Vietnamese border, the land was so pitted with craters that it looked, in the words of one diplomat, 'like valleys of the moon'**. The Khmer Rouge attacks of that summer, undertaken in total disregard of the human and material cost, had created a momentum that was unstoppable. Kissinger later acknowledged that , after mid-1973, he had known Cambodia was lost.

…**Nol himself was elected President in a fraudulent referendum** where, but for massive vote-rigging by his younger brother, Non – Pol's one time classmate – he would have been soundly defeated.

"Ah, em, Counselor, your job is to lie to us about the government we are supporting– tell us what we prefer to believe- not tell us the actual gritty truth on the ground. Therefore, we are sending you to the Aleutian Islands with a thin windbreaker and thick coffee mug to report on inaccuracies of Russia's Pacific weather forecasts in winter. Thank you for your diligence and piercing insight…"

The US Embassy's political counselor, William Harben, before his acerbic despatches led to his transfer from Phnom Penh, noted in his diary that Washington was 'supporting a regime which is almost a caricature of the ideal opponent for Marxist-Leninists.' His Ambassador, Emory Swank, told the State Department that Nol was mentally, as well as physically, ill.

On the battlefield, communist forces continued to have the upper hand. **Lon Nol's troops, a US military historian wrote later, were hampered by 'chronic deficiencies of poor leadership, corruption, inadequate training and poor morale'.** Their main achievement that year was to prevent Khmer Rouge gunners from establishing secure positions closer than eight or nine miles from the capital, just beyond rocket and howitzer range of the central part of the city, which meant that incoming ordnance fell mainly on the suburban slums, teeming with malnourished refugees. But Phnom Penh was already rotting from within. It was not just a mater of venality of officials at all levels, the opium parlours, the catamites, the brothels offering filettes, the drepravity of a regime where everything and everyone was for sale; more telling than any of that was the fact that most of those with a spark of integrity now supported the other side….worked secretly with urban radicals to send to the resistance medicines and military maps, often bought from Lon Nol's own officers. To circumvent government checkpoints, they were couriered out by a network of blind and maimed beggars.

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

The final mention is best censored for decency for those aged 89 and younger; and no, its not about sophomoric chocolate éclair gobbling contests or gingerly exploring the rewarding attributes of hand rolled crusts of flaky Quiche Lorraine blindfolded. It was not turning over Crêpe Suzette either. For the curiously inclined, it was not even an infamous game of chance, a pot luck of sorts with bikini clad participants that I have elected to not disturb on the creaking shelf of urban legends that delves into adventures of raw madness, to the dismay of no gentle soul of upstanding erudite society.

This was obviously a war that created new tangents of carnal depravity in conjunction with an insidious drug counter-culture supported by mercurial poppy growing warlords such as Khun Sa in the vast mountainous Golden Triangle which

gives insight on why so many US veterans came back numb from severe forms of exposure, soulfully hollowed from abnormal experiences that were previously unknown en masse in other misguided military adventures, that on paper appeared monolithically noble in cause yet in execution, dreadfully less so. The Mekong from this era has stories but the fact as mentioned that I elected to censor - especially surprising as mentioned from such an intelligent author in Osborne after such an exciting and informative historical read that is tantalizing of French contact with Doudart de Lagr*é*e and later Henri Mouhot about a major river of the world - the life source of undeniably rich and ancient cultures for millennia - was perhaps better left forgotten in the sands of time to maintain a modicum of civility and settled comfortable composure. War breeds immorality, as by their nature inhumane, the value of life inordinately plunges with occupying forces as codes of ethical conduct are too often trampled under boots with either tacit or explicit abuse (as with Japanese armies and vengeful Russian shock forces conquering German territories in WWII). We need not assail ourselves with undue graphic details that compromise patently our moral compasses and unimpeachable integrities by subjecting them to such past depravations where the uplifting dignity and sanctity of human life is unsparingly assaulted at all points in the writhing bondages of stifling debased despair, subjugating village debutantes to flagrantly serve the debauched waxen and waning whims of full-faced hardened men, lustfully tanked and fuelled on canned beer and Tennessee bourbon. Let us pray the poisonous tyranny and pain of the war has been washed out long to sea, rinsed from the lands and cultures woven together as a tapestry by the mighty Mekong.

Hidden from the American public and their legislators, the American military and the Central Intelligence Agency had been sending bombers over Laos from as early as 1964. Their bombing raids had the dual purpose of aiding a 'secret army' of anti-communist troops recruited among Hmong hill people and of stopping the flow of men and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. **Part of this effort, which was ultimately unsuccessful despite the vast amount of ordnance dropped throughout Laos, was coordinated by an American air**

base on the outskirts of Vientiane. Knows as ‘Silver City’ or simply ‘Kilometre 6’ it was home to intelligence officers and pilots whose presence in Lao fuelled the city’s reputation for tropical decadence. The names of the bars that doubled as meeting places for commercial sex remain legendary among those whose memories stretch back to Laos before the communist victory in 1975...Madame’ Lulu’s ‘Le Rendezvous des Amis, which was celebrated for its offerings of warm beer and (sexually explicit).

- Milton Osborne
The Mekong

Laos: Barack Obama regrets 'biggest bombing in history'

07 September 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37286520

The bombs, as one Laotian recalled, "fell like rain", US President Barack Obama said on a visit to Laos, a first for any sitting US president.

"Given our history here, I believe that the United States has a moral obligation to help Laos heal," he said.

He referred to America's secret and devastating bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s.

Some $90m (£68m) will be spent over three years for the removal of cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance.

That compares to $100m spent in the last 20 years.Mr Obama did not offer an apology for the bombing.

In his comments on Tuesday, President Obama described Laos as the most heavily bombed nation in history. Eight bombs a minute were dropped on average during the Vietnam war between 1964 and 1973 - more than the amount used during the whole of World War Two.

The US flew 580,344 bombing missions over Laos, dropping 260m bombs - equating to 2m tons of ordnance, with many targets in the south and north struck time and again as part of efforts to isolate Communist North Vietnamese forces. Most devices dropped were anti-personnel cluster bombs. An estimated 30% of these munitions did not detonate.

Ten of the 18 Laotian provinces have been described as "severely contaminated" by unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Mine-clearing agencies estimate that about 288m cluster munitions and about 75m unexploded bombs were left across Laos after the war ended.

Why are cluster bombs so reviled?

Cluster bombs scatter explosives across a wide area and often fail to detonate on impact. They pose a significant threat to civilians because of both their impact at the time of use and their deadly legacy.

Launched from the ground or dropped from the air, cluster munitions consist of containers that open and disperse sub-munitions indiscriminately over a wide area. Many explosive sub-munitions, also known as bomblets, fail to detonate as designed, becoming landmines that kill and maim indiscriminately. They are difficult to locate and remove, posing a danger to civilians long after conflicts end. Children are particularly at risk, as they can be attracted to the bombs' toy-like appearance.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions bans the stockpiling, use and transfer of virtually all existing cluster bombs, and also provides for the clearing up of unexploded munitions.

It has been adopted by 108 states, but not the US which, according to some estimates, spent as much on clean-up efforts in Laos between 1995 and 2013 as it spent in three days of bombing during the war.

Laos is likely to ask for an extension to its commitment to get rid of UXO when Convention member states next meet in August 2020.

The number of casualties from air-dropped explosive devices - mostly cluster munitions - in Laos since 1964 is estimated by the Landmine and Clustering Munition Monitor to be around 50,000 people. Of these about 29,000 people were killed and 21,000 injured. The overwhelming majority were civilians. Today only a handful of people are killed and injured, the figures show. But the threat posed by UXO stops villagers from getting to their farms and renders vast tracts of agricultural land useless until they have been cleared of munitions.

The president's announcement has been widely welcomed by aid agencies working to address the UXO problem in Laos, which include the Halo Trust, the Mines Advisory Group, Norwegian People's Aid, UXO Laos and Handicap International. "Before the president's announcement I feared that the UXO operation in Laos would take hundreds of years," Mines Advisory Group country director Simon Rea told the BBC from Vientiane. "Now I am optimistic this can be reduced to decades."

"The president's announcement is extremely good news for us and for poor families in rural areas who lives are still blighted by UXO. Likewise Halo Trust CEO James Cowan said the president's announcement will have a profound effect on the people of Laos.

"It will help them live and farm in safety on their land, as well as creating opportunities for development and infrastructure," he said.

"Explosive remnants of war have blighted their lives for far too long. It is a momentous step in Laos's journey towards freedom from the deadly debris of war."

What role can surveying play?

"Today more than ever we are getting a much better grasp of the scale of the contamination," Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Senior Advocacy and Research Advisor Lucy Pinches told the BBC.

"We are using survey triangulation data to place contaminated land into blocks or boxes which can then be systematically cleared of cluster ammunition remnants."

Aid agencies have also gained access to Pentagon bombing records so that they can identify which areas of land - mostly the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the south and the Lao communist party headquarters in the north - were bombed and likely to contain unexploded bombs.

"More partnerships in the last couple of years among international clearance NGOs has greatly helped in pushing this process forward," NPA Laos Country Director Jonas Zachrisson told the BBC.

But at the same time he cautions that "much of the country remains unsurveyed with limited data regarding the extent, scope and nature of the problem".

How are Laos-US relations today?

President Obama is the first US president to visit Laos and has adopted a noticeably conciliatory approach towards his hosts. He said that the US bombings had destroyed "villages and entire valleys, killing countless civilians".

His approach has been welcomed by Laotian President Bounnhang Vorachit as a way of enhancing mutual trust between the two countries after the devastating war.
The president in return has promised the government will step up its efforts to locate and return US servicemen missing in the war.

Mr Obama has made improving relations with Southeast Asian nations a foreign policy priority as Chinese influence has grown in the region. Communist Laos' economy is heavily dependent on Chinese investment

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Son Sen was charged with blocking the US airlift, which as the only other way of supplying Phnom Penh. In the first twelve days of January, more than a hundred 107-mm rockets hit the airport and nearby city suburbs. As the siege of the capital intensified and the howitzers were able to move closer, the frequency of shelling increased until the runways were being pounded more than a hundred times a day. **In mid-March, after a 105-mm shell went through the cockpit of an aircraft coming in to land and several passengers were killed by shrapnel, the airlift was halted**. But it was resumed two days later as American officials realized they had no alternative. At its height, 600 tons of ammunition were being flown in each day from Thailand and more than 400 tons of rice.

By early April, life in Phnom Penh had become totally unreal.

