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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 04/13/2014

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DEAR FRIEND.....



In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning—getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system. —

Ella Baker, 1969

Ella Joe Baker died in 1986 at the age of 83. Her entire adult life was devoted to building organizations that work for social change and encouraging individual growth in individual empowerment. Nonetheless, even among those generally knowledgeable about the modern history of the African American struggle, neither her name nor her sense of how we make positive social change are widely known. She worked during the time when few Americans were capable of taking a black woman seriously as a political figure. Yet, Ella Baker was a central figure in African-American activism as an organizer and as an advocate of developing the extraordinary potential of ordinary people. Few activities can claim a depth and breadth of political experience comparable to Ella Baker's half century of struggle. She was associated with whatever organization in the black community was on the cutting edge of the era - **NAACP (National Association of the Advancement of Color People)** in the forties, the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** in the fifties, and the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** in the sixties. Miss Baker's activism - and she was always pointed Miss Baker to the people she worked with, a mark of respect, strongly influenced by her family and childhood community.

The rhetoric, as she once said, got far ahead of the organization, even when thoughtful and grounded, as ideas often became slogans for people who were less thoughtful and had done less work. She was always dubious about the real value of demonstrations. Because as she would often say, *"lobbying and demonstrations may produce some gains from the powers that be relatively quickly, but the same powers may retract those same gains as soon as the political winds shift."* What Miss Baker called *"real organizing"* might mean that results would take longer to achieve, but it might also mean these results would be better protected. Raised by a strong single mother, my purpose in writing this essay is to introduce the *"Grand Lady,"* as her grandfather used to call her, to people who may not have heard much about her way of working and thinking. That Ella Baker could have lived the life she did and remain as little known even among the politically knowledgeable is important in itself. It reminds us once more of how much our collective past has been distorted, and distorted in these empowering ways.

Ella Baker is often described as *"an unsung heroine of the Civil Rights movement."* In the literal sense that's not true, because of all the songs that the black women's a cappella group **Sweet Honey in the Rock** performs, none is more beloved than *"Ella's Song,"* composed by **Sweet Honey** founder Bernice Johnson Reagon. The song begins in Ella Baker's own words, *"We who believe in freedom cannot rest."* Initially a member of Martin Luther King's inner circle, Ella Baker went her own way after two years at the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** because she disagreed with its policy of strong central leadership. She gave herself over instead to grassroots organizing, working with young people in particular because she believed that *"strong people don't need strong leaders."*

Today her memory is honored at the **Ella Baker Center for Human Rights** in Oakland, where an initiative is being launched this summer called **Reclaim the Future**. The plan is *"to build a constituency that can transform urban America by creating jobs, reducing violence and honoring the earth."* Ella Baker's work, and the work going on today in her name, represents the dimension of nonviolence that Gandhi called, in language that is almost dauntingly prosaic, *"Constructive Program."* Long live Miss Ella Jo Baker and the thousands of others like her around the world who are unsung heroes in the struggle of righting the wrong for people in need of help through social change. The long-term goal, for which she admittedly had no blueprint, was simply a more democratic, egalitarian, and humane world. *Not a bad goal/achievement for a little black girl raised in rural North Carolina.*

Piers Morgan concluded his final CNN show Friday night by delivering one last blow against America's gun violence epidemic.



The **"Piers Morgan Live"** host praised the U.S. as *"a land of true opportunity,"* adding, *"The vast majority of Americans I've met are decent, hardworking, thoroughly dependable people."* But he went on to say that an estimated 100,000 Americans per year are hit by gunfire, and argued, *"I am so pro-American, I want more of you to stay alive."* Morgan pointed out that on average each day in America 35 people are murdered with guns, another 50 kill themselves with guns and 100 more each day are shot but survive, is how he came up with the number of 100,000 people a year hit by gun fire in America. And if this isn't an epidemic then nothing else is.....

Web Link:

[thoughts.cnn.html](https://www.thoughts.cnn.html)

Morgan expressed frustration with reaction to the Aurora, Colo., theater shooting and the Newtown, Conn., school shooting: *"I assumed that after 70 people were shot in a movie theater and then just a few months later 20 first-graders were murdered with an assault rifle in an elementary school, that the absurd gun laws in this country would change, but nothing has happened."* He added: *"The gun lobby in America, led by the NRA, has bullied this nation's politicians into cowardly silence. Even when 20 young children are blown away in their classrooms."* Earlier this month, National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre declared, *"There is no greater freedom than to survive and protect our families with all the rifles, shotguns and handguns we want."* A study published in the American Journal of Public Health last year found that states with more gun ownership often had higher rates of gun-related murders.

Morgan argued in his last show: *"More guns doesn't mean less crime, as the NRA repeatedly tries to tell you. It means more gun violence, more death and more profits for the gun manufacturers."* He concluded, *"Now it's down to you. It is your country. These are your gun laws. And the senseless*

slaughter will only end when enough Americans stand together and cry, 'Enough!' I look forward to that day. I also look forward to seeing you all again soon. Thank you. And God bless America. Oh, and while I'm at it, God bless Great Britain too. Good night." We have to wonder why our political leaders not see this pressing issue with the clarity of Morgan, because accepting it as the price for Freedom falls hollow on the more than 11,000 people who die from gun violence each year.

Nation of Takers?

In the debate about poverty, critics argue that government assistance saps initiative and is unaffordable. After exploring the issue, I must concede that the critics have a point. Here are five public welfare programs that are wasteful and turning us into a nation of **"takers."** Here is an op-ed ***Nation of Takers?*** – that Nicholas Kristof wrote last month in the **New York Times** to illustrate how much the deck is stacked against the poor while they are being used as scapegoats by the bidders of the rich, who are receiving some of the most egregious subsidies and handouts imaginable.

First, welfare subsidies for private planes. The United States offers three kinds of subsidies to tycoons with private jets: accelerated tax write-offs, avoidance of personal taxes on the benefit by claiming that private aircraft are for security, and use of air traffic control paid for by chumps flying commercial. As the leftists in the George W. Bush administration put it when they tried unsuccessfully to end this last boondoggle: *"The family of four taking a budget vacation is subsidizing the C.E.O.'s flying on a corporate jet."* I worry about those tycoons sponging off government. Won't our pampering damage their character? Won't they become addicted to the entitlement culture, demanding subsidies even for their yachts? Oh, wait ...

Second, welfare subsidies for yachts. The mortgage-interest deduction was meant to encourage a home-owning middle class. But it has been extended to provide subsidies for beach homes and even yachts. In the meantime, money was slashed last year from the public housing program for America's neediest. Hmm. How about if we house the homeless in these publicly supported yachts?

Third, welfare subsidies for hedge funds and private equity. The single most outrageous tax loophole in America is for "carried interest," allowing people with the highest earnings to pay paltry taxes. They can magically reclassify their earned income as capital gains, because that carries a lower tax rate (a maximum of 23.8 percent this year, compared with a maximum of 39.6 percent for earned income). Let's just tax capital gains at earned income rates, as we did under President Ronald Reagan, that notorious scourge of capitalism.

Fourth, welfare subsidies for America's biggest banks. The too-big-to-fail banks in the United States borrow money unusually cheaply because of an implicit government promise to rescue them. **Bloomberg View** calculated last year that this amounts to a taxpayer subsidy of \$83 billion to our 10 biggest banks annually. President Obama has proposed a bank tax to curb this subsidy, and this year a top Republican lawmaker, Dave Camp, endorsed the idea as well. Big banks are lobbying like crazy to keep their subsidy.

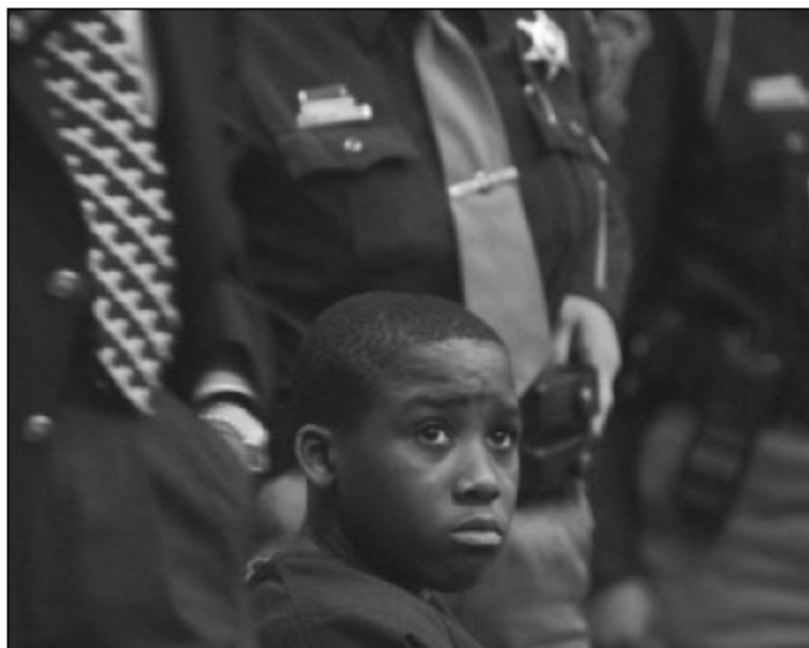
Fifth, large welfare subsidies for American corporations from cities, counties and states.

A bit more than a year ago, Louise Story of **The New York Times** tallied more than \$80 billion a year in subsidies to companies, mostly as incentives to operate locally.

You see where ■ going. We talk about the unsustainability of government benefit programs and the deleterious effects these can have on human behavior, and these are real issues. Well-meaning programs for supporting single moms can create perverse incentives not to marry, or aid meant for a needy child may be misused to buy drugs. Let's acknowledge that helping people is a complex, uncertain and imperfect struggle. But, perhaps because we now have the wealthiest Congress in history, the first in which a majority of members are millionaires, we have one-sided discussion demanding cuts only in public assistance to the poor, while ignoring public assistance to the rich. And one sided discussion leads to a one-sided and myopic policy.