Those with money and connections scrambled for seats on the last planes out. The two and a half million others existed in suspended animation. Despite the airlift the city was getting only half the rice it needed. There was no medicine, few hospital beds and, in a country drowning in blood, none left over for transfusions. Once one of the loveliest capitals of South-East Asia, Pnhom Penh had become a bloated caricature of plight of poor countries everywhere, in which the misery of the many is matched by only the shameless consumption of the few. **While rice prices rose astronomically and, in the shanty towns, thousands of children and old people**

starved to death, restaurants like the Siréne and the Café de Paris still offered foie gras, venison and fine French wines. At the venerable Hotel Phnom, the oldest and most respected establishment in Cambodia, a French girl made love one evening in the swimming pool- one at the shallow end, one at the deep end, with two different men- to cheers from other guests sipping poolside drinks. It was as if the city were determined to prove itself the cesspit of decay and turpitude that the Khmers Rouges claimed it was – the ideal target, ready and waiting, like a diseased whore, for the purifying fires of an incandescent revolution.

By April 10, some 800 US Embassy personnel and assorted 'experts' had been flown out to Thailand. Kissinger, having realized, month too late, that a deal with Sihanouk was the only possible way of avoiding total defeat, tried to keep Ambassador John Gunther Dean and a skeleton staff in Phnom Penh while feelers were put out to the Prince in Beijing. The effort was doomed before it began. Two days later, the Secretary of State had to now to the inevitable. On Saturday, April 12, the Ambassador and his colleagues were helicoptered out to US naval ships standing by off the Cambodian coast. Cambodia's acting President, a veteran army general named Saukham Khoy, went with them. **After spending nine billion dollars*, equivalent to nearly ten years of Cambodia's national income, most it on aerial bombardments, and leaving half a million inhabitants dead, America's adventure in Cambodia had finally reached its term.**

* $ 58 Billion in (2015) currency

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

French soldiers suspended over Burkina child sex claims

1 July 2015, BBC

French troops have been accused of child abuse in CAR and Burkina Faso

France has suspended two of its soldiers over allegations they sexually abused children in Burkina Faso. One of the alleged victims was a five-year-old girl whose father found a camera containing images of his daughter being sexually abused, report AFP news agency.

It comes after another abuse scandal involving French soldiers.

A leaked UN report claimed 16 French peacekeepers abused children in the Central African Republic. “This is an army that confronts [such accusations] head on," the army's chief of staff, General Jean-Pierre Bosser told AFP news agency.

French military police are travelling to the country to investigate, alongside the local police. The French army has come under criticism for being slow to react to previous child abuse claims in Central African Republic.

There have been a number of sex scandals involving UN peacekeepers recently, with one UN report saying the peacekeepers regularly barter goods for sex with people.

About 3,000 French soldiers are stationed in five countries in the region - Mali, Chad, Mauritania and Niger as well as Burkina Faso - in an anti-terrorism operation and the UN currently has about 125,000 peacekeepers deployed in a number of countries around the world.

This is the state of the Mekong today which illustrates how countries are tied incontrovertibly together without an agreed agenda of resource management and lack of adequate dialog to form a comprehensive strategy for solutions:

Climate Change: Mekong Delta heads for troubled waters

BBC World Service, Vietnam

19 October 2015

Lush greenery in the lower Mekong region sprawls as far as the eye can see, an illustration of just how fertile the delta is. The endless green fields scored by the river's nine tributaries, which the Vietnamese call "Nine Dragons", explain why this area is one of the world's major food baskets. It houses the richest inland fishery and accounts for more than a fifth of the world's rice exports, although looks can be deceptive. Encroaching sea water from the south, a proliferation of hydro dams in the north and large-scale sand mining are endangering the delta, officials warn. As a result, an alarming 500 hectares (5 km2) of land is being lost to soil erosion every year, they say.
"The sea level rise is bringing up water so fast that our defences against it have failed," said Ky Quang Vinh, director of the Climate Change Coordination Office, a government agency in Vietnam's Can Tho, the most populous city in Mekong. "We've stopped growing mangrove trees on the coast because they only grow if the sea level rise stays below 1.6mm (0.06in) a year, and our work shows that in Vietnam it's going up by 5mm (0.2in)." "Several of our sea dykes have collapsed too."

Unstoppable sea water

As inland river water gets saltier, rice farmers across the lower Mekong delta are responding by switching to shrimp farming or growing reeds. Salt water has been found 60km (37.3 miles) inland.

According to the Southern Irrigation Research Institute, saltwater intrusion destroyed more than 6,000 hectares (60 sq km) of rice field last year. "Nearly half the delta population now has no access to fresh water and that's serious," says Le Anh Tuan, deputy director of the Research Institute for Climate Change. Scientists at the Mekong River Commission (MRC), an intergovernmental body, also warn that if the sea level

continues to rise at its projected rate of around one metre by the end of the century, nearly 40% of the delta will be wiped out. **The MRC covers four countries in the lower Mekong region: Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.**

Runaway dams

In the north, it is the pace of dam expansion that is causing most concern.
Several dams upstream are already accused of disturbing the ecology of the river, which stretches nearly 5,000 km (8,047 miles) from Tibet in China to the sea. According to International Rivers (IR), an organisation working on trans-boundary rivers, China has built six "mega dams" on the river and is planning another 14 over the next 10 years. "China's dam construction on the Upper Mekong has already had an impact downstream, especially along the Thai-Lao border where communities have suffered declining fisheries and changing water levels that are seriously affecting their livelihoods," the IR says in one report.

"By changing the river's hydrology, blocking fish migration and affecting the river's ecology, the construction of dams on the Lower Mekong will have repercussions throughout the basin."

Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam are planning to follow China's lead by building a dozen more dams on the lower Mekong. The Don Sahong hydro dam project in Laos is especially controversial in Cambodia and Vietnam, the two countries at the basin's southernmost tip.

There is also evidence that new dams retain vital nutrient-rich sediments which replenish the river bed and which marine life depends on to survive. According to the Mekong River Commission, roughly 85 million fewer tonnes a year of pebbles, boulders and sand are deposited in the river today than in 1992, mainly due to the construction of hydropower dams and reservoirs upstream." Less water and sediment from the north mean more saline intrusion from the sea in the south and more losses for the delta and its

inhabitants," says La So Sinh of the Vietnamese government's natural resources and environment monitoring agency. Even though the MRC coordinates water resources development between its member countries in the Mekong basin, critics say it is not doing enough to resolve dam disputes and their consequences.

Heads in the sand

There is a third disturbing development: the tens of millions of cubic metres a year of sand being mined from the lower Mekong river that flows through Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. A World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) study suggests most extractions are happening in Cambodia and Vietnam. "In the Vietnamese part of the delta, over 150 sand mines, spread across 8,000 hectares (80 sq km) of the river's surface, have been licensed by 13 Mekong Delta provinces," it says.

"One billion cubic metres (35.3 billion cubic feet) of sand would be needed by 2020 to fulfil the demand for construction materials in the Mekong Delta region." Environmental campaigners in Vietnam say the government is aware of the ecological cost of allowing the mining but does not act. "It cannot ask local authorities to withdraw licenses because private companies will then demand compensation," says Duong Van Tho from the Vietnam Mining Coalition.

There is a further risk. "Some parts of the river within our territory are just five metres (16.4 feet) deep, so big ships just can't sail through them," says Phan Thanh Tien, general director of the Cai Cui port in the lower Mekong. "But to expand our navigation capacity here and abroad, our only option is to dredge the river bed."

With both government agencies and private companies involved in dredging, riverside communities are left feeling more vulnerable. "After such dredging, big ships have started entering smaller tributaries and canals, which causes big waves of water that break our embankments and flood our homes," says An Binh's community leader Pham Vam Xuong. Experts say erratic rainfall patterns have made floods worse during the wet

season. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has long warned that the Mekong delta will feel the effects of climate change.

Its latest assessment report says: "National climate change adaptation plans have been formulated in all four Lower Mekong Basin countries, but trans-boundary adaptation planning across these countries does not exist."

Just when they could have joined forces to combat climate change, experts say, the countries in this region are embroiled in dam development disputes. And the deeper their differences, the bigger the fears for the delta become.

Perhaps the legacy from fifty years ago has largely healed even if not quite entirely, as it had no other choice but to let fresh flowers grow as the points of thorns dull, yet the memories of the Vietnam War will certainly dwell riverside with generations not to be forgotten anytime soon, just as the Mekong's kindred spirit in the Mississippi still winds its long tale whispering and hinting of the lasting exploitation and suffering 'sold down river' of generations with patent inequality and exploitation of the sons and daughters of chained immigrants to this today, cutting across the continent as it spills into the oil-slicked Gulf with a coastline also rapidly eroding into the sea directly on the sticky Agonic Line. Perhaps this is fitting as both rivers hold hands and share a common legacy of French exploration and exploitation on great continents larger than Europe; this legacy is bonded and forged in blood with distinctively wayward and cruel policies of American intervention after French resignation for differing reasons of expansion in North America and later in Asia. The costs of war in Southeast Asia were high and dubious at best. America was funding the French for 80% of the cost of holding their former colonies (often not remarked to keep up appearances of national solvency after WWII) which eventually sullied the reputations of both nations with defeats; France and America can sit down and break bread all these years later and know that the will of the people with bamboo bridges and borrowed rifles proved ultimately more powerful than bigger bombs from conventional armies dropped from bigger jets. As

well, the will of the people putting their lives on the line in their own country for equal rights a hundred years after the Civil War have undeniably made gains in America, though the struggle very much continues as events again this year have illuminated. As I heard a white commentator say a few months ago, nobody white getting pulled over by the police says to themselves they wish they were black. This fact is not just true in America but in Europe and Latin America. We are often treated marginally with blatant forms of parasitic drag to enter and flow in the mainstream in our own countries. This is a bitter reality with double-standards rife economically, politically with judicious consequences. A few token successes does not negate the general impoverishment and despair of the black masses. We Americans have an imperfect country with an imperfect past but as Naipaul reminds us, as with the Congo, there is a bend in the river ahead. America has no option but to boldly prepare for changes as the demographics under Stars and Stripes will continue to blend in color; clinging to obsolete values imperils the nation categorically for future generations. VC when I was a boy meant Viet Cong, now it's short for venture capitalist in current lexicon. Change is the one true constant not be shunned but to be willfully embraced.

The new challenges of the Mekong are born for the pragmatic need for more energy to power market oriented economies looking towards the future, which now puts more stress on the river's ecosystem impacted from global warming, a generation not threatened by the deafening destruction of bombers but by rival neighbors entrenched and competing for power, real and not politically theoretical. Market shift.

…The years of relentless American bombing shaped the attitudes of the communist victors and once the war was finally over in 1975 they insisted on punishment for those they had defeated. And, as we shall see, the Lao royal family was no exception.

It was a time when men were brutal, like wild animals.
Interview with a Cambodian refugee; Sa Keo camp, Thailand. 1980.

- Milton Osborne
The Mekong

It was a time when police officers were savage on American streets, much like wild animals, driven with a peculiar thrill to kill.

Interview with an African-American citizen who exports exceptional wine from the Golden State; 1st class per nation's passport, 3rd class in reality in aisle seat, Row 52 with tepid *bœuf à la Bourguignonne* with cheap Shiraz, 5 hours until landing over Pacific watching Johnny Depp in "Black Mass". 2015.

- Anon.

Only a few months after this Benjamin died, way out in the swamp, crushed beneath a gigantic bald cypress just as he was engaged in brandy-befuddled remonstrance with two black timber hands. The Negroes later claimed that they had tried to warn of the great tree toppling at their master's back, but their gesticulations and whispers had been ignored, and they themselves had skipped lightly way as the monster crashed down upon poor drunken Benjamin. Certainly from the rate at which Benjamin had begun to stow away liquor, the story seemed true enough. Among the Negroes for years after there were dark hints, barely spoken, of foul play – but for myself I doubted it. Slaves have put up with far meaner owners than Benjamin.

Anyway, whatever final constraints Marse Samuel may have felt about continuing my education were removed by his brother's passing. Beyond doubt Benjamin would never have been a cruel master, a nigger-breaker. But if Benjamin's death brought no rejoicing among the Negroes, it would not be accurate either to say that any were plunged into mourning. Even the dumbest slave shelling corn down in the most rundown and ramshackle cabin had gotten wind of at least the general drift of Marse Samuel's charitable notions, and they all knew they had passed into more promising hands; so on the day of Benjamin's funeral, as the scores of humble darkies gathered with sorrowing downcast looks behind the big house and the more musically inclined lifted their voices in tender lament-

"O my massah's gone! massah's gone!
My massah's gone to heaven, my Lord!
I can't stay behind!"

- the insincerity of their simple words was as plain as the difference between gold and brass…

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

This is a fact known but I suspect not highlighted properly to American history students presently (most certainly not in my youth) because it frays the hypothetically enriching idea of an equal fabric of norms in our society:

The American landed class were making the Constitution and laws; poor whites drag on their coattails and delude themselves to think that just because they could be spectators in Georgia at Augusta holding parasols and relieving themselves at 'Whites Only' outhouses behind the 19th Hole, that they too could be admitted to the same oak-walled clubhouse and sit where the cake gets truly cut, at the Masters. There were treats and then there were trash in a timocracy-plantocracy which is

probably what the vast majority of whites are averse to grapple and come to terms with since this legacy is indeed slimy and slippery; the litmus test was not about race but about equity and social standing. Your measure of equity and education would correspond to your strata in society. Just being white in a state did not equate to owning an estate as gentry. People- meaning whites especially – often delude themselves to believe what they prefer about America's past and not take a hard look when facts bubble up and appear inconvenient to what one wishes to believe. Between a choice between lies and truths, far too many welcome the lies to sit down and make themselves comfortable and keep truths outside in the cold'

> I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America
> and to the republic for which it stands,
> one nation under God,
> indivisible,
> with liberty and justice for *all.*

There is not one American adult who genuinely believes in this allegiance in its entirety. It is an ideal of our potential but we are far from even being close to reaching it. It states what we should be and painfully illuminates what we are presently not as a nation. Be politically connected, with expensive attorneys from major law firms, own property and have deep pockets and, importantly better white, you may find liberty and justice can start shaking hands in your favor amigos. All is a three-letter word that means a lot by being indiscriminatingly inclusive and it is simply not true, it is categorically false. If is said, "justice for some," it would be a lot more direct and truthful. We all say the allegiance for our same love and admiration of our country but ironically we know just how hollow those words really ring in the arena of reality if we weigh them on even scales. All is just said but it's not active, all is snoozing and drooling on itself in a Lazy Boy lounge chair in front of a football game with warm beer. If we care, we can have the gumption to give honest constructive criticism and ring the bells to wake up. I wish *all* would get out of its

slumber, wash-up and sit at the kitchen table and break bread with all of us. Many of us haven't met *all* yet, just heard about him!

Americans are taught that George Washington cut down the cherry tree and didn't lie to his father. His admission was a significant first step to being a great man of integrity so we can sleep at night feeling good about this Founding Father. Teachers in the past and even now would likely lose their paychecks if they taught the truth that he took pleasure as 'a strict disciplinarian' in Virginia handling his slaves with ordering whippings and punishments. Parents would complain because they were not plainly taught that and prefer to keep up the flag unsullied, don't rock the boat. That doesn't sell and give comfort. George in the collective imagination is better cutting down a cherry tree as an adolescent, heroically crossing the Delaware River, owning modest land holdings – enough for a nice patio, pool and grill - with briar pipe puffing Irish gardeners with flasks of Bushmills whiskey tending to flower beds and everybody knows their place with bagpipes at the end of another long productive day finished, of course, with a fine dinner with Lafayette with an enticing bottle from Bordeaux. That kind of rubbish would make us warm inside and is entirely absurd and categorically untrue. Much like children who believe Santa Claus will visit on Christmas Eve sliding jolly down the chimney at 180 kg and not ever getting soot on his white beard and red coat, Washington and friends are held or nearly so, as sacrosanct as much as Mao is revered for founding a new nation without an honest federal accounting of deplorable and misguided economic policies that did not require the intervention of foreign powers to weaken China, but being much more insidious, found inside its own borders as Hunan homegrown.

Likewise, Napoleon realized France was a vehicle for his greater glory. You too can be emperor if you control the arms! He spoke of the ideals of the Revolution but mandated Africans as still slaves in French Caribbean colonies and, like any good dictator, the press was shackled to print as the government often wished. Dissenting voices were quashed. He defeated himself by biting off more than he could chew. His life, completing the full circle, started on a island and ended on an

island after conquering and then losing his hold on continental powers- beaten largely but certainly not entirely by the tenacity of a stubborn island power. Somebody else would find the same fate when losing aircraft and submarines that allowed ship convoys to deliver much needed food and armaments to stage a comeback across the Channel in Normandy. This reminds us, as well, that many Japanese were surprised to learn the Pacific War was over because to the end they were told their military was making headway even under massive retreats and losses. In retrospect, when Iwo Jima was lost- not some far flung island in the Philippines or New Guinea- that should have been a time-out moment between somebody's ears in Tokyo that this wicked game had indeed reached its climax. We all need to be careful of who is telling us what and why to mold public opinion with **propaganda** to protect the posterities of - with dubious at best policies- agendas to lead us astray so we all end up losing.

This is one of the central mysteries of the Khmer Rouge period. **The generally accepted explanation** – that famine ensued because huge quantities of rice were exported to China to pay for arms shipments – **was concocted by Vietnamese propagandists for their own political purposes and replayed *unthinkingly* by Western academics.** It is wrong. China – alone with Vietnam itself, France, the United States and Thailand – shared moral responsibility for the tragedy that enveloped Cambodia….Contrary to the regime's hopes, there was no exportable grain for rice sold to Madagascar, Senegal and Singapore…Apart from rubber, wood and ingredients for traditional medicines, no other natural produce was exported either. Singapore offered to buy processed fish from the Tonle Sap, but the deal fell through after the Cambodians pleaded 'problems with logistics'.

The truth lay elsewhere.

The root of the problem was that the co-operatives produced less than the regime and most outside observers believed. This was, in part, because the younger and stronger men

and women spent much of the year in mobile brigades building irrigation works rather than tending their fields…

What is sure us that many rural cadres, fearing punishment if they admitted low yields, claimed to have fulfilled or over-fulfilled the three-tons per hectare target…the inevitable result was that rice poured out of the countryside into the state granaries in the towns, leaving starvation rations for perhaps 40 percent of the rural population.

US officials claimed that the final assault on the Cambodian capital was spearheaded by regular Vietnamese units backed by heavy artillery, but like much else the Americans said at the time, this was false. No Vietnamese main-force unit had fought in Cambodia since 1973. The US dropped more than 500,000 tons of bombs on Cambodia resistance bases and had spent hundreds of millions of dollars propping up the corrupt and incompetent anti-communist regime of Marshal Lon Nol, who had seized power from the country's hereditary ruler, Prince Sihanouk. The Khmer Rouges told themselves proudly that their ill-educated peasant troops had defeated all that the mightiest military power on earth had been able to throw in their direction.

The last thing Hanoi wanted was for the Cambodians to win first. **Far from helping, as the Americans claimed, they dragged their feet.** Khmer Rouge officials complained about Hanoi's miserliness in sharing munitions. Much later the Vietnamese themselves confirmed this...

- Philip Short Pol Pot

With Cruz, They'd Lose
The Economist, Lexington pg. 28
28 November 2015

Ted Cruz, a firebrand Republican, peddles a self-serving myth about presidential contests

The presidential candidate who has most harmed American politics this year is Donald Trump, a bully who has prospered by inciting rage. Yet from the narrower perspective of the Republican Party, the most dangerous candidate of the 2016 pack may be Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, who is rising in the polls by **telling conservative activists of a seductive misleading story about how their party wins elections.**

Since launching his presidential run, the 44-year-old Texan has built his campaign around a simple pitch: assuring the most conservative third of the Republican electorate, from born-again Christian voters to hardline members of the Tea Party, that they form a natural majority of the conservative movement, and indeed would decide general elections if they would only turnout and vote. In his telling, this stirring truth frightens a cowardly Republican establishment in Washington, which urges conservatives to run to the middle as "Democrats-lite"- whereupon, Mr. Cruz argues, "We get whipped." By way of proof, the first term senator informs Republican crowds that in 2012, when the party nominated Mitt Romney, roughly half of all born-again Christian voters and millions of blue-collar conservatives stayed home….

…Prayerful Republicans have won Iowa in the past and faded soon afterwards, it is true. But Mr. Cruz sees openings. **The 2016 presidential primary calendar is front loaded with conservative, pious states, many in the South, allowing Cruz strategists to dream of swiftly dominating the "very conservative" lane of the race, while establishment rivals squabble among themselves.** As Mr. Trump's campaign has taken a more thuggish turn, Mr. Cruz has gingerly distanced

himself, saying that Republican candidates should remember that "tone matters." What Mr. Cruz will never do is criticize Mr. Trump's angriest supporters, for he hopes to

inherit them one day. Instead he presents himself as angry America's champion in Washington. He calls Barack Obama "an apologist for radical Islamic terrorism", and has challenged the president to debate the wisdom of admitting Syrian Muslim refugees to America, a plan that Mr. Cruz calls "lunacy".

…On paper, Mr. Cruz makes an unlikely warrior against elitism. Before entering Texas politics, he as a debating champion at Princeton and a star student at Harvard Law School, later securing a high-flying post as a clerk at the Supreme Court….The praise Mr. Cruz a "fighter" who battled Democrats and also his own party leaders in Congress, notably when he forced a government shutdown in 2013 in what he called a bid to derail Obamacare. *Fans do not care that other Republican senators angrily call the shutdown a doomed scheme whose purpose was to cast Mr. Cruz as a grassroots hero.* To the grassroots, being disliked in Washington in a character reference.