We're cutting one kind of subsidized food — food stamps — at a time when Gallup finds that almost one-fifth of American families struggled in 2013 to afford food. Meanwhile, we ignore more than \$12 billion annually in tax subsidies for corporate meals and entertainment. Sure, food stamps are occasionally misused, but anyone familiar with business knows that the abuse of food subsidies is far greater in the corporate suite. Every time an executive wines and dines a hot date on the corporate dime, the average taxpayer helps foot the bill. So let's get real. To stem abuses, the first target shouldn't be those avaricious infants in nutrition programs but tycoons in their subsidized Gulfstreams.

However imperfectly, subsidies for the poor do actually reduce hunger, ease suffering and create opportunity, while subsidies for the rich result in more private jets and yachts. Would we rather subsidize opportunity or yachts? Which kind of subsidies deserve more scrutiny? Some conservatives get this, including Senator Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma. He has urged *"scaling back ludicrous handouts to millionaires that expose an entitlement system and tax code that desperately need to be reformed."* After all, quite apart from the waste, we don't want to coddle zillionaires and thereby sap their initiative!



Nathaniel Abraham, 12, is being charged as an adult in a homicide case. He looks around as Sheriff's deputies move in to re-cuff him during a break in his hearing to determine if the trial charging him as an adult will proceed.

Since the death of Trayvon Martin I have been trying to figure out how did it become acceptable to kill young African American men and how it's become open-season to kill teenagers of color and sentence them as adults, sometimes *'life without the possibility of parole'*. Then I came across an article in the **New York Times** by Clyde Haberman - ***When Youth Violence Spurred 'Super-predator' Fear*** - which provided the background on how this fear came about.

After to surge of teen violence and meet early 1990s, some social sciences predicted the future was going to be a whole lot worse. Reality proved otherwise. The media responded by calling it a tidal wave of violence, youth violence was out of control, the future looks bleak and one word said it all, *'super predators.'* Social scientists and criminologist looked at the data and saw doom. They stepped out of the ivory towers and into the public arenas, sounding the alarm about a coming wave of kids who are going to ravage the country. These social scientists described this super predator as a young juvenile criminal who is so impulsive, so remorseless that he can kill, rape and maim without giving it a second thought. The prediction was terrifying and lawmakers crack down on juvenile offenders, causing the country to go into a moral panic over a super predators.

But there was one problem. The calculations were wrong because they made it up. Yes there were gang violence and yes it was out of control for several years but it was contained to specific geographic areas. Yet no matter where you lived the media made these instances national stories. As such, there was a sense that the country at large was going to hell in a handbag. Yes, from 1985 to 1995 teenage homicides doubled and with studies saying that it would be a million more teenagers (*between 14 and 17*) by 2000. Some social scientists predicted crime rates would snowball even more, with a doubling or tripling in the rate of youth violence, suggesting that the small percentage of kids that do violent crimes would be much more destructive than the generation before them, as 6% of violent offenders are responsible for more than 50% of all of the violent crimes committed by this age group, a bloodbath often violence by 2005. This was strong language, an alarm that few could ignore and rhetoric prove the most powerful arrow in their quivers.

See web link: <http://nyti.ms/1hRseXf>

It was John DiLulio, and every league academic from Philadelphia in an article, ***Ticking Time Bomb in the Weekly Standard*** in 1995 coined the term **Super-Predictors** which originated when he interviewed an older inmate, who offhandedly referred to some of the young inmates as predictors. And like a match to a flame, the word caught on. When you use the word like predator that is loaded with certain assumptions about a way that an animal hunts another animal, to call someone a super-predator really amps that up even more. DiLulio described these kids as growing up essentially fatherless, Godless and jobless and although not pointing any particular racial group but in 1996 he wrote that as many as half of these juvenile super-predators *"could be"* young black males. Making race the central issue and with the extent that Black and Latino children were increasing in society and with them, would come a big crime increase. Required in moral panic is the identification of a particular group of people who are demonized in some way. When you describe another group is godless, you can do anything to them. Hence, it became open season against young Black and Latino men and we have seen this is 'stop and frisk' police policies across the countries and the Zimmerman jury verdict.

Lawmakers seized the moment to spur on the overhaul of a legal system what they considered to lack of adequate legal supervision, equating kids who steal hub caps to those who rape and murder. Newt Gingrich saying, *"There are no violent offenses that are juvenile."* As a result between 1992 and 1997 forty five states enacted laws cracking down on juvenile offenders, making it easier to prosecute youths in adult criminal courts and increase penalties.

But the same time that these laws were being enacted juvenile crime rates were already falling, as juvenile crime rates have been plummeting since 1994 and in the wake of this panic. The fall in juvenile crime has been attributed to many things. A stronger economy. Better policing. A decline in crack cocaine use. And DiLulilo's research had not foreseen any of these trends. By the late 1990s and a steady decline in juvenile crime, it was evident how mistaken Dilulilo was, as the super-predator was a no-show. The predictions were off by a factor of four, which is probably as far off as you can possibly get and call yourself a scientist. The alarm of super-predators was wrong but once this myth was established, it was difficult to reel it in.

The problem wasn't the misinterpretation of the data. The real problem is the myth that was created. As the fear of the super-predictor led to a number of laws and policies that we just now are recovering from. Automatic mandatory life sentences for juveniles is now seen as cruel and unusual punishment and has been outlawed. Criminology is not pure science and the fear perpetuated by the media is often as dangerous as the peril it is warning the public against.

There is little doubt that television coverage contributes to the public hysteria about youth crime. In particular, local television news plays a primary role in shaping what the public believes it knows about juveniles and the justice system. There are several reasons why TV stories about specific crimes — especially involving young suspects — are so ubiquitous. They are cheap to produce, often come camera-ready with gripping images, and are easy to report because they fit easily into a journalistic formula that has at its core human drama.

The increasing visibility of juveniles set in the context of crime lends credence to some people's view that today's youth are a new breed of *"super-predators"*—violent, remorseless and impulsive pre-adults responsible for widespread mayhem. Of course, the clear but unspoken subtext of the *super-predator* thesis is that a disproportionate number of criminal youth are from racial minority groups. To be sure, minority youth offenders are arrested for violent crimes at rates exceeding their population sizes. But those who analyze the role of TV news — you will find that the overwhelming focus on violent crime adds to this distortion because the dominant message is consistent with the widely held public perception that young people of color commit violent crime.

Recently a group of social scientist set out to examine in a novel way the connections between what people see in local newscasts and what they think about juvenile crime. They designed an experiment to assess the impact of the *"super-predator news frame"* in which the only difference between what groups of viewers saw in a news story involved the race of the alleged youth perpetrator.

In an experiment conducted to gauge the effect of media on stigmatizing youthful offenders as predators. People were presented with a 15-minute videotaped local newscast, including commercials.

It was described to them as having been selected at random from news programs broadcast that week. The report on crime was inserted into the middle of the newscast, following the first commercial break. The participants—who were found while shopping in a mall in Los Angeles—were assigned at random to one of the following groups:

- Some participants watched a news story—with a “***super-predator script***” — in which the close-up photo of the alleged murderer showed a young African-American or Hispanic male.
- Other participants watched the same newscast and story, except that the race of the murder suspect was white or Asian.
- A third set of viewers watched the same newscast, but this time the story did not contain any information concerning the racial identity of the accused.
- Finally, a control group did not see a crime story in the newscast.

Prior to watching the various newscasts, each participant filled out a short questionnaire. Information about their social and economic backgrounds, political beliefs, level of interest and involvement in political affairs and customary media habits was gathered. After they viewed the newscasts, a lengthier questionnaire was given, probing in more detail their social and political views. Only then was the method and purpose of the experiment explained to them.

Here’s what they discovered. A mere five-second exposure to a mug shot of African-American and Hispanic youth offenders (*in a 15-minute newscast*) raises levels of fear among viewers, increases their support for “*get-tough*” crime policies, and promotes racial stereotyping. However, they also found that these effects vary a great deal by the race of the viewer. Exposure to the “*super-predator news frame*” increases fear of crime — measured as concern for random street violence and expectations about victimization — among all viewers. The increase for white and Asian viewers is about 10 percent. The effect is more pronounced among African-Americans and Hispanics, with a 38 percent rise.

This, by itself, is not a surprising finding. After all, these two groups are most likely to be victimized and violent crime typically involves people from the same racial and ethnic backgrounds. The more pertinent question is how these fears translate into opinions about crime. The scientists measured this by asking an open-ended question about “*solutions to the crime problem*” in a follow-up survey. Here is what they found.

- Exposure to the “*super-predator news frame*” increases a desire for harsher punitive action among whites and Asians by about 11 percent.
- Exposure to the “*super-predator news frame*” decreases support for this type of solution by 25 percent among African-Americans and Hispanics.

It is interesting that while the “*super-predator script*” heightens fear among all viewers, this anxiety translates into a demand for harsher and swifter punishment only among whites and Asians. Among African-Americans and Hispanics, these stories remind them of injustice and prejudice. This finding appears consistent with the historic opposition minority groups have shown toward punitive policies such as the death penalty. Media depictions of “*superpredators*” remind minority viewers of this fact, while similar news images and stories strengthen the belief among whites and Asians that crime remedies for young offenders need to be harsher, in part as a result of what they’ve seen. A similar pattern holds for how these stories affect racial stereotyping. Exposure to the image of a minority “*super-predator*” increases the percentage of whites and Asians who subscribe to negative stereotypes about African-Americans and Hispanics. However, among viewers from these minority groups, the tendency to attribute negative characteristics decreases by 20 percent after viewing these stories.

The “*super-predator frame*,” therefore, widens the racial divide among members of the viewing public. From study’s perspective as media analysts as well as social scientists, they believe this study suggests why and how the practice of journalism—especially when it comes to reporting youth crime on television — should be revised. Without commenting on intent, it is enough to say that “*body-bag*” journalism, particularly as it focuses on young people, has a corrosive influence. There are more constructive ways of reporting these stories. Organizations such as **The Berkeley Media Studies Group** and television stations like **KVUE** in Austin, Texas have developed alternative approaches that work well in reporting the story of youth crime and reduce the racially polarizing effect that otherwise emerges.