Remember Barry Goldwater? He lost 44 states

Alas for Cruz fans, the senator's story about a Republican voter strike in 2013 does not add up. Turnout fell among lots groups in 2012, some of them Obama-friendly. Moreover, turnout actually rose in some of the most closely-fought states. Voting rates also remained pretty healthy among white Protestant evangelicals, who made up one in four of all voters according to exit polls, though they account for only 19% of the population. Conservative Cruz fans may not care, for now. His fable about how elections are won flatters them, after all. As Mr. Cruz beamed in Des Moines: "The men and women in this room scare the living daylights out of Washington." **But it is a fable: no Republican has won the White House without hefty moderate support. Mr. Cruz is a clever and eloquent man. All the more reason to beware of him.**

This Land is Our Land
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A century ago many Americans fretted about a minority in their midst, which reputedly owed its first loyalty to an obscurantist faith, and which in league with foreign conspirators, was poised to destabilize the country. In particular they suspected- as some Republican presidential candidates imply today- that houses of worship had become dens of sedition and vice. So it was that several states passed "convent-inspection" laws, to help uncover stashes of arms supposedly hidden in nunneries by Catholic traitors (as well as maidens immured against their will). Donald Trump, eat your heart out.

Actually Mr. Trump's plans for monitoring mosques are not the most egregious aspect of his anti-Muslim platform: the authorities of many mosques, having no wish to harbor extremists, already voluntarily liaise with the security services. Even uglier was the stampede, of governors and congressmen as well as presidential candidates, to insist that Barack Obama abjure his (rather paltry) plan to take in some 10,000 Syrian refugees next year. Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz advocated the selective admission of Christian Syrians; Ben Carson compared dangerous refugees to rabid dogs. **The fact that European passport-holders pose a much greater threat than fleeing Syrians barely disturbed this mean spirited chorus.**

After the atrocities in Paris, Muslims have replaced the much-maligned Mexicans as the main object of nativist ire. Alas, the rhetorical potential of hypothetical Syrians was quickly exhausted; some candidates soon progressed from the Muslims they want to keep out to those already in America. Mr. Trump pledges to deport the few Syrian refugees who have come (along with 11m undocumented migrants). He revived the discredited canard that thousands of Arabs in New Jersey celebrated the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001. Worst of all, perhaps, he entertained the idea of a register of American Muslims, a prospect at which even Mr. Cruz balked. He later sought to finesse that, perhaps in a characteristic confusion about his own policies, maybe in confidence

that his intended audience had already heard him. Of course, on Muslims, both he and Dr. Carson seemed to suggest that no Muslim should become president; Mr. Trump failed to object when a questioner suggested America "get rid" of all of them.

These men do not speak for all Americans; but- not surprisingly, in the wake of the September 11th attacks- polls suggest their remarks do have a constituency and their bilious contest a prize. Muslims are the least-popular religious group in America, according to the Pew Research Centre. They are especially unloved among Republicans, who also tend to be most disenchanted with Barack Obama's approach to counterterrorism. Sometimes, though, Mr. Trump seems to be peddling something darker than anti-terror zeal. His strongman shtick, enthusiasm for waterboarding and nonchalance of protester at a recent rally ("Maybe he should have been roughed up" - black male) give off an incipient whiff of a kind of bouffant fascism.

To Americans alarmed by this intolerant turn, it may be some consolation to know that their country has taken and survived them before. **For much of America's history, Catholics were among the main targets of bigotry, often depicted as clannish, superstitious, and loyal to a foreign power.** That antipathy dated to colonial times, when one popular children's game was called "Break the pope's neck"; Guy Fawkes Night was widely celebrated until the revolution. Anti-Catholic agitation was exacerbated in the mid-19th century by escapees from Ireland's potato famine and arrival of Catholics from Germany. **It manifested itself in the Know-Nothings, a secret society-cum-political movement, and in church burnings and deadly riots. In California there was similar unease about the influx of Chinese.**

Anti-papist feeling swelled again in the hardscrabble 1890s, this time directed in part at Italians and Slavs. Wayne Flynt, a historian at Auburn University, cites the lurid case of Sidney Catts, a Baptist minister from Alabama who became an insurance salesman in Florida and in 1917 – on the back his fearmongering – the state's governor. Catts claimed Catholics were storing arms in a Tampa cathedral' there whispers of a papal invasion, followed by the construction of a new Vatican in Palm Beach. Convents were scrutinized;

anti-Catholic fraternities abounded. One such was consecrated precisely 100 years ago, on November 23rd 1915, when a giant cross as burned on a mountain outside Atlanta and, **after a hiatus since Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan was reborn.**

The Klan's victims also included Jews, who, while never as reviled as American Catholics have been, were the subject of twin prejudices in the 1920s and 1930s. As Hasia Diner of New York University puts it, the upper stratum of society feared the Jews "were worming their way into elite institutions", while some ordinary folk thought them "bent of undermining small-town simplicity". Among the latter camp's champions was Henry Ford, who reproduced the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in his Dearborn Independent, which was stocked in all his car showrooms**. Jews were held to have caused the Wall Street crash and the first world war, and, as another war loomed, were allegedly bent on dragging America into it.**

These are disparate incidents, but they suggest some patterns. One common circumstance is economic pain, whether that involves immigrants stealing jobs and resources or globalization exporting them**. Another is anxiety over national security, as in the interning of Japanese-Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the anti-communist witch hunts of the cold war.***

* The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America by Wm. Manchester

A third is racial and religious unease. All these neuroses are combustibly combined in today's post-recession panic about Muslims and Islamic State.

Get thee to a nunnery

America is by no means the only Western democracy prone to spasms of nativism. Nor is it the only country liable to forget – and so repeat – its misjudgments of earlier newcomers: look at Britain's Jews and Ugandan Asians, both resented when they landed but now extolled as model minorities. Established immigrant communities can be uncharitable to later groups elsewhere , too. But there is a special disjuncture between

America's xenophobia and its lofty ideals, and sometimes (as in the past few weeks) a distinct ferocity in the way it is expressed, amplified as it is by the country's competitive politics and First Amendment outspokenness.

At the bottom, the phenomenon has peculiarly American causes, sufficiently entrenched to be immune to the tightening of immigration rules since the 1920s or the varying moral claims of importunate foreigners: 61% of Americans, for example, opposed taking in Jewish children in 1939, slightly more than opposed admitting Syrian refugees now. One is the hope and conviction that the whole point of America is to protect its citizens, fortress-like, from perils and miscreants across the seas. Another is the slow disconcerting evolution to a more secular, patchwork nation.

Historians also speculate that some Americans intermittent hostility to outsiders is fundamentally religious in another way: a transmutation of a hunch that the devil walks among them, and that the faithful must be ever vigilant for his guises. That, on the other hand, is unlikely to apply to **Mr. Trump, whose acquaintance with Christianity seems almost as thin as his understanding of Islam.**

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…Publishing under the name of Sax Rohmer, Ward introduced the arch-villain, Dr. Fu Manchu. The 'slit-eyed doctor' embodied all the evils the public saw in opium and orientals. Set on extinguishing the white race and dominating the world he uses weapons ranging from missiles to animal magnetism but his main strength lies in opium. He himself, 'like most Orientals,' consumes the drug with impunity but he uses it with unequalled guile to enervate his enemies. Not, as an eminent physician was heard to comment, an ornament to our profession…

The Yellow Peril sold newspapers too. The Chinese population of London was only about 1,300 in 1910, and just 3,000 in 1921, **minuscule compared to that of even San Francisco or even Paris (where students at the Sorbonne included Mao Zedong, Chou En-lai and Ho Chi Minh)** but that was enough to inspire a stream of

first hand reports. The accounts 'from life' of enslaved white girls in the grip of yellow fiends and their drug would make a modern tabloid newshound blush.

The phobias and horror stories may have been reinforced by a lingering feeling of guilt. For about ten years after 1870 the Anglo-Oriental Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade published a speciously titled journal, Friend of China, which combined pseudo-Christian breast-beating with horrific stories illustrating the 'the vengenance' of the Chinaman descending on and corrupting white society. One of the Society's stalwarts, the Rev. George Piercy warned against any sense of 'false security':

Those who have been claiming justice for China for the opium traffic at the hands of our government forget about the consequences of the supposedly retributive action…What could all this grow to but the plague spreading and attacking our vitals?...It begins with the Chinese in our midst but does not end with them.

In the United Sates the Hearst newspaper syndicate fanned the flames of hatred. On circumstance helped. In 1874 America toppled into an economic recession. The cause was, as usual, the greed of entrepreneurs in New York, Boston and Chicago. They themselves quickly recovered; but to ordinary Americans the temporary end of prosperity- they did not know that it would be temporary- was a seismic experience. **During the despairing 1870s, as unemployment rose, it became accepted that the Yellow Peril not only corrupted white women but also robbed white men of their jobs.** The charge contained a grain of truth. Building the Transcontinental Railways only coolies would risk spanning yawning ravines with heavy steel girders, blow tunnels in the rocks with cheap and untested explosives, trudge over scorching salt flat, face Indians trying to defend their land and be stung and eaten by despoiled wildlife. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt could not have found white workers to do these jobs, let alone paid them the coolie wages which made his obscene fortune. Opium was the key to the bargain. The Chinese addicts would do anything so long as the drug was provided. Even so, the cost in lives rain into tens of thousands. Of the 800

Chinese shipped in to work on the trans-isthmus Panama railway 468 committed suicide within three days of arrival. But to the Yellow-Peril press truth and facts mattered little:

Most of us vaguely (intoned a typical rant) about the colonly of 'Celestials' who cluster about the lower end of our wonderful Bowery, but there are not many who know of the hundreds of American girls who are drawing into it each year from the tenement houses and cigar factories to become associates and then slaves of the Mongolian. It is opium which captures the women and keeps them in slavery.

And if the fiend could go after white women, what could keep him from seducing the white man's children?

In our great city of San Francisco, young boys, yes, and little girls, with look of cunning old men and women, sneak out of the vile alleys of the Chinese quarter into our beautiful sunshine and refreshing sea-breeze, with expressions of vice, duplicity and greed only to corrupt out own children. They carry the curse of China, opium as their weapon. They and there poison must be rooted out before they will decimate our own youth and emasculate the coming generation of Americans.

In times of economic stress any garbage is believed; and the gutter press was not the only organ to disseminate it. The labour leader, Samuel Gompers, a European immigrant still revered for his commitment to the American working man and woman, claimed to have found Chinese laundries in the California 'pollulating' with white orphans and kidnap victims, tiny lost souls… forced to yield up their virgin bodies to maniacal yellow captors…What other crimes are committed in these dark fetid place when these little innocent victims of Chinaman's wiles were under the influence o the drug opium is too horrible to imagine. There are hundreds, aye thousands, of our American girls and boys who have acquired this deathly habit and are doomed, hopelessly doomed, beyond redemption.