Right now, in the minds of the viewing public, youth crime is as much about race as it is about crime. Many experts believe that efforts to curb youth violence must ultimately deal with the vexing social problems facing young people of color. If this is so, reporters ought to look at developing stories about the nature of these problems and effects they have on community safety. Unless these broader contexts are examined, and the “*superpredator script*” is revised, then the behavior of the troubled “*six percent*” of youth will define an entire nation’s understanding of these issues. But let’s understand that although there are definitely juvenile predictors and I am sure that some deserve to be labeled “super-predators” only a very small percentage of youthful offenders fit this description and by treating a large segment of our youth as predatory society may be creating the thing that it is trying to eradicate which was all based on a myth. ***Remember that our children are not our enemies, unless we fail them.....***

 This artist rendering shows the Supreme Court Justices. (AP Photo/Dana Verkouteren)

Without a doubt the Supreme Court further opened the doors of our democracy to big money in its ruling today in *McCutcheon v. FEC*. Last week in a five-four split along ideological lines, the Court ruled that overall limits on individual campaign contributions were unconstitutional under the First Amendment. The Court left in place the cap on donations to a single candidate that conservative donor Shaun McCutcheon also challenged in the case. In a concurring opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas moved to strike that limit down as well.

“I was disappointed by the Supreme Court’s decision today,” said Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), who, along with former Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI), enacted the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act in 2002. Many of the provisions of that Act have since been rolled back by Supreme Court decisions, including the 2010 ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*. “*I am concerned that today’s ruling may represent the latest step in an effort by a majority of the Court to dismantle entirely the longstanding structure of campaign finance law erected to limit the undue influence of special interests on American politics.*” McCain said he worried that the ruling would lead to a spate of campaign finance and corruption scandals.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) denounced the ruling saying it would fundamentally undermine American democracy. “*The Supreme Court is paving the way toward an oligarchic form of society in which a handful of billionaires like the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson will control our political process,*” he said in a statement. Legal scholar Heather Gerken, who teaches election and constitutional law at Yale — and who spoke with Bill Moyers about the case last October — said today’s decision would have far-reaching effects on our campaign finance system. “*The Court downplays the significance of its*

decision, but they are wrong to do so. If the Court understood how money runs through the political system, they could not have offered such reassurances. This decision is going to cause the parties to restructure how they finance elections going forward, and we'll all feel the effects for years to come."

At **The Daily Beast**, Lawrence Lessig, a reform advocate and law professor at Harvard University, argued that the decision didn't take the framer's intent into account in its narrow definition of "corruption" as a quid pro quo exchange of cash for policy between donors and politicians. Corruption, he writes, can also occur when politicians are dependent on one class of citizen. *"Already we have a system in which Congress is dependent upon the tiniest fraction of the 1% to fund its campaigns. I've estimated the number of relevant funders is no more than 150,000 (about the number of Americans named 'Lester.')* If aggregate contribution limits are struck, that number will fall dramatically," he wrote.

The decision outraged good government groups, who have been working since 2010 to stem the flow of special-interest money into politics following Citizens United. In that decision, the Court's conservative majority held that money is speech, and that the federal government could not restrict it by limiting "third party" campaign spending by corporations and unions. That ruling gave rise to super PACs and the dark money groups that deep-pocketed wealthy donors use to funnel money to support politicians who share their interests.

"No regular person can compete with Charles and David Koch." — Robert Weissman, **Public Citizen** *"The Supreme Court in the McCutcheon decision today overturned 40 years of national policy and 38 years of judicial precedent,"* said campaign finance reformer Fred Wertheimer, who heads Democracy 21, a nonprofit group working to protect fairness and integrity in elections. *"The Court's decisions have empowered a new class of American political oligarchs. These Court decisions [Citizens United and McCutcheon] have come at the enormous expense of the voices and interests of more than 300 million Americans."*

"Yes, you and I now have the 'right' to spend as much as we want, too. But no regular person can compete with Charles and David Koch," wrote Robert Weissman, president of the good government advocacy group **Public Citizen**. *"There are literally only a few hundred people who can and will take advantage of this horrendous ruling. But those are exactly the people our elected officials will now be answering to."*

"That is not democracy. It is plutocracy. Today's reckless Supreme Court ruling threatens so many of the things we love about our country. No matter what five Supreme Court justices say, the First Amendment was never intended to provide a giant megaphone for the wealthiest to use to shout down the rest of us."

Former Secretary of **Labor Robert Reich** echoed these sentiments in a Facebook post, writing that the decision will allow wealthy individuals to purchase *"unparalleled personal influence in*

Washington,” “drowning out the voices of ordinary citizens.” He added: “This is the most brazen invitation to oligarchy in Supreme Court history.” Reich called for an amendment to the Constitution stating that “(1) money is not speech under the First Amendment, (2) corporations are not people, and (3) we the people have the right to set limits on how much money individuals and corporations can spend on elections.”

‘McCutcheon’ Means “All the Free Speech You Can Buy”

Two events this week have made the fight to save democracy from big money, already an uphill battle, even harder. In Washington, DC the Supreme Court struck down overall contribution limits on how much individual donors can give to candidates, parties and PACs. In New York State’s annual budget, Governor Cuomo and legislators killed a commission investigating political corruption, failed to pass campaign finance reform and gave tax breaks to the rich.

Fortunate for any of us who believe this country should be about fair play and justice, and those waiters, busboys, and cooks reinforce our faith that organized people can counter organized money. But they are going to need all the hope and heart they can muster. So are we. The fight to save our democracy from the clutches of plutocrats just got harder. Here in New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo of the Wall Street wing of the Democratic Party, and legislators from both parties, killed a commission investigating political corruption and aborted a promising plan for a more level playing field in state elections.

They did so while handing “*wealthy individuals in wealthy communities*” -- the biggest contributors to elections -- some very big tax breaks. And in Washington, as you’ve heard by now, in the McCutcheon case, the Supreme Court five -- the pro-corporate bloc -- struck down limits on how much money can be given to candidates, parties and political action committees.

One prominent right-winger says the justices *merely* “reinstated the first amendment for all Americans.” But by doubling down on their earlier ruling in the infamous Citizens United case, which equates money with speech, the justices have decreed that you are entitled to all the free speech you can buy. Just like the Koch brothers. The prevailing myth in America has been that the rich have a right to buy more homes, more cars, more gizmos, vacations and leisure. But they don’t have the right to buy more democracy. The Supreme Court just laid that myth to rest, and the new gilded age roars in triumph.

But we, the people, should not cower or give in to despair. Those restaurant workers aren’t quitting. They have summoned a spirit from deep within our past, when those early insurgents stood against imperial authority. Believing that: When injustice becomes law, defiance becomes duty. At our website, [REDACTED], we’ll show you some ways you can get involved. And there’s more about the fight for a living wage. That’s all at [REDACTED] I’ll see you there and I’ll see you here, next time.

Bill Moyers: April 4, 2014

Now He Tells Us: McCutcheon Attorney Admits Money Is Not Speech

Dan Backer, the lead lawyer behind a landmark case that further opened the campaign finance floodgates, conceded in an interview with **HuffPost Live** that money is not, in fact, speech. The effort to repeal laws regulating the role that moneyed interests can play in elections has long been animated by the notion that any such restriction is a violation of the First Amendment's right of free speech.

Indeed, in his first brief comment to **HuffPost Live**, Backer, who counseled Shaun McCutcheon, referenced speech no fewer than four times in explaining the Supreme Court's rationale in its *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission* decision striking down certain campaign contribution limits last week: *"I don't understand why anyone should have their free speech limited to help somebody else feel like they can speak more. The Constitution does not envision the idea of, as the court said, 'weakening the rights of some and the speech of some in order to enhance or promote the speech of others.'"*

But the argument has a clear weakness. **HuffPost** asked Backer why, if money is speech, bribery is illegal. Shouldn't bribery be considered an expression of one's First Amendment rights? Money quickly transformed in Backer's reasoning. *"The court did not say, and really neither does any serious commentator, that money is speech. Money is not speech. Money is a necessary tool to engage in political speech and political association,"* he said. If money isn't speech, **HuffPost** asked, then why is it out of line for the government regulate campaign donations? *"It's not out of line. It's allowed to regulate money in elections in order to prevent quid pro quo corruption,"* Backer answered, referencing the narrow definition of corruption cited by the Supreme Court in the *McCutcheon* decision.

And the above segments are my rant this week and it should be yours as our democracy should not be for sale whether the buyer be Michael Bloomberg or Sheldon Adelson.

WEEK's READINGS

We're Not No. 1! We're Not No. 1!

We in the United States grow up celebrating ourselves as the world's most powerful nation, the world's richest nation, the world's freest and most blessed nation.

Sure, technically Norwegians may be wealthier per capita, and the Japanese may live longer, but the world watches the [REDACTED], melts at Katy Perry, uses iPhones to post on Facebook, trembles at our aircraft carriers, and blames the C.I.A. for everything. We're No. 1!

In some ways we indisputably are, but a major new ranking of livability in 132 countries puts the United States in a sobering 16th place. We underperform because our economic and military strengths don't translate into well-being for the average citizen. In the Social Progress Index, the United States excels in access to advanced education but ranks 70th in health, 69th in ecosystem sustainability, 39th in basic education, 34th in access to water and sanitation and 31st in personal safety. Even in access to cellphones and the Internet, the United States ranks a disappointing 23rd, partly because one American in five lacks Internet access. "It's astonishing that for a country that has Silicon Valley, lack of access to information is a red flag," notes Michael Green, executive director of the Social Progress Imperative, which oversees the index. The United States has done better at investing in drones than in children, and cuts in social services could fray the social fabric further.

This Social Progress Index ranks New Zealand No. 1, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and the Netherlands. All are somewhat poorer than America per capita, yet they appear to do a better job of meeting the needs of their people. The Social Progress Index is a brainchild of Michael E. Porter, the eminent Harvard business professor who earlier helped develop the Global Competitiveness Report. Porter is a Republican whose work, until now, has focused on economic metrics. "This is kind of a journey for me," Porter told me. He said that he became increasingly aware that social factors support economic growth: tax policy and regulations affect economic prospects, but so do schooling, health and a society's inclusiveness. So Porter and a team of experts spent two years developing this index, based on a vast amount of data reflecting suicide, property rights, school attendance, attitudes toward immigrants and minorities, opportunity for women, religious freedom, nutrition, electrification and much more. Many who back proposed Republican cuts in Medicaid, food stamps and public services believe that such trims would boost America's competitiveness. Looking at this report, it seems that the opposite is true.

Ireland, from which so many people fled in the 19th century to find opportunity in the United States, now ranks 15th. That's a notch ahead of the United States, and Ireland is also ahead of America in the category of "opportunity." Canada came in seventh, the best among the nations in the G-7. Germany is 12th, Britain 13th and Japan 14th. The bottom spot on the ranking was filled by Chad. Just above it were Central African Republic, Burundi, Guinea, Sudan and Angola. Professor Porter notes that Arab Spring countries had longstanding problems leading to poor scores in the "opportunity" category. If that's a predictor of trouble, as he thinks it may be, then Russia, China, Saudi Arabia and Iran should be on guard. None do well in the category of opportunity.

In contrast, some countries punch well above their weight. Costa Rica performs better than much richer countries, and so do the Philippines, Estonia and Jamaica. In Africa, Malawi, Ghana and Liberia shine. Bangladesh (no. 99) ranks ahead of wealthier India (no. 102). Likewise, Ukraine (no. 62) outperforms Russia (no. 80).

China does poorly, ranking 90th, behind its poorer neighbor Mongolia (no. 89). China performs well in basic education but lags in areas such as personal rights and access to information. All this goes to

what kind of a nation we want to be, and whether we put too much faith in [REDACTED] as a metric.

Over all, the United States' economy outperformed France's between 1975 and 2006. But 99 percent of the French population actually enjoyed more gains in that period than 99 percent of the American population. Exclude the top 1 percent, and the average French citizen did better than the average American. This lack of shared prosperity and opportunity has stunted our social progress.

There are no quick fixes, but basic education and health care are obvious places to begin, especially in the first few years of life, when returns are the highest.

The arguments for boosting opportunity or social services usually revolve around social justice and fairness. The Social Progress Index offers a reminder that what's at stake is also the health of our society — and our competitiveness around the globe.

Nicholas Kristof: April 2, 2014

5 MLK Causes You Didn't Learn About In Middle School



One doesn't have their **very own national holiday** and **900 streets named after them** unless they are truly deserving. Nor does Gallup name you the second most beloved person in all of the 20th century without good reason.

Martin Luther King Jr. was aptly awarded all of the above. Today on the 46th anniversary of his assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, he was celebrated for the Civil Rights Movement hero that was. Sam Moore, of Sam & Dave, is releasing a song titled, "**They Killed A King**" in his honor, and tomorrow **The National Civil Rights Museum is reopening** -- after a 16-month renovation -- at the site of his assassination in Memphis.

Dr. King will always be known for his passion and achievements in the area of civil rights, but it is also worthwhile to remember what made him such a revered public figure was his dedication to numerous causes under the umbrella of human rights. Here are some you may not know Dr. King kept near and dear until his passing.

Sanitation Workers' Rights

There is **much documentation** about Dr. King's work for sanitation workers' rights. In fact, MLK was in Tennessee helping organize the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike at the time of his assassination in 1968. On the evening before his death, MLK gave his famous **Mountaintop speech** and urged workers, "*we've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end*," to keep fighting for union recognition, and thereby adequate wages and improved safety standards.

Curriculum Reform

Dr. King not only wanted equal opportunity of education for people of all races, but valuable education for people of all races. It is his opinion that is the only way to find truth and raise a human population with integrity and character:

A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.

The above quote is from "*The Purpose of Education*" which he wrote in 1947.

Advancing Economic Opportunity

Part of MLK's solution to economic inequality in America was a anti-capitalist view for the future of the country. He was criticized for it, but he felt passionately about equal pay and equal rights for workers, and would not be moved on the subject despite acquiring a "*socialist*" label for his beliefs.

Anti-War Sentiment

Even from beyond the grave, MLK can tell you in his own words how his non-violent protest principle transfers over to international policy in his famous speech, "**Why I Am Opposed To The Vietnam War.**"

Working Across Religions

Dr. King was a Christian, and a firm believer at that. That did not however, stop him from recognizing shared ideals of social change with people of other faiths, such as Malcolm X, who was Muslim.

During a PBS civil rights series, **Coretta Scott King said about her husband**, *"I know Martin had the greatest respect for Malcolm... I think that if Malcolm had lived, at some point the two would have come closer together and would have been a very strong force."*

Human Dignity And Integrity

Regardless of MLK's position on pro-life vs pro-choice, Planned Parenthood Federation of America **awarded him the PPFA Margaret Sanger Award** for *"his courageous resistance to bigotry and his lifelong dedication to the advancement of social justice and human dignity"* in 1966. His wife Coretta Scott King graciously accepted the award on his behalf.

Gay Marriage Rights

Was MLK on board with gay rights? **CNN pieces together the puzzle** of clues left behind in his legacy and closest of family and friends. For starters, Coretta Scott King was an avid gay rights activist.

Congressman John Lewis, a close friend and esteemed Civil Rights Movement colleague of Dr. King -- the youngest speaker at the March on Washington -- discusses the freedom to marry in the video above. He explains that civil rights and equal rights are one and the same, and how he sees *"marriage equality as a step, a necessary step, in completing the long, hard struggle what Dr. Martin Luther King called the beloved community."*



Scanning the media looking for topics of interest for this week's readings I came across an article in **The Guardian** by Richard Schiffman – ***Think the new climate report is scary? The food-pocalypse is already upon us*** – but what really got me was the article's subtitle – ***Riots. Towns gone dry. Soaring prices. Crushing starvation.*** If this sounds like fear-mongering from scientists, talk to the farmers – and if this doesn't get your attention it definitely got mine. The article was based on report, released a week ago by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate**

Change (IPCC) which is a 2,600-page catalogue of the risks to life and livelihood from climate change – now and in the future.

The report was built on the work of more than 300 scientists drawing from 12,000 scholarly articles to produce the most comprehensive picture of climate risks to date. Rajendra K. Pachauri (*Chairman of the IPCC*) said the report provided all that governments could need for coming up with a strategy for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and protecting populations from climate change and hope that hoped its conclusion on the rising threat of climate change would “*jolt people into action*”. Pachauri, who has headed the IPCC for 12 years, said he hoped it would push government leaders to deal with climate change before it is too late.

As Schiffman describes; this mother of all climate reports is so scary that one of its authors resigned from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in protest. “*Farmers are not stupid*,” the Sussex University economist Richard Tol said this past week, as hundreds of researchers cloistered away in Yokohama, Japan, hammering out the final wording of a document that he called “*alarmist*” when it comes to the many threats of global warming. The people who grow our food will find ways to adapt, said the rogue climate scientist at the most important climate science meeting in seven years.

But change isn't easy – especially not tectonic changes to the Earth. The IPCC report's most alarming projections make clear what many other studies have warned: the future of agriculture – of global hunger, of your grocery bill – is screwed. Or as UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon put it rather more politely when he inaugurated the first rounds of the IPCC report last September: “*The heat is on. We must act.*”

Glaciers will continue to shrink in the Himalayas, according to the IPCC, severely impacting the availability of water for farming in vast areas of south Asia and China. Climate change will damage heat-sensitive crops like wheat and corn, and have a smaller impact on rice and soy production. Prices for essential staples will rise on the global market. Hunger will increase in large parts of Asia and Africa. “*Nobody on this planet is going to be untouched by the impacts of climate change*,” predicted the IPCC chief Rajendra Pachauri at a morning news conference.

The new report says that all of these very bad things will happen in future decades, as climate change picks up steam. But as I found out in east Africa last month, the future is already here for too many of the world's farmers. In Tanzania, the twice yearly seasonal rains upon which so many growers depend no longer come on time – and they're sporadic, drenching downpours at that, alternating with prolonged dry spells. Heat spikes have also been withering maize crop, and wells and streams are increasingly drying up. Twenty-five years ago the weather here was predictable – the long rains started mid-March to mid-May, then the short rains started in late August, early September. In the last decade, these rains never come on time. We have had floods and week upon week, with no rain at all. Farmers are confused about when and what to plant. It is all very worrying.

Similar disruptions are already challenging farmers worldwide. In Vietnam's Mekong Delta, rural people are losing ground as higher sea levels turn rivers too salty to grow rice. In Nicaragua, rising temperatures are spreading “*coffee rust fungus*”, a disease which is killing thousands of trees and may render 80% of its the nation's coffee-growing areas unusable by 2050. And in the central Philippines, coconut farmers are struggling to recover from November's Typhoon Haiyan, which badly damaged or

tore out an estimated 33m trees. Just as there are no atheists in foxholes, there are few climate-change skeptics amongst those who grow the world's food – if any. Farmers don't have to read UN reports to know how radically their weather is changing. And consumers don't need academic studies or bullet points to know that food prices are steadily rising.

With scientists around the world projecting that global wheat yields could drop by 2% every decade, climate change has already cut into the global food supply and is fuelling wars and natural disasters and governments are unprepared to protect those most at risk according to a report. Friends of the Earth's executive director, Andy Atkins, said: *"We can't continue to ignore the stark warnings of the catastrophic consequences of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of people across the planet."* Giant strides are urgently needed to tackle the challenges we face, but all we get is tiny steps, excuses and delays from most of the politicians that are supposed to represent our interests. *"Governments across the world must stand up to the oil, gas and coal industries, and take their foot off the fossil fuel accelerator that's speeding us towards a climate disaster."*



Rwandan girls completing their school work

One article that caught my interest this week was again in **The Guardian** by UK former Prime Minister Tony Blair – ***20 years after the genocide, Rwanda is a beacon of hope.*** Having visited Rwanda in the 1990s, like former UK Prime Minister who was there in 1994, I too found the country to be a shell of a nation. Blair: Some 800,000 people had been killed, over 300 lives lost every hour for the 100 days of the genocide, and millions more displaced from their homes. Its institutions, systems of government, and trust among its people were destroyed. There was no precedent for the situation it found itself in: desperately poor, without skilled labor and resources, and the people demoralized and divided. Very few expected the country to achieve more than high levels of sympathy. But under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, Rwanda decided to start afresh; to begin a unique experiment in post-conflict nation building, which would steer it away from intractable cycles of killing. This year, as Rwanda marks the 20th commemoration of the genocide, it is remarkable to see the progress the country has made.