And a well-respected San Francisco doctor, Winslow Anderson, wrote:

It is a sickening sight…young white girls…lying undressed or half dressed on the floor or on couches, smoking with their Oriental 'lovers,' men and women, in these Chinese smoking houses.

…Hamilton (known to all as Ham) Wright was a medical graduate of McGill University, handsome, clever, and a liar of the dangerous 'transparently honest' variety. Even when what he said was patently contradicted by the facts, it was hard not to believe him. His early researches on the bacterial origin of beriberi- a disease caused by vitamin B_1 deficiency – were widely acclaimed but quickly disproved. He found a new mission as the standard bearer of the worldwide war on opium. In this role he became brash and bullying, two exemplary attributes in the Theodore Roosevelt entourage. The President himself became convinced that here was a man who knew the answers to the drug problem; and since most foreign problems had a drug dimension, this was a useful expertise. **Foreigners by contrast found the doctor arrogant, patronizing and untrustworthy, a dislike which the doctor reciprocated. With the exception of the Chinese whom he perceived as America's backward but natural allies, he regarded all non-white Americans as belonging to a lower evolutionary order.**

He was a gifted speech-maker though his message to civic political, religious and trade audiences varied little. First came the drug itself. The New York Time journalist E. Marshall reported one such speech. Did Wright's audience realize that 'of all the nations is the world the United States consumed the most habit-forming drugs per capita…Did they realize that opium, the most pernicious drug known to humanity, is surrounded in this country with fewer safeguards than any other nation in Europe fences it in with'? Both statements were untrue but few were inclined to check. Then came the race card, steadily rising in intensity: '**Did his audience know that a fact-increasing number of cases are being reported of Negroes in the South becoming addicted both to opium and to a new form of vice…coke sniffing…which irresistibly**

compels them to rape white women…What makes the menace even more horrible is the fact that the drugs actually improved their marksmanship.'

...He had considerable gift of persuasion. In 1874 he successfully lobbied Congress to pass 'Comstock's Law' making he delivery or transporation of 'obscene, lewd or lascivious material…any method or information pertaining to birth control' and 'all kinds of inebriating substances' illegal. He was soon loathed by civil liberties organizations but passionately supported by religious fundamentalists of the more rabid kind. A master of the political manoeuvre, with the help of church groups he was made a Special Agent of the United States Postal Service with police powers including the right to carry and use arms. He now travelled wherever he wished and could apprehend smut-mongers and arrest chemists and doctors suspected in dealing in drugs. Although he is remembered today mainly as a pursuer of obsence publications, including anatomical atlases and any art book featuring nudes, and as the self-styled 'weeder in God's garden', opium and other drugs in fact came highest on his list of target….

His campaign as God's champion drove at least fifteen people to suicide an the he professed to be 'mighty jolly' whenever that happened. An old lady in Greenwich Village whom he had twice checked into the Tombs Prison for publishing her opium inspired trysts with the Archangel Michael heard that he was going for a third warrant and out her head into the gas oven. This was another 'good day' to him but the incident provoked critical headlines and for a time donations to his anti-vice campaign declined. But these were temporary setbacks. He rarely bothered to prosecute pharmacists suspected of stocking opium, morphine, contraceptives or abortifacients, preferring to go in with an axe and destroying the premises himself. **He became the self-styled 'Terror of Opium Dens,' demolishing buildings which he suspected because he had seen 'shifty-looking Chinks' entering.** He claimed that through his campaigns he was responsible for the destruction of 15 metric tons of books, 284,000 plates of obscene material, four million pictures and uncounted bottles of opium and morphine He also took credit for 4,000 arrests and some 500 convictions.

…On the contrary. The number of users, addicts, pushers and dealers continued to rise…..

- Thomas Dormandy
  Opium, Reality's Dark Dream

Certain groups had special difficulty in accommodating to the new regime. As in Lon Nol's time, **Christians were suspected of being Vietnamese**. **Sino-Khmers were forbidden to speak Chinese,** on the grounds that Khmer, or Kampuchean as it was now termed, was the single national language. **The Chams, already under suspicion during the civil war, had the worst of all worlds, since their history, religion (Muslim), and culture made them a people apart.** The Khmers looked down on them because their kingdom, Champa, had been overrun by the Vietnamese in the fifteenth century, an event constantly cited as a warning of Cambodia's fate if its resolve weakened. Moreover, the fact that they lived and intermarried in self-contained communities, often having little contact with other Cambodians, was a security concern…**the dispersal of the 150,000 Chams in the Eastern Zone to villages in the North and Northwest became established policy.**

- Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Suddenly I became aware of a commotion- laughter and shouts from a cluster of white men behind the blacksmith's stable perhaps fifty yards away across the road. The bare earthen plot at the rear of the stable was the Saturday gathering place for the poor whites of the county just as the market gallery had become the social focus for the Negroes. These white idlers were the rogues and dregs of the community: penniless drunks and cripples, scroungers, handymen, ex-overseers, vagabonds from North Carolina, harelipped roustabouts, squatters on pineland barrens, incorrigible loafers, cretins, rapscallions, and dimwits of very description, they made my present owner by

comparison appear to possess the wisdom and dignity of King Salomon. There by the stable each Saturday with straw hat and cheap denim overalls they gathered in a shiftless mob, cadging from each other quarter-plugs of chewing tobacco or snorts of rotgut brandy, palavering endlessly (like Negroes) about pussy and cooze, scheming out ways to make a dishonest half-dollar, tormenting stray cats and dogs, and allowing the slaves from their market promontory a bracing glimpse of white men worse off – in certain respects at least – than themselves. Now when I looked up to find the source of the disturbance among them I saw that they had assembled in a rough circle. In the midst of the circle, perched upon a horse, was the squat, hunched form of Nathaniel Francis, roaring drunk, his round face besotted with swollen pleasure as he gazed down at something taking place on the ground. I was only mildly curious, thinking at first that it was a white man's wrestling match or drunken fistfight: hardly a Saturday passed without one or the other. But through the baggy pants' leg of one of the bystanders I saw what appeared to be two Negroes moving about, engaged in doing what I could not tell. Cackles of glee went up from the crowd, wild hoots and cries. They seemed to be egging the Negroes on, and Francis drunk in the saddle caused the horse to stamp and prance at the space within the encircling mob, raising an umbrella of dust. Hark had risen to his feet to gawk and I told him that he had better go find out what was happening; he moved slowly off.

After a minute or so Hark came back to the gallery, and the sheepish half-smile on his face- I will never forget that expression, its mixed quality of humour and gentle bewilderment- filled me with a sad foreboding, as if I had known, sensed what we was going to say the instant before his mouth opened to say it.

"Old Francis he puttin' on a show fo' dem white trash," he proclaimed, loud enough for most all of the other Negroes to hear. "He drunker dan a scritch owl and he makin' dem two niggers Will and Sam fight each other. Don't neither of 'em want to fight but ev'time one of 'em draw back and whop de other, old Francis he give dat nigger a stroke wid his whip. So dem niggers dey got to fight and Sam he done raised a bleedin' whelp on Will's face and Will I do believe he done broke off one of Sam's front teeth. Hit sho is some kind of cock fight."

- William Styron
The Confessions of Nat Turner

The real George Washington doesn't feed into our collective psyche for a high-minded resolve and temperament as characteristics requisite of a great leader. His legacy has been systematically sanitized and deodorized, contrived and gussied up for mass marketing and easy consumption (thank you, Cornel West). America clings to the bright well-lit fast food version of George and just has a tough time sitting down to break multi-grain bread over the real man and his times on a split-log table with a tallow candle. Slavery gets in the way of the notion of national hero so its too often been buried and sneered upon by anyone who brings the messy topic up. The nation's capital, the District of Columbia, is garlanded his name as well as the Northwest Pacific state he never once set foot on. His intelligence, ambition, ruthlessness and gritty determination were required to beat the British, tested even after experiencing his army's first defeats, but those switches were not magically turned off in tending to his own properties. This was a man given to giving orders in battlefields and in his own fields. He was a man of action who took direct action. When it comes to light the vast acreage of land Washington owned personally, it simply defaults as being de rigueur to have many African slaves working his lands in the prevailing norms of Virginia in his time. We can own and deal with this fact, not shy away from it, as has been so often the case.

Americans especially need to dispel the simplistic myths about Washington and the other Founding Fathers in reverence as the historical cherry-picking of what is good is to be promoted, and the conveniently bad, which has fallen out of fashion with enlightened ethics, to be subdued as though skeletons pushed into the back of a closet, does the national memory a disservice. As I learned many years ago, 'fish come with bones, and land comes with stones.' I am certain that if we are a mature nation, we can have the backbone to deal with inconveniences of our collective past intelligently and boldly stride confidently into the future, breaking from holding

reverently onto obsolete values that lead us to our destruction. History serves us as a record of experiences that we can observe and realize what has worked and what has not, what are we are proud of and what we do most unfortunately regret. We can minimize future regrets by acknowledging past mistakes and not by rewriting history to whitewash facts for them to take on new shapes and reappear freshened up to our demise, old wine in new bottles. History is not boring but gives us insight and an advantage to weigh our best choices going forward to achieve optimum results with the most tact with a reliance on case studies. We need to be careful and indentify flags of conveniences in there varied forms as their nature is to thinly obscure what they are really about yet staying within the parameters of the law.

America's most insidious enemy we find historically is within but we conveniently focus beyond our borders at foreign powers as the priority for our wrath. The US needs to take a harder look at us, in our own house, not just give a passing glance to believe what we wish, as opposed to what honestly needs to be dealt with. The jihadist carnage in San Bernadino is deplorable and desolate of defense, doing the Muslim communities in America no favor in the least on the courts of the street, but worth pondering on how a couple could get their hands on so many guns and explosives so readily. What was on hand simply could not be construed as simple home defense. I got the gist it sounded like they were arming a platoon, and Muslim or not, some kind of flags of concern should have been raised with authorities by calibers and quantities being amassed. A laissez-faire approach of them being ardent collectors of sorts just seems both naïve and negligent. The crazed couple did not have to smuggle or import what they used for lethal terror. If that is the case, it implies anybody who drives a car could do the same random event which should be frightening on its own accord. Common sense in America should dictate that the notion of safe and sane should be put under a microscope as it seems as mercurial as an amoeba. However, the likelihood of innocent random fatalities from abroad, as in Paris, must pale in comparison to violent deaths domestically by count of civilian citizens by police. That rings less alarm bells and adds less drama since it's not as inflammatory than raging terrorist debacles abroad yet true. What should be

abnormal events are slipping into being routine, not at distant Timbuktu, but here at home directly under Old Glory.