This is a country where neighbors killed neighbors with machetes and clubs, raping women and burning churches to the ground containing hundreds of people who had fled to them in hope of refuge. This is a very ugly personal killing and mass genocide and very personal as Hutu majority went village to village killing Tutsis. And while more than 5.4 million people have died in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), from Tony Blair's article whose foundation – the **Africa**

Governance Initiative – which provides countries with the capacity to deliver practical change, has been operating in Rwanda – says that progress in Rwanda over the last two decades has been extraordinary.

Tony Blair: There was no grand theory when the new government took power in 1994; the primary concern was to guarantee that the extreme ethnic divisions which caused the genocide would never resurface. Security and stability came first, alongside basic humanitarian relief, and, slowly at first, then with greater speed, improvements in health, education and incomes. There was a belief that by uniting its people behind the common cause of progress, they could construct a new national identity: Rwandan, rather than Hutu or Tutsi. Over the last decade economic growth has exceeded 8% per annum. Investment is flowing into Rwanda – it has nearly tripled since 2005 – and investors are made welcome. Even without many natural resources, the country is economically vibrant.

In little over five years more than a million Rwandans have lifted themselves out of poverty. The proportion of children dying before their fifth birthday has more than halved, and when they reach seven years old, they can nearly all go to school. Most of the population is covered by health insurance, and malaria deaths have fallen more than 85% since 2005. Crime is very low. Women can walk the street at night safe. And if all of this is true and I have no reason to believe that it is not, these achievements are beyond amazing.

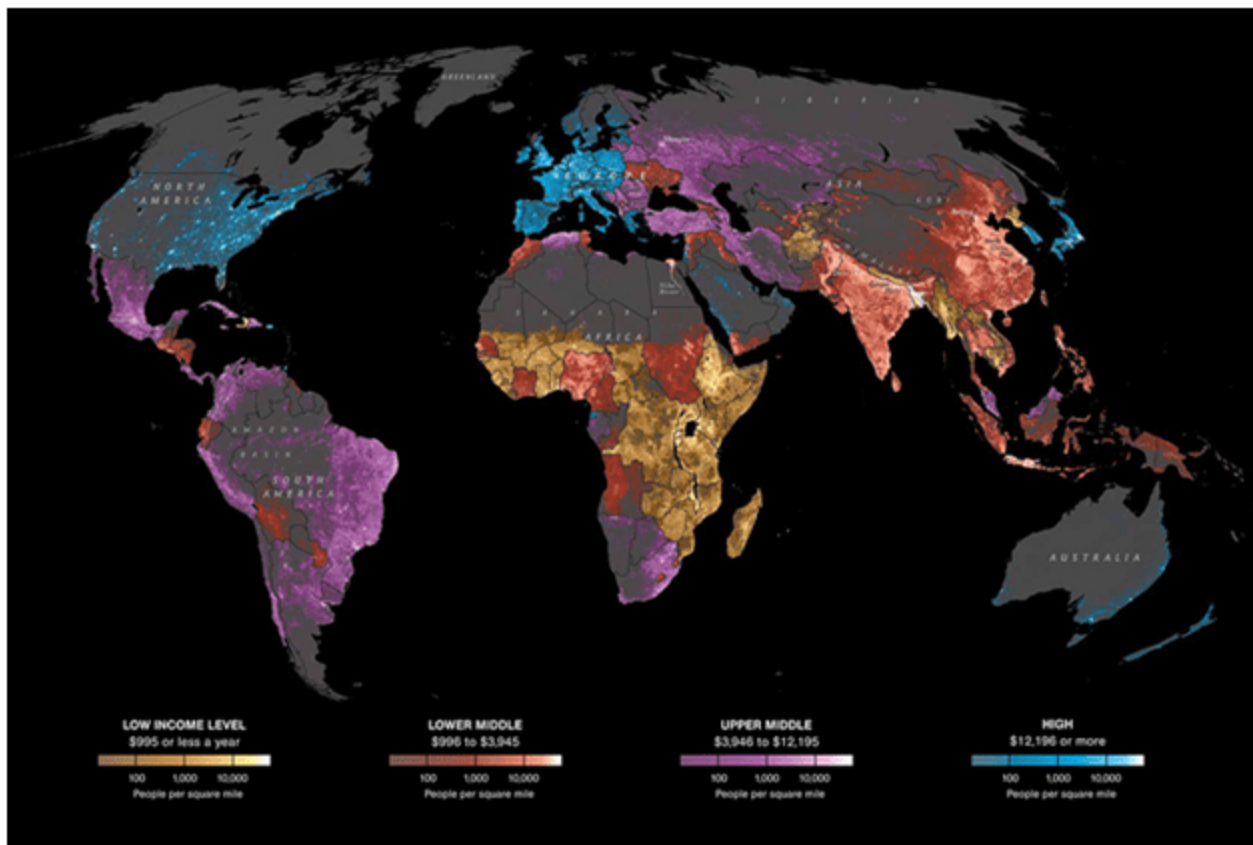
Tony Blair: Some international observers underplay these achievements, emphasizing the role of foreign aid in the country's success. It is clear that aid has significantly contributed to its development. But it is because the government has deployed it effectively that we can point to the achievements the country has made. It does a disservice to Rwandans to suggest otherwise – and at a time when many in western nations are questioning the use of aid budgets, we should look at Rwanda as an example of how to use aid well. The government has also faced criticism for some of the policy choices it has taken. For instance, the Gacaca system of community justice was introduced to try the perpetrators of the genocide. It has been attacked for not meeting international standards. But with limited resources, nearly 2 million people potentially faced with court proceedings and a need for the population to heal its wounds, Gacaca was the only practical solution to the transitional justice the country so badly needed.

And the population needed this. Because 20 years on, the social effects of the genocide are still being felt. Communities are still trying to build a liveable peace, in unimaginable circumstances – with murderers and their victims families living side by side. No wonder that trust is fragile. And building trust is made all the harder as the country's quest for justice is not over; many of those who committed the genocide are still at large. It was only this year that France tried the first suspect living on its soil. Pascal Simbikangwa, a former Rwandan intelligence chief, was sentenced to 25 years for his role in the slaughter.

Blair summarizes the article: It means that hard choices still need to be made. The country has ambitious economic targets – Rwanda aims to become a middle-income nation by 2020 – while political and social transformation continues. Last year, media and access to information laws were passed, while the genocide ideology law was loosened. A law criminalizing gay people was rejected. And in 2017, the presidential elections will take place. Rwandans are increasingly united. There is a strong patriotism and belief in the government – almost nine in 10 say they *"trust in the leadership of their country"*. They can never forget their tragic past but do not want to be defined by it. The older generation already know all too well the cost of failure, but a majority of the population, born post-

genocide, has inherited the possibility of a different future. We should remember the lives that were lost. We should recognize that this government undertook, and continues to undertake, a historic exercise in nation-building, and seek to understand the choices the country has made. And we should stand with them as they write the next chapter in their history.

If Rwanda can right its self, then there is hope for every country to address their own challenges. So for the other dysfunctional countries in Africa who are too numerous to name, they should understand that they need to put aside tribal differences in the greater good for everyone in their countries, as well as their neighbors with the understanding that unless they are tolerant to others and work together they will never prosper. We live in a world that depends on a global economy, where countries are dependent on others more than ever. And unless countries such as the DRC, Sudan, Chad, Libya, Egypt Somalia, Ivory Coast to name a few, the Continent of Africa will continue to be the mess that it is today. where nine of the ten poorest counties in the world are located.



Attached is an article from the **Huffington Post** by Vicky Ramirez with **8 Maps That Will Change the Way You Look at Africa** from **National Geographic**.

1. Where the world's 7 billion live

This illustrates where and how the world lives. Not surprisingly, the areas with the highest income levels have greater life expectancy (77 for males, 83 for females compared to 58 and 60 in low income levels), access to improved sanitation (99 percent compared to 35 percent), among other human

security factors. The need for development is critical in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly 1 billion people live, many on \$995 or less a year.

2. How the world would look if it were measured by its wealth, 2015

Using data from the **World Bank Development Indicators**, this map from **Global Finance** shows us what the world will look like in 2015 if it were inflated to the size of their economic wealth. Once again, the need to spur growth in Africa is not just evident, but necessary.

3. Now, the real size of Africa

We know the African continent is pretty big. But how big? This infographic, created by Kai Krause uses some of the largest countries in the world and all of Eastern Europe as puzzle pieces within the grand continent of Africa.

4. Where the world's 30 million slaves live

To quote Rajiv Narayan from **Upworthy**, *"Sure 12 Years a Slave won an Oscar, but we all deserve to win Best Actor for pretending slavery doesn't exist anymore."* This map which is issued by the **Walk Free Foundation** suggests that today there still is a presence of slavery (*hundreds of millions*) in a number of regions in Sub-Sahara Africa and in the Indian Sub-Continent as a result of child marriage, human trafficking and economic bondage.

5. Global Vegetation

This is the view of the world's vegetation presented by NASA clearly depicting the pastoral difference between Northern and Southern Africa. There is evidently opportunity for agriculture -- in fact -- it is twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. But there are other risks to consider in non-pastoral land. Check out the next map...

6. World Water Risk

When we say we have a global water crisis, this map indicates that it is serious. **The World Resource Institute** use a mapping tool called Aqueduct to help companies, investors, governments, and the public understand the global water stress and risks. You can compare this map with the previous map to see the affect. You will notice that while there is opportunity for agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa, large parts of Northern Africa and parts of Southern Africa face high risk of water scarcity.