How white Southerners can be proud of the heritage of the antebellum South and the era of Jim Crow is beyond my comprehension. Perhaps I take a longer view that every person on this planet is ultimately of African descent, it's just that some of us look it more than others after migrating and are the product of smaller gene pools, which is ultimately why each and every human should be worthy of decency and respect flatly irrespective of race. Science and knowing history can be very unsettling to what we would prefer to believe in the present. I've resigned myself to be boring that way without the drama of racism. Life is a lot more friendly and healthier this way. I am comfortable to know I have company that feels the same which strengthens my resolve that, perhaps most surprisingly, this time I could be right.

IV

STRAIGHT, NO CHASER

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

- William Shakespeare

Macbeth, Act V Scene 5

But as envoi to this chapter – which is, after all, about the romantic love for the ocean- I will offer up the words of one of the most remarkable transoceanic solitary sailors, the Frenchman Bernard Moitessier. The decision that lifted him into a different maritime realm from all of those others who have circumnavigated the world was one that he took in the far south Atlantic, during the race in 1968 that was won by Robin Knox-Johnston and in which Donald Crowhurst so tragically killed.

Moitessier was spotted passing the Falkland Islands, heading northbound, and fast. Fast enough, in fact, for it to be assumed that he would win. But then suddenly, and for no apparent reason connected to the race, he decided he would not continue north at all, but would turn due east, would pass out of the Atlantic Ocean altogether, and would head into the Indian Ocean for the second time. In due course he explained himself, in a letter squeezed into a can that he fired from a slingshot toward a passing merchantman:

My intention is to continue the voyage, still nonstop, toward the Pacific Islands, where there is plenty of sun and more peace than in Europe. Please do not think I am trying to break a record. "Record" is a very stupid word at sea. I am continuing nonstop because I am happy at sea, and perhaps because I want to save my soul.

He was later to write his testament, an ode to the sea as the center of his happiness. Within there is a paragraph that goes to the heart of his beliefs, and which are held by most who love the Atlantic Ocean, and all the other seas besides:

I am a citizen of the most beautiful nation on Earth. A nation who laws are harsh yet simple, a nation that never cheats, which is immense and without borders, where life is lived in the present. In this limitless nation, this nation of wind, light and peace, there is no other ruler besides the sea.

- Simon Winchester
  Atlantic

I'm outside with the shining sun waiting for the shuttle. I love the smell of jet fuel in the morning…

This city in many respects is the most honest city in America. Viva Las Vegas! It has no shame and puts it directly to your face that it is all about Mr. Dollar and always has been. He caters to the lowest common denominator which, we coolly observe, is not very high. You witness billion dollar mega-casinos with people begging on the sidewalks with cardboard signs across the street. It is all so wonderfully superficial and if you have money, you can literally have all that you want. With money you always have company, someone to talk you, which is why I get the impression lonely lost souls are pulled here by some energized magnet. This is a place where misfits can fit in. If management sees you are actively playing, everyone is polite and pleasant with complementary passes for restaurants and upgrades for rooms. Just keep playing because they'll get you in the end.

You have no restrictions with drinking at any hour; if you are a smoker, keep on smokin' inside. Pleasures are unabated which is why few can hate it. Las Vegas has no pretense to be a tech or academic powerhouse. It is not an open salon for philosophers to debate finer points of life but rather a whore's holiday to decide which arcade to get paid. Your worst avaricious you can now be at its best and be entirely socially acceptable. Dapper Dracula can let his fangs hang and Medusa can let her hair down. It's all good as long as you have a dollar, not in the distant past nor the near future, but in the present, in the now.

Other cities, towns and communities round out the sharp corners with no drinking, no gambling, no this, no that. But they all operate under restricted national registrations which convey security and wholesome sober clean park interests, not with the open registrations of Vegas. Vegas is about harboring tramp steamers and

paddlewheel river boats in the desert which, by definition, will always attract shady ships in the night. Bright lights and big city and all the joys that goes with it.

The cities where we live are Vegas too in that so much of it is motivated by the same common denominator, publically repressed but operating with the same principal: money. That is why people sell their souls to the Almighty Dollar. In the Bush Recession those who deluded themselves about their friends, communities and work associates learned a hard lesson that in the end, it boils down ultimately to Mr. Dollar. Green grass, blue pool homes and barbequing under blue skies were a financial fantasy for many until the rug of reality was pulled out under their feet and they landed flat on their backs. And like a tsunami with those walking on the beach and celebrating their good fortune of how much more sand they now have, the wave came crashing down upon them with a vengeance.

Those that operate with open registration regulations never once batted an eye because they have always known that this is how this game is truly played. They never allowed themselves to be fooled in the mirage. Markets go up and down, winnings are made and losses absorbed but the one constant in the eye of the hurricane has always been and will be about Mr. Dollar.

If you want to find the balance in your relationships, follow the money. Las Vegas is a microcosm of America and the world at large: much goes with money; however, woe to you soon without it. We have all heard of successful careers going sour and those who thought they had plenty of supportive friends can't find one when they need one. In Vegas, if you can find Mr. Dollar, you can soon find a caring friend. In fact, if you hit it big, you can charter a jet with your very own family whose names you need to learn!

To try to balance the budget, Sihanouk had granted, for an annual fee of 80 million francs – a huge sum at the time (1969), equivalent to a third of all Cambodia's foreign aid – licenses for two casinos. Financially they were an immense success. Socially they were a disaster. Phnom Penh was soon alive with stories of people committing suicide after losing their life-savings. Business activity slumped as factory owners, government officials, shopkeepers and laborers spent their days and nights courting ruin at the betting tables…it was the perfect symbol of the bankruptcy of the Sihanouk's regime.

-Philip Short Pol Pot: History of a Nightmare

Thank you Las Vegas for flying an honest flag free from all pretenses of grander aspirations to uplift the human experience. Beyond your many hollow and base amusements, your honesty is indeed your best quality. You don't give a damn about anything but the dollar and really don't pass judgment or pontificate about what is right or wrong. You give a straight deal because you cater to quenching appetites and pocketing the profits. Others pretend but they don't really care and put your same amusements on quaint side streets where you opt to be loud in the scorching desert and out in the open! Gods at Mt. Olympus may quake before your Mammon avarice and appetite for pleasures. You make it clear that it all comes down ultimately to cards & craps, laughs and cocktails, Chuck & chuckles, spills of dice and thrills o' vice.

I look forward to lining up in the casino's buffet line with all the rest of my long lost and even new found friends whilst I have money in my pocket. I was told the poached eggs and hash are so good that El Chapo might order a tunnel, even with a motorcycle and electrical lighting, dug directly from the casino's kitchen to the security shed in the parking lot, to smuggle them way down Mexico way. Will he meet his Waterloo after a brief exile and remarkable return to be placed eventually on a windy lonesome foggy rock? They might have new plans for Alcatraz we don't

know about just for him. Maybe he thought of that and already has a submarine ready under the bay. As said, there are those who always excel to reach the top of their game, irrespective of what exactly the game they do play.

Sail your best headings with current charts and may your flag proudly blow in the prevailing breezes of tolerance and compassion, never let them be wrecked on crags of unenlightened despair. Unless you are less than privileged as president or head of state, perhaps adhering to sticky facts will serve you well to exercise tactful judgment about yourself, others and surroundings. Know your current position, plot correctly your course in life being aware of external Variations and internal Deviations and keep a firm hand on the tiller– or in the air with your black mamba skin polished boots- ready on the rudder pedals, climbing high with clear skies… above it all.

May cases of wine and conversation prevail over bullet casings. Let there be bottles of cheer and not bombs of hate. I will leave you kind reader to now return to my beckoning decanter of aged Cognac reflecting the crackling fire and peppery dark maduro cigars to be unobstructed in my holiday delusions of being just a man momentarily, as I delight in listening to old friends of Chabrier, Ravel, Saint-Saens, Fauré and Debussy, as the world outside will soon remind me subtly or sometimes not, that I am more than just a man, but with a distinct caveat of being out of Africa as well with all the unbridled joys that go with it. My fine French friends simply never fail to somehow warm even the chilliest of souls and open the heart to the grandeur, the wonder of living - Gallic - of course.

Surely I come quickly…

Footsteps outside the door jar me from my reverie, I hear white men's voices. Again a lantern casts a bloom of light through the cell, but the half-dozen men go past with thumping boots and stop at Hark's door. I hear jingling keys and bolt slide back with a thud. I turn and see the outline of two men pushing the chair past my door. Its legs bump

and clatter on the plank floor, there is a heavy jolt as its arms strike against the doorjamb of Hark's cell. "Raise up," I hear one of the men say to Hark. "Raise your ass up, we got to rope you in." There is silence, then a creaking sound. I hear Hark begin to moan in pain. "Easy dar!" he cries out, gasping. "Easy!"

"Move his legs," I hear one of the white men order another.
"Grab him by the arms," says someone else.

Hark's voice becomes a wail of hurt and wild distress. The sound of bumping and shoving fills the air.

"Easy!" Hark cries out., sobbing.
"Push him down!" says a voice.

I find myself hammering at the walls. "Don't hurt him!" I rage. "Don't hurt him, you white sons of bitches! You've done hurt him enough! All his life! Now God damn you don't hurt him no more!"

Silence descends as the men cease talking. In a long drawn out breath Hark's wail dies away. Now I hear a hurried sound of snapping ropes as they tie him to the chair. Then the white men whisper and grunt while they strain beneath the weight of their burden and lift Hark out into the hallway. Shadows leap up and quiver in the lantern's brassy radiance. The white men shuffle in furious labor, gasping with the effort. Hark's bound and seated shape, like the silhouette of some marvelous black potentate born in stately procession toward his throne, passes slowly by my door. I reach out as if to touch him, feel nothing, clutch only a handful of air.

"Dis yere some way to go," I hear Hark say. "Good –bye ole Nat!" he calls.
"Good-bye, Hark," I whisper, "good-bye, good bye."

"Hit gwine be all right, Nat," he cries out to me, the voice fading. "Ev'hthin' gwine be all right! Dis yere ain't nothin', Nat, nothin' atall! Good-bye, old Nat good-bye!"

Good-bye, Hark, good-bye

- William Styron
  The Confessions of Nat Turner

Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"

Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the new-born king"

Christ, by highest heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel

Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King"

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings;
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth

Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the new-born king"

Wishing You and Yours a Safe Holiday Season

&

Warm Wishes for the Year to Come,

V

EPILOGUE

What's the Origin of the Term Hipster?
November 18, 2015
blog.dictionary.com/hipster

Hipsters have become simultaneous objects of ridicule and desire, associated with the new and in vogue, and also with an absurd form of consumerism. Why do we call them *hipsters*, and how did this word, born of jazz music in the early 1930s, make the transition to describe young men in skinny pants and classes on how to properly sharpen a pencil?