7. Global Internet Usage

On a continent where only 7 percent of its inhabitants are online, this map is an eye-opening illustration of the digital divide. With the internet comes improved access to information, communication and ideas -- and organizations need to make sure to bridge the gap. The good news is that Africa's telecommunications market is one of the fastest growing in the world.

8. Energy Poverty

Last but not least, this snapshot of the world at night, stitched together with photos from NASA, contrasts with the little access to electricity in Africa compared to the global north. Energy poverty translates to poor health care, stifled economic growth, toxic fumes, limited or no education, and lack of safety.

Here is the Web Link: [\[REDACTED\]](#) and you can also download a copy of the article with the actual maps.

We all know the old adage that *"a picture is worth 1000 words,"* the above 8 maps represent so much more.



Ordinary Nigerians are the one class of people unlikely to benefit

Something strange happened in Nigeria last Sunday: The economy nearly doubled, racking up hundreds of billions of dollars, ballooning to the size of the Polish and Belgian economies, and breezing by the South African economy to become Africa's largest. As days go, it was a good one. It was, in fact, a miracle borne of statistics: It had been 24 years since Nigerian authorities last updated their approach to calculating gross domestic product (GDP), a process known as *"rebasing"* that wealthy countries typically carry out every five years. When the Nigerian government finally did it this week, the country's GDP — the market value of all finished goods and services produced in a country — soared to \$510 billion — an 89% rise, far in excess of analysts' predictions. Nigeria is now Africa's largest economy, pushing South Africa to a distant second place. Nigeria's overnight transformation raises two distinct but interconnected questions.

First: What do we miss about countries when we don't have accurate economic data about them—and what are the practical implications of that blindness? In computing its GDP all these years, Nigeria, incredibly, wasn't factoring in booming sectors like film and telecommunications. The Nigerian movie industry, Nollywood, generates nearly \$600 million a year and employs more than a million people, making it the country's second-largest employer after agriculture. As for the telecom industry, consider that there are now some 120 million mobile-phone subscribers in Nigeria, out of a population of 170 million. Nigeria and South Africa are the largest mobile markets in sub-Saharan Africa, and cell-phone use has been exploding in the country:



Incorporating the film and telecom industries into Nigeria's GDP made a huge difference in the services sector, rendering the country's economy not just bigger but more diversified. It's long overdue. The United Nations Statistical Commission recommends a statistical rebasing every five years, to:

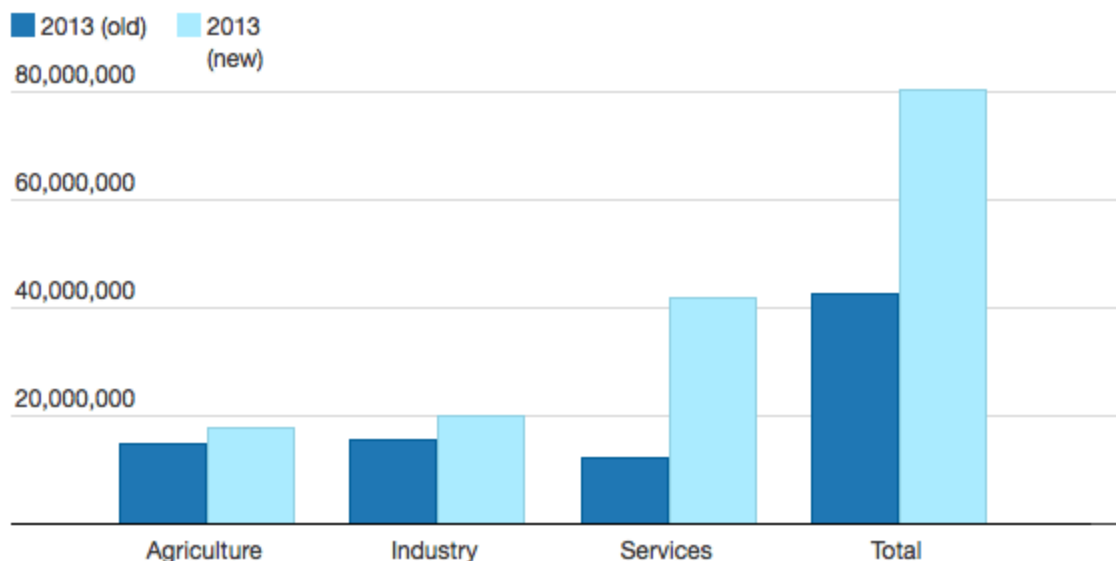
- a)** account for changes in the patterns of economic activity (consumption and production), such as a country discovering new mineral wealth or getting an infusion of broadband or launching a local car manufacturing industry or seeing an industry lapse into obsolescence

- b)** update base prices to a more recent year, to account for inflation.

In Nigeria's case we have not rebased since 1990 – a whole quarter of a century ago. By updating the base year from 1990 to 2010, apart from the necessary adjustment for inflation we have also had to take into account all the changes that have taken place – the impact of the internet and the telecommunications industry, Nollywood, the music industry, the sizeable expansion of the services industry, etc. The implication of this complicated recalculation is that what we thought was a \$270bn economy is actually worth \$510bn. It's the equivalent of suddenly discovering the existence of six Ghanas within Nigeria.

2013 Nigerian GDP: Old vs. New Estimates

Nominal GDP, in millions of Nigerian naira



Cases like Nigeria's indicate that *"Africa as a whole probably is not as poor as we've long thought,"* the economist Diane Coyle writes in her great (and well-timed) new book, **GDP: A Brief but Affectionate History**. *"In many African, Asian, and Latin American economies, the GDP calculations take no account of phenomena such as globalization, or the mobile phone revolution in the developing world.... There are fundamental weaknesses with the collection of basic statistics such as what businesses there are, what they are selling, or what goods and services households spend their incomes on. The surveys needed to collect this information are carried out only infrequently.... [O]ne estimate suggests that for twenty years sub-Saharan African economies have been growing three times faster than suggested by the 'official' data."*

"One estimate suggests that for twenty years sub-Saharan African economies have been growing three times faster than suggested by the 'official' data." And these economic indicators are not mere abstractions—they have real-world consequences. Coyle notes that when Ghana rebased in 2010, its GDP increased by 60 percent, transforming it instantly from a "low-income" country into a "low-middle-income" country. Aid organizations use these categories to determine levels of financial assistance. John Campbell at the Council on Foreign Relations points out that newly rebased Nigeria may now clamor for membership in political groupings like the G-20, the BRICS, and even the UN Security Council.

But all this brings us to the second question: Are economist (*bean counters*) too obsessed with GDP as a measure of countries' economic strength and health? As Coyle wrote on Monday, this week's GDP overhaul will likely make investors and entrepreneurs more confident in Nigeria. And yet, "Nothing real has changed, the economic problems like poverty and inequality and a poorly-functioning state remain." Campbell delves deeper into the economic problems facing individual Nigerians—issues that no amount of rebasing can solve:


South Africa's GDP numbers are three times larger than Nigeria's on a per capita basis. South Africa has a diverse, modern economy, while Nigeria remains heavily dependent on oil.... Further, World Bank president Jim Yong Kim included Nigeria with India, China, Bangladesh, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the countries with the largest number of people living in "extreme poverty," defined as less than \$1.25 per day. He went on to say that if you add to those five countries Indonesia,

Pakistan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya, those ten countries together account for 80 percent of the world's total "extreme poor." GDP, Coyle writes in her book, is a "*made-up entity*"—a product of the 1940s "*designed for the twentieth-century economy of physical mass production, not for the modern economy of rapid innovation and intangible, increasingly digital, services.*" The good news is that the Nigerian government now has a better system for measuring its economy. The bad news? Knowing Nigeria has a \$510-billion economy doesn't reveal a whole lot about the welfare of its citizens.

The change is noteworthy for, in the words of finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the "*psychological impact*" it will have on foreign investors. They will pay greater attention to Nigeria now that its economy casts a larger shadow than South Africa's and display new confidence that will potentially be rewarded with lucrative gains, especially at a time when value-laden sectors such as power are opening up in unprecedented ways. Business will also boom for hotel owners, travel agents, airlines, and events planners as the number of Nigeria-focused trips and investment conferences (already a booming industry since 2013) swell. Scammers might even be expected to cash in as well. ("Good Day dear friend, I am Lamido Sanusi, governor of the central bank of the newly rebased west African nation of Nigeria...")

The one class of people who have nothing to gain will be ordinary Nigerians: the market woman in Ibadan, the itinerant shoe cleaner in Lagos, the motorcycle taxi rider in Makurdi, the cattle merchant in Potiskum, the shoe maker in Aba, the newspaper vendor in Abuja; the sprawling class of 'bottom millions' condemned by their country to extreme poverty). The \$1,200 by which Nigeria's per-capita income has suddenly risen will not somehow magically appear in their pockets. For this crowd the news is the sort of sleight of mouth that they've since grown to expect from the government. In the aftermath of protests against the removal of fuel subsidies in 2012, President Jonathan announced, in a public broadcast, the creation of 370,000 jobs. Just like that, because everyone knows jobs are created when well-meaning presidential words mix with faith in the hearts of job-hungry citizens.

But for me the two big problems with Nigeria are the lack of transparency and rule of law, where there is neither. I first traveled to Nigeria four decades ago, it was still suffering from the aftermath of the Biafran War, and as far as I am concerned it is still a mess. With an estimated population of 174.5 million, land mass twice the size of the state of California and being the 8th largest exporter of crude oil, if Nigeria could ever get its act together, there is a possibility for it to become a true economic power beyond its regional power base. But until it institutes government policies that directed ground up, with full transparency and rule of law it will still be a long way from achieving South Africa's incredible success of more than quadrupling the size of its Middle Class in first ten years after majority rule in 1994 and doubling it again since 2004. We have to stop judging a country's success by economic numbers and instead concentrate on how to raise those condemned to extreme poverty at the bottom. And until Africa does this, it will still be the Dark Continent to me and other humanitarians who believe the greatest thing that we can do is champion policies and efforts that support the most unfortunate.