The earliest uses of *hipster* are often mixed with a very similar word, the *hepster*. *Hepster* began appearing in the late 1930s, and **primarily referred to a person who is knowledgeable about or interested in jazz**. Although the word was likely in spoken use before this, we can see it used in print as early as June 8, 1938, when *Variety* magazine published an article about **Cab Calloway**'s new book, which was referred to both as a Cat-ologue and a hepster's dictionary.

Later that year an article in the *New York Amsterdam News* referred to "Cab Calloway's Hipster's dictionary," although this was likely a typo, as the book in question did not have the word *hipster* in its title. By 1939 hipster was being used on its own, as seen in the African-American newspaper, *The New York Age*: "J. R. and G. G. at the party were coming on stronger than most hipsters…"

Part of the reason that *hipster* and *hepster* were interchangeable at the time is that they come from near-synonyms, *hep* and *hip*. Each of these words, which mean "in-the-know"

or “knowledgeable,” were in use since the beginning of the 20th century (*hep* since 1907, and ***hip*** since 1904).

Part of the reason that *hipster* and *hepster* were interchangeable at the time is that they come from near-synonyms, *hep* and *hip*. Each of these words, which mean **“in-the-know”** or “knowledgeable,” were in use since the beginning of the 20th century (*hep* since 1907, and *hip* since 1904).

Oddly enough, there was another sense of *hipster* that predated all of this. The word was used in the early 1930s to describe a dancer (the hip portion of the word referenced the movement of a person’s hips, rather than their cultural acumen). **Josephine Baker** was referred to as “Harlem’s banana-shaking hipster” in the Baltimore Afro-American in 1932, and in 1935 this publication wrote of dancer Willa Mae Lane as a “pretty hipster.”

In 1957 Norman Mailer published “The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster,” an essay on the adoption of black culture by white people. Whether the popularity of this piece shifted the meaning of the word is open to debate, but at this time hipster begins to be used considerably more often. **Some have speculated that *hipster* transitioned throughout the 1950s and 1960s to become *hippie*.**

In any event, the *hipster* never really went away, although use of the word waned. But *hipster* then experienced a resurgence at the dawn of the millennium, and beginning in the 21st century has become a sort of shorthand for ostentatiously fashionable youths. It is not entirely clear why, once it became common to refer to the folk with creative facial hair as *hipsters*, the word took on such a negative meaning. It seems to be an immutable truth that each new generation finds their elders to be unbearably stodgy, and each older generation finds their successors to be unreasonably self-absorbed. Perhaps the connotations of *hipster* are just a convenient way of expressing this.

French philosopher Andre Glucksmann dies at 78
10 November 2015, BBC

Andre Glucksmann, one of the most prominent figures in French philosophy, has died aged 78. An associate of Jean-Paul Sartre, he helped provide the intellectual underpinning for the student and worker revolts of May 1968.

He was originally seen as a Maoist but changed his views when he discovered the reality of totalitarianism. He persuaded Sartre to back his call to help boat people fleeing the communist regime in Vietnam in 1979.

"My first and best friend is no more," his son Raphael wrote on Tuesday. "I had the incredible luck to know, laugh, debate, travel, play - do all and nothing at all with such a good and brilliant man."

Andre Glucksmann was born into a Jewish family originally from Poland and his experience of the Nazi occupation of France during World War Two inspired his early involvement with the French Communist party, as well as Maoists who advocated civil war.

In the early 1970s he condemned President Georges Pompidou's France as "fascist". It was when he read The Gulag Archipelago by Soviet writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1974 that his views dramatically changed, Le Figaro reports.

In common with other leading French thinkers such as Bernard-Henri Levy, he soon made a much-publicised break with Marxism. Together they came to be known as the "New Philosophers".

In 1977, he wrote a stinging attack on communism in Barbarism with a Human Face.

Glucksmann's thinking focused increasingly on the rights of the individual against the threat of totalitarianism, and he was prominent in promoting human rights in Bosnia, Chechnya and the Middle East, says the BBC's Hugh Schofield in Paris.

He supported Western military action against Serbia and, more controversially, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. His move to the right was symbolised in 2007 when he supported Nicolas Sarkozy for president, our correspondent adds. However, he later broke with Mr Sarkozy over his policy towards Russia's Vladimir Putin which Glucksmann judged too friendly. He had earlier supported Chechens during their conflict with the Russian government in the 1990s.

President Francois Hollande praised Glucksmann's constant interest in the "suffering of peoples", while Nicolas Sarkozy, now leader of the opposition Republicans, said his loss "turned a page in French thought from the second half of the 20th Century".

Britain is not new to illegal wars as we have observed. They just traded opium for oil in the last one following Bush's lead off a cliff, like a lemming, to certain demise. Let us remember that the Iraq War was a grand coalition of a handful of countries to add legitimacy including the regional power called Tonga with 42 well-needed troops:

Tony Blair could face Iraq contempt vote in Commons
10 July , 2016

A group of senior MPs is calling for a vote to decide whether Tony Blair is guilty of contempt of Parliament over his decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Conservative David Davis said he will present the motion on Thursday accusing the former PM of misleading Parliament.

Meanwhile, John Prescott, the then deputy prime minister, said he now believed the invasion was "illegal".

Mr Blair has apologised for mistakes he made but has said he stands by his decision and "there were no lies".

In his long-awaited report on the Iraq invasion, **Sir John Chilcot said the legal basis for the war was reached in a way that was "far from satisfactory", but he did not explicitly say it was illegal.**

But Mr Davis, a former shadow home secretary, told BBC One's Andrew Marr Show: "I'm going to put down a contempt motion, a motion which says that Tony Blair has held the House in contempt.

"It's a bit like contempt of court. Essentially by deceit."

'A parliamentary crime'

Referring to the 2003 vote to invade Iraq, he said: "**If you look just at the debate alone, on five different grounds the House was misled, three in terms of the weapons of mass destruction, one in terms of the UN votes were going, and one in terms of the threat, the risks.**"

He has cross-party support with SNP MP Alex Salmond saying Mr Blair's actions were "a parliamentary crime, and it's time for Parliament to deliver the verdict".

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he agreed "Parliament must hold to account, including Tony Blair, those who took us into this particular war".
Asked if he would back the motion, he told the BBC: "I haven't seen it yet, but I think I probably would."

Mr Davis said if his motion is accepted by Speaker John Bercow, it could be debated before Parliament breaks up for the summer on 21 July.

He said if Mr Blair was found guilty it was unclear what actions would be taken but "the government could choose to strip him of his Privy Councillorship".

Mr Blair has repeatedly said he did not deceive Parliament.

Following last week's publication of the Chilcot report, the former prime minister made a statement to the media saying "there were no lies, Parliament and Cabinet were not misled, there was no secret commitment to war, intelligence was not falsified and the decision was made in good faith".

He did admit mistakes, saying it would be "far better" if he had challenged intelligence on Iraq's weapons in the run-up to war.

Meanwhile, writing in the Sunday Mirror, Lord Prescott said he now agreed "with great sadness and anger" with former UN secretary general Kofi Annan that the war was illegal.

He said he would live with the "catastrophic decision" for the rest of his life.
"A day doesn't go by when I don't think of the decision we made to go to war. Of the British troops who gave their lives or suffered injuries for their country. Of the 175,000 civilians who died from the Pandora's Box we opened by removing Saddam Hussein," he went on.

He also expressed his own "fullest apology" and said he wanted to identify "certain lessons we must learn".

"My first concern was the way Tony Blair ran Cabinet. We were given too little paper documentation to make decisions," he wrote.

Ties That Burn in Paris Now Burn After Attacks

New York Times by Dan Bilefsky

26 November 2015

La Belle Équip, where 19 people died during this month's terrorist attacks, means "the beautiful team," and those who frequented the corner bistro in the bourgeois bohemian 11th Arrondissement say the name is all too fitting.

It's owner, Gregory Reibenberg, is Jewish and was married to a woman of Algerian Muslim descent, Djamila Houd, 41, a bright and bubbly receptionist at a fashion house. She died in his arms the night of the attack after several men armed with assault rifles sprayed the café's terrace with bullets.

Nearly two weeks after the Nov. 13 attacks, which left 130 dead, the multicultural band of friends and colleagues who spent their time at La Belle Équip are trying to rebuild their lives. But it is a wrenching task made all the more difficult by the fact that so many of the victims were intimately connected.

Despite its oversized place in the global imagination, Paris is not a very big city, but a walkable patchwork of often cozy neighborhoods with distinct identities. Here in the 11th Arrondisement, home to a left-leaning and urbane population of artists, actors, writers and students, the corner bistro – as in the rest of the city – served as a salon for debate or wine-fueled conversation. It is a refuge away from home to meet friends, people-watch or tame loneliness. It is also a place where the waiters know your name, your favorite dish or preferred apertif and double as confessors and confidants….

On the Sunday following the attacks, he led a march through the quarter, clutching a white rose. "It's a place filled with life, this little corner, he told the crowd.

Speaking on France 2 television, Mr. Reibenberg said closing La Belle Équip was out of the question.

"We must go to concerts," he said. "We must sit on terraces. We can still smile with scars on our face. We will lick our wounds and then will all live with our scars, it doest us from being happy. There's no choice."

The *Tsar Bomba* is the single most physically powerful device ever used by mankind. For comparison, the largest weapon ever produced by the United States, the now-decommissioned B41, had a predicted maximum yield of 25 megatonnes of TNT (100 PJ).

…**The largest nuclear device ever tested by the United States (Castle Bravo) yielded 15 megatonnes of TNT (63 PJ**) because of an unexpectedly high involvement of lithium-7 in the fusion reaction; the preliminary prediction for the yield was from 4 to 6 megatonnes of TNT (17 to 25 PJ). The largest weapons deployed by the Soviet Union were also around 25 megatonnes of TNT (100 PJ), as in the SS-18 Mod. 3 ICBM warheads.

The *Tsar Bomba* was a three-stage bomb with Trutnev-Babaev second and third stage design, with **a yield of 50 to 58 megatons of TNT** (210 to 240 PJ)…

This is equivalent to about 1,350–1,570 times the combined power of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki,…

10 times the combined power of all the conventional explosives used in World War II, one quarter of the estimated yield of the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa, and 10% of the combined yield of all nuclear tests to date.

… A three-stage H-bomb uses a fission bomb primary to compress a thermonuclear secondary, as in most H-bombs, and then uses energy from the resulting explosion to compress a much larger additional thermonuclear stage. There is evidence that the *Tsar Bomba* had several third stages rather than a single very large one.

The *Tsar Bomba* was flown to its test site by a specially modified Tu-95V release plane, flown by Major Andrei Durnovtsev. Taking off from an airfield in the Kola Peninsula, the release plane was accompanied by a Tu-16 observer plane that took air samples and filmed the test. Both aircraft were painted with a special reflective white paint to limit heat damage.

The bomb, **weighing 27 metric tons**, was so large (8 metres (26 ft) long by 2 metres (6.6 ft) in diameter) that the Tu-95V had to have its bomb bay doors and fuselage fuel tanks removed. The bomb was attached to an 800 kilogram parachute, which gave **the release and observer planes time to fly about 45 kilometres (28 mi) away from ground zero. When detonation occurred, the Tu-95V (aircraft) fell one kilometre from its previous altitude because of the shock wave of the bomb.**

- Wikipedia

Footage from a Soviet documentary about the bomb is featured in *Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie* (Visual Concept Entertainment, 1995), where it is referred to as the *Russian monster bomb*

What is lesser known but mentioned in the film Trinity and Beyond was that the aircraft's skin was warped from the consequent shock wave. The pilot in command, Major Durnovtsev who we can categorically believe must have been an incredibly gifted and patriotic pilot to be selected for such an exalted mission, safely landed the aircraft, generated a letter of resignation and did not fly again.

I suspect, and freely admit that I could be flatly wrong or wish to believe so, that the major had some kind of spiritual awakening that perhaps the endeavor in which both power and purpose collided into an unholy alliance; he came to his bearings that he wished no further part of it. As opposed to the idea of exiting from a successful military career in aviation at the top his game with a life of medals and toastings in his honor as a quasi-Russian equivalent to Yeager for aviation-muscle demonstrations for national boasting rights, he may have been dismayed and regretful for having a direct hand in such a futile exercise. Theory was pushed aside as the rubber hit the road, the bullet hit the bone after all said and done. What was sold as a triumph was instead unabashedly tragic. It was a disgrace for science and industry to be put to such deplorable use. Political persuasions could be damned! **This one bomb would have wiped Paris off the face of the planet as detailed on the Wikipedia web page.** As an American, I can be proud on this accomplishment that our capable nation left the dubious distinction to remain unchallenged, knowing when to hold 'em, and when to fold 'em. You can win by losing some races.

What is ironic is that the Tsar Bomba is named after royalty in a nation that supposedly eschewed the vestiges of royalty. Tsar is a Russian derivative, such as Kaiser for German, meaning Caesar. Rome continues to lurk in the background, the past pierced through all the slogans and propaganda of the times. Obviously the concept of a royal ruler was never entirely eliminated.

Perhaps the man the Major was when he took off was a changed man when he returned from the fateful mission. The propaganda rung unrewardingly hollow, as from a void, echoing as though from a distant garbage tin that reeked of fetid sheer madness disingenuously cloaked in flags of patriotism.

Russia reveals giant nuclear torpedo in state TV 'leak'
12 November 2015, BBC

The Kremlin says secret plans for a Russian long-range nuclear torpedo - called "Status-6" - should not have appeared on Russian TV news. The leak happened during a report on state-run Channel One about President Vladimir Putin meeting military chiefs in the city of Sochi.

One general was seen studying a diagram of the "devastating" torpedo system. Launched by a submarine, it would create "wide areas of radioactive contamination", the document says.

The "oceanic multi-purpose Status-6 system" is designed to "destroy important economic installations of the enemy in coastal areas and cause guaranteed devastating damage to the country's territory by creating wide areas of radioactive contamination, rendering them unusable for military, economic or other activity for a long time", the document says.

"It's true some secret data got into the shot, therefore it was subsequently deleted," said Mr Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

"In future we will undoubtedly take preventive measures so this does not happen again." The US Defence Department said it had seen the report, but would not comment further. "We are aware of the video footage, but defer to the Russian navy as to its authenticity," a Pentagon spokesperson told the BBC. However, the Russian government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta later reported details of the weapon, without showing the diagram, and speculated about a super-radioactive cobalt device. So the leak may not have been accidental.

Cobalt warhead?

On the diagram the giant torpedo's range is given as "up to 10,000km" (6,200 miles) and depth of trajectory is "up to 1,000m" (3,300ft). It was developed by Rubin, a submarine design bureau in St Petersburg. It would, apparently, be launched by nuclear-powered submarines of the 09852 "Belgorod" and 09851 "Khabarovsk" series.

Rossiiskaya Gazeta called the torpedo a "robotic mini-submarine", travelling at 100 knots (185km/h; 115mph), which would "avoid all acoustic tracking devices and other traps".

- Some commentators in Russian media suggest leak of giant torpedo plan was deliberate
- Such a torpedo was envisaged in 1950s, during Cold War, by nuclear physicist Andrei Sakharov - later a famous dissident and peace activist
- 100-megaton warhead could devastate US coast with massive tsunami and intense radiation
- **Soviet "Tsar Bomba" was biggest nuclear device ever detonated - it was 58 megatons**
- Torpedo "leak" is warning to US not to seek nuclear advantage, says Russian military analyst Igor Korotchenko.

Just before the torpedo diagram came into view in the state TV report, Mr Putin could be heard telling the generals that the US and its Nato allies were forging ahead with a global anti-missile defence system "unfortunately ignoring our concerns and our offers of co-operation".

He said the Western defence project was "an attempt to undermine the existing parity in strategic nuclear weapons and essentially to upset the whole system of global and regional stability".

In June Mr Putin said Russia would put more than 40 new intercontinental ballistic missiles into service this year.

US 'real goal'

The US is developing the sea-based Aegis Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system to counter the perceived threat of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles from Iran or another so-called "rogue" state. Under the plan, air defence missiles will eventually be sited on land in Romania and Poland.

Mr Putin dismissed that Nato argument, pointing to the international deal, agreed this year, imposing limits on Iran's nuclear programme. "References to an Iranian or North Korean nuclear missile threat are just used to conceal the true plans - their real goal is to neutralise the strategic nuclear potential of other nuclear states... above all, of course, Russia," Mr Putin told the generals in Sochi, a Black Sea resort.

He said Russia would continue developing strategic offensive systems capable of penetrating any anti-missile defence.

According to state-run Rossiiskaya Gazeta, the destructive power attributed to the new torpedo's warhead would fit the description of a cobalt bomb. That would be a type of thermonuclear warhead with a layer of cobalt-59, which on detonation would be transmuted into highly radioactive cobalt-60 with a half-life longer than five years. Such a weapon would guarantee "that everything living will be killed", the paper said - there would not even be any survivors in bunkers.

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A cobalt bomb has never been tested because of the devastating radiation it would unleash. "But it can be considered as a means of deterrence - like the Perimetr system, which is on combat readiness, which guarantees retaliation with all of Russia's nuclear forces even if command posts and the country's leadership have been annihilated".

Russian military experts told BBC Russian Service:

- A warhead of up to **100 megatons** could produce a tsunami up to 500m (1,650ft) high, wiping out all living things 1,500km (930 miles) deep inside US territory - Konstantin Sivkov, Russian Geopolitical Academy

- Robotic torpedo shown could have other purposes, such as delivering deep-sea equipment or installing surveillance devices. The Russian defence ministry has a special division for deep-sea research - Konstantin Bogdanov, Lenta.ru website

- This is no secret for the US, whose military is also working in the area of robotic submersibles for hunting and destroying submarines - Viktor Murakhovsky, reserve colonel, editor of Arsenal of the Fatherland magazine.

Donald Trump: US must greatly expand nuclear capabilities

22 December 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38410027

Donald Trump has called for the US to "greatly strengthen and expand" its nuclear capabilities.

The president-elect, who takes office next month, said the US must take such action "until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes".

His spokesman later said that he was referring to the need to prevent nuclear proliferation. Mr Trump spoke hours after President Vladimir Putin said Russia needs to bolster its military nuclear potential.

The US has 7,100 nuclear weapons and Russia has 7,300, according to the US nonpartisan Arms Control Association.

Mr Trump's comments came in the form of a tweet, giving no other details.

Hours later, Jason Miller, the communications manager for the Trump transition team, explained he "was referring to the threat of nuclear proliferation and the critical need to prevent it - particularly to and among terrorist organizations and unstable and rogue regimes".

Mr Miller also added that the president-elect "emphasised the need to improve and modernize our deterrent capability as a vital way to pursue peace through strength". Mr Trump's tweet came after President Putin met with his military advisers to review Russian military activities in 2016.

"We need to strengthen the military potential of strategic nuclear forces, especially with missile complexes that can reliably penetrate any existing and prospective missile defence systems," Mr Putin said.

Russia, he added "must carefully monitor any changes in the balance of power and in the political-military situation in the world, especially along Russian borders", possibly referring to US missile defences in eastern Europe which the Pentagon says are to counter Iran.

During Mr Trump's campaign he referred to nuclear proliferation as the "single biggest problem" facing the world, but also said he could not rule out using nuclear weapons against Europe.

Mr Trump's defeated Democratic rival Hillary Clinton repeatedly cast her opponent during the campaign as too erratic and lacking in the diplomatic skills required to avoid a nuclear war.

She mocked him by saying "a man who can be provoked by a tweet should not have his fingers anywhere near the nuclear codes".

A new era dawns: By Laura Bicker, BBC News, Washington DC

This is a radical departure from President Obama's current policy.

Mr Trump has offered no further details on his plans but he has hinted in the past that he favoured an expansion of the nuclear programme. He was asked in interviews whether he would use weapons of mass destruction against an enemy and he said that it would be an absolute last stance, but he added that he would want to be unpredictable.

In contrast, President Obama has talked of the US commitment to seek peace and security without nuclear weapons. He has sought to reduce the nation's arsenal in favour of more special operations forces and precise tactical strikes. But in 29 days the nuclear codes and the nation's defence policy will no longer be in his hands.

In interviews before his surprise victory Mr Trump said that other countries should spend more on their own defence budgets, and forgo US protection, because "we can't afford to do it anymore".

He has said he is in favour of countries such as Japan and South Korea developing nuclear weapons "because it's going to happen anyway".

Round the world record: French sailor Thomas Coville sets new mark

27 December 2016
http://www.bbc.com/sport/sailing/38435390

Frenchman Thomas Coville has smashed the record for sailing around the world single-handed without stopping by eight days.

The 48-year-old finished in 49 days, 3 hours, 7 minutes and 38 seconds.
The previous record of 57 days 13hr 34min and 6sec was set by fellow Frenchman Francis Joyon, who took it from Britain's Ellen MacArthur in 2008.

Coville set off from Brest in France on 6 November and will rarely have slept for more than three hours at a time.

"Mentally I had my highs and my lows but I knew where I wanted to get to," Coville, who had made four previous attempts to break Joyon's record, told Le Parisien newspaper.

"Physically I could not have gone much further.

END