 **Inline image 10**

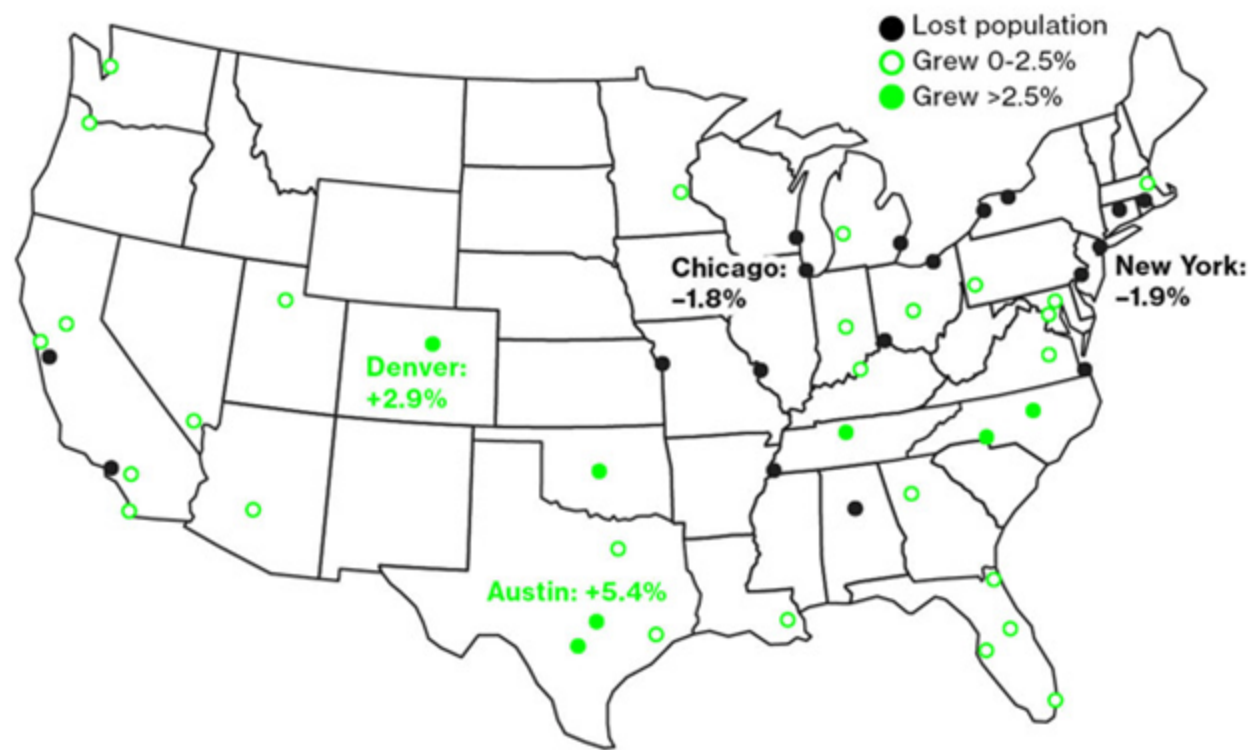
The Austin City Limits Music Festival

There is a new demographic shift in America as Millennials (*people born from the early 1980s to the early 2000s*) are increasingly deciding not to cast their roots in New York and Los Angeles, and instead are moving to somewhere less expensive, less massive, less hectic, and—again for good measure—less expensive. Many of these people are now moving from Los Angeles to Charlotte, from

Boston to Durham, from New York to Seattle, from the Bay Area to Denver. And thanks to new U.S. Census data, we now know that this trend is really happening. The flight to second-tier cities is thriving.

Fresh numbers released late last month give the 2013 population estimates for metro areas. The fastest growth came in regions that host fracking boom towns and retiree meccas, but those areas still have relatively small populations. If you look at the 52 metro areas with more than a million residents, however, the biggest increase in domestic migration from 2010 to 2013 drew newcomers to America’s second-tier cities. Below are the 20 fastest-growing large metros. Only three—Dallas, Houston, and Atlanta—are among the national top 10 by population size.

Population change from domestic migration, 2010 to 2013		
Metro Area		
1. Austin-Round Rock, Texas	5.4%	
2. Raleigh, ████	3.7%	
3. San Antonio-New Braunfels, Texas	3.2%	
4. Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, Colo.	2.9%	
5. Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, ████ -S.C.	2.6%	
6. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, Tenn.	2.6%	
7. Oklahoma City, Okla.	2.6%	
8. Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, Fla.	2.3%	
9. Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas	2.1%	
10. Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas	2.1%	
11. New Orleans-Metairie, La.	2.0%	
12. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.	1.9%	
13. Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla.	1.7%	
14. Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, Ore.-Wash.	1.4%	
15. Jacksonville, Fla.	1.3%	
16. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Wash.	1.3%	
17. Richmond, Va.	0.9%	
18. Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, Ga.	0.9%	
19. San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, Calif.	0.8%	
20. Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, Nev.	0.8%	

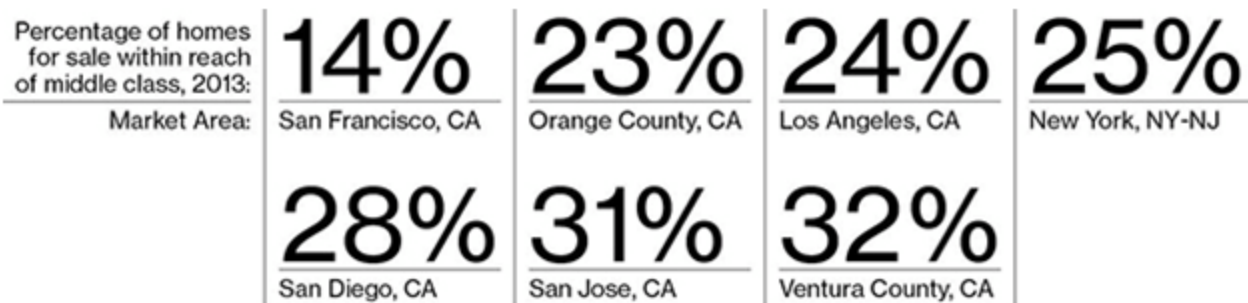


GRAPHIC BY BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK. DATA: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Note the places that didn't make the list: San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Greater New York, Los Angeles, Washington, [REDACTED]. Instead, those bigger cities are sending residents to the B-list metros. The census hasn't yet reported county-to-county migration for 2013, but another data set released in February shows the movement between specific areas from 2007 to 2011. For example, here are non-Texas metros sending the most new residents to Austin:



Perhaps this data from the website Trulia, which shows the areas where fewer than a third of homes on the market are affordable to the middle class, has something to do with it:

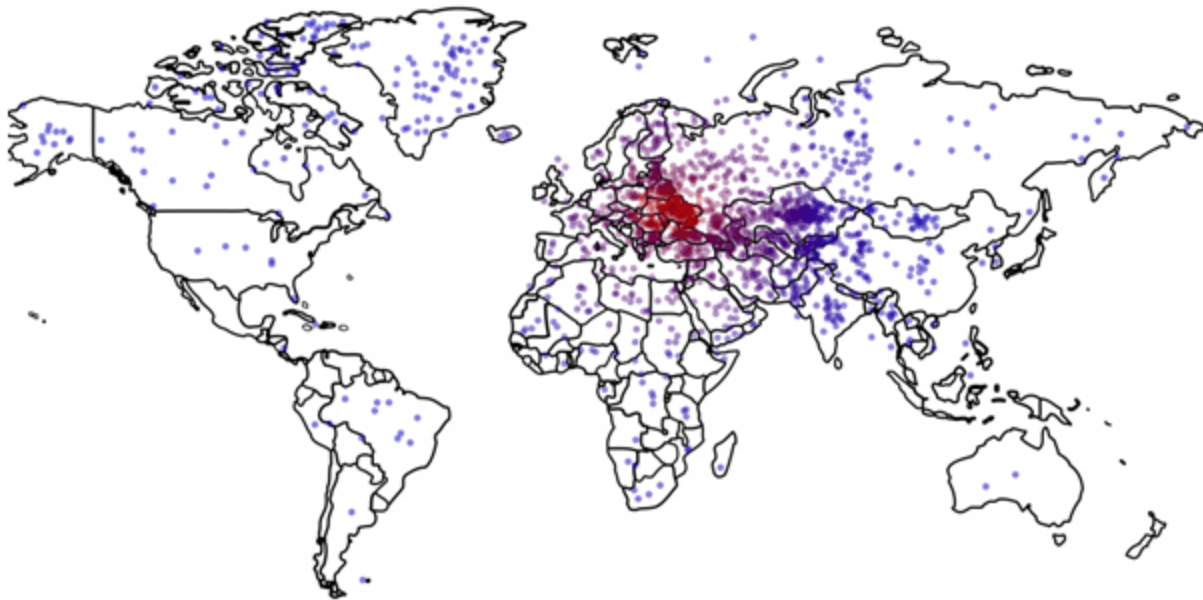


With wage growth lackluster to nonexistent, there aren't any signs that this affordability crunch will ease much soon. So this shift will continue to change politics and economies around the county. The housing markets in hot second-tier cities are currently the tightest in the country.

Will people start fleeing these growth cities, too, like the man who told CNN Money last week that he's priced out of Austin so he wants to move to Tennessee or North Carolina? Julian Castro, the mayor of San Antonio (third fastest-growing big metro), said at the 2012 Democratic convention in Charlotte (fifth fastest-growing big metro) that he thought migration from the liberal coasts will be a factor in making Texas less Republican.

And what happens to the really big cities that aren't keeping up with the growth of their second-tier peers? In New York City, some chefs say they are already having trouble staffing their kitchens. The

line cooks, it seems, would rather open their own restaurants in Nashville than work for \$12 an hour in Manhattan. For more information please feel free to download Karen Weise's attached article – ***Austin or Bust: America's Biggest Cities Lose People to the Urban B-List*** – this week in **Bloomberg Businessweek**.



Where's Ukraine? Each dot depicts the location where a U.S. survey respondent situated Ukraine; the dots are colored based on how far removed they are from the actual country, with the most accurate responses in **red** and the least accurate ones in **blue**.

There is no better example of the idiom “*Ignorance Is Bliss*” than the study (March 28-31, 2014) conducted by three Ivy League political scientists shows that only one out of six Americans surveyed could point out Ukraine on a map. The poll also shows that the further away a person thought Ukraine was from Eastern Europe, the more they wanted the U.S. to intervene militarily. It is hard not to be amused (*as well as depressed*) at the survey when the median guess was 1,800 miles out from the actual location of Ukraine. But the most depressing finding was that the less accurate respondents were the most bullish about American intervention.

Kyle Dropp of Dartmouth College, Joshua D. Kertzer of Harvard University and Thomas Zeitzoff of Princeton asked 2,066 Americans where Ukraine was on a map and how they think the U.S. should respond to the crisis there. The three “wanted to see where Americans think Ukraine is and to learn if this knowledge (or lack thereof) is related to their foreign policy views.” Participants were asked to locate Ukraine on a high-resolution world map. Some respondents put the East European country in South America, Australia and even just a few hundred miles from the North Pole. Sixteen percent got it right, but the median response was about 1,800 miles off. The researchers say some likely weren't paying much attention to the map section of the survey. They also may have misunderstood the question, as some marked Washington, ■■■, and various spots in the Midwest.

The rest of the survey focused on participants' perceptions of what is happening on the ground in Ukraine and what the U.S. should do about it. About 13 percent of Americans supported the use of U.S. military force in Ukraine and 45 percent supported less costly measures like boycotting a G8 summit in Russia and excluding the Russia from the club of major economies (which the U.S. is doing now). Interestingly, the further off respondents were about Ukraine's location, the more they wanted the U.S. to intervene. Regardless of other demographic markers or political affiliations, the people who were way off in finding Ukraine were more likely to favor U.S. involvement.

In an article this week in **The Economist – Ignorance is Strength** – Part of the problem is the trait of overconfidence, much explored by behavioral-finance academics. We all think we are better drivers than average, have an above-average sense of humor and so on; this self-belief may be quite useful in persuading us to start businesses, or indeed get out of bed each morning. When it comes to our ability to process information, however, we can be hopelessly wrong. This is often shown by tests which ask us to estimate a high and low range for a number (eg the number of atoms in the universe) with 90% confidence; rarely are 90% of the estimates within the range.

This issue creates a problem for those of us who believe that democracy needs reform. One much-touted answer is to hold more referendums. But these can run into the kind of special-interest problems as those with most to gain (*or lose*) will campaign hardest (and spend more) for measures which spread the cost widely among voters. Electors may also have little incentive to become informed because it is highly unlikely that their individual vote will make a difference to the result. And they often vote in a way that does not pertain to the issue at hand and against their own self-interest.

Another example of misinformation is the foreign-aid budget. A **Worldpublicopinion** survey in 2010 found that, asked for their estimate of the proportion of the US budget spent on foreign aid, the median guess was 25%; when asked what would be a reasonable proportion, the median opinion was 10%. The actual proportion was 0.6%. So most people think that the proportion of foreign aid is way too high but the actual number is lower than what they think would be reasonable (it may be that the two guesses are mutually dependent; people say 10% because they want the budget to be halved from what they believe it to be. Still, there is a lot of leeway). Remember only 60% of Americans have a passport and less than half of them have traveled outside of the Western Hemisphere. But the biggest problem with many Americans is in spite of their ignorance many don't believe in their own infallibility.

What could be the answer? Public education is an option, starting at school with much more detailed civics lessons, and we could create an electoral commission that would be obliged to send out a one-page list of the data to all potential referendum voters. But this sounds a bit like force-feeding toddlers spinach; you can't make adults read stuff. And the poor old teachers would find themselves besieged by enraged parents, complaining of political bias. But one of the things that we will have to do is lose the idea that we are number 1 and therefore can do no wrong. And a good start on how to deal with today's international issues and challenges is to acknowledge that both the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were colossal mistakes which could hopefully lead to our taking a more balanced look at a world around us and not through the rose colored lens of our own naïve, selfish self-interest and self-importance..... *as there are none so blind as those who will not see*. And ignoring the evidence of science because it doesn't support a certain ideology is stupid, I am sorry ignorant.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTES

In matters of truth and justice there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same.

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

A long time conservative Republican friend of mine sent this video in an attempt to get me to switch to **FOX News**..... And although, it was entertaining I sort of think that I will stay with NBC, PBS, NPR, MSNBC, Huffington Post, New York Time, Washington Post, The Economist, Financial Times, The Atlantic, Rolling Stone and Mother Jones.... With this said, I have to admit the video is extremely funny and with this admission please feel free to also enjoy....

THE GIRLS ON FOX NEWS

Web Link: <http://youtu.be/gNjoT4uK3IE>

And yes, hats off to the person in Nashville who made this, in spite of your politics well done my friend.....

GREAT MAGIC TRICK

Marco Tempest: *The magic of truth and lies* (and iPods)

What if deception is in the eye of the beholder? And what if lies can help us tell the truth? Watch this video and enter into the multimedia world of magician Marco Tempest. Then decide for yourself.

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

Ideas are not set in stone. When exposed to thoughtful people, they morph and adapt into their most potent form. **TEDWeekends** highlights some of today's most intriguing ideas and allow them to develop in real time. Please enjoy of the video with magician Marco Tempest on the above YouTube link because are *Magic Tricks Are SO. MUCH. FUN.*

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Hugh Masekela is a world-renowned flugelhornist, trumpeter, bandleader, composer, singer and defiant political voice who remains deeply connected at home, while his international career sparkles. He was born in the town of Witbank, South Africa on April 4, 1939. At the age of 14, the deeply respected advocate of equal rights in South Africa, Father Trevor Huddleston, provided Masekela with a trumpet and, soon after, the **Huddleston Jazz Band** was formed. Masekela began to hone his, now signature, Afro-Jazz sound in the late 1950s during a period of intense creative collaboration, most notably performing in the 1959 musical **King Kong**, written by Todd Matshikiza, and, soon thereafter, as a member of the now legendary South African group, the Jazz Epistles (featuring the classic line up of Kippie Moeketsi, Abdullah Ibrahim and Jonas Gwangwa).

In 1960, at the age of 21 he left South Africa to begin what would be 30 years in exile from the land of his birth. On arrival in New York he enrolled at the Manhattan School of Music. This coincided with a golden era of jazz music and the young Masekela immersed himself in the New York jazz scene where nightly he watched greats like Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Mingus and Max Roach. Under the tutelage of Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong, Hugh was encouraged to develop his own unique style, feeding off African rather than American influences – his debut album, released in 1963, was entitled **Trumpet Africaine**.

In the late 1960s Hugh moved to Los Angeles in the heat of the '*Summer of Love*', where he was befriended by hippie icons like David Crosby, Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. In 1967 Hugh performed at the **Monterey Pop Festival** alongside Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, Ravi Shankar, The Who and Jimi Hendrix. In 1968, his instrumental single '**Grazin' in the Grass**' went to Number One on the American pop charts and was a worldwide smash, elevating Hugh onto the international stage. His subsequent solo career has spanned 5 decades, during which time he has released over 40 albums (and been featured on countless more) and has worked with such diverse artists as Harry Belafonte, Dizzy Gillespie, The Byrds, Fela Kuti, Marvin Gaye, Herb Alpert, Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder and the late Miriam Makeba.

In 1990 Hugh returned home, following the unbanning of the **ANC** and the release of Nelson Mandela – an event anticipated in Hugh's anti-apartheid anthem '**Bring Home Nelson Mandela**' (1986) which had been a rallying cry around the world. Volvo XC60 and Hugh Masekela. In 2004 Masekela published his compelling autobiography, **Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela** (co-authored with D. Michael Cheers), which **Vanity Fair** described thus: '...you'll be in awe of the many lives packed into one.' His story is far from over, and as Bra Hugh approaches his 75th birthday he shows no signs of slowing down. He maintains a busy international tour schedule as his fan base around the world continues to grow.

In June 2010 he opened the FIFA Soccer World Cup Kick-Off Concert to a global audience and performed at the event's Opening Ceremony in Soweto's Soccer City. Later that year he created the mesmerizing musical, **Songs of Migration** with director, James Ngcobo, which drew critical acclaim and played to packed houses. Songs of Migration will visit Amsterdam, London and Washington in October 2012. In 2010, President Zuma honored him with the highest order in South Africa: **The Order of Ikhamanga**, and 2011 saw Masekela receive a **Lifetime Achievement** award at the **WOMEX World Music Expo** in Copenhagen. The US Virgin Islands proclaimed '**Hugh Masekela Day**' in March 2011, not long after Hugh joined U2 on stage during the Johannesburg leg of their **360 World Tour**. U2 frontman Bono described meeting and playing with Hugh as one of the highlights of his career.

2012 has already been a busy year with Hugh just returning to South Africa from touring Europe with Paul Simon on the **Graceland 25th Anniversary Tour**. He has opened his own studio and record label, **House of Masekela** which has already put out its first release: **Friends** – a 4 CD collection of jazz standards featuring his dear friend, pianist Larry Willis. Hugh is currently using his global reach to spread the word about heritage restoration in Africa – a topic that remains very close to his heart. “My biggest obsession is to show Africans and the world who the people of Africa really are,” Masekela confides – and it’s this commitment to his home continent that has propelled him forward since he first began playing the trumpet.

Over the decades, Masekela has been involved in numerous social initiatives, and most recently he serves as a director on the board of **The Lunchbox Fund**, a non-profit organization that provides a daily meal to students of township schools in Soweto of South Africa. With this I would like to share the music of Hugh Masekela, whom I first met in Greenwich Village New York outside of the famed Village Gate and after a set we had made so much noise in front that one of the guests in the Greenwich Hotel above, threw a pot of “water laced with urine” on us at 4am after we told him to stuff it..... And whatever you do..... try to listen to *Proud Monkey* with Dave Mathews and Hugh Masekela as it truly was a surprise to me and hopefully you too....

Hugh Masekela – **Grazing In The Grass** -- <http://youtu.be/UKcGCOEb28>

Hugh Masekela – **Coal Train** -- http://youtu.be/yo9bhF_KcKI

Hugh Masekela – **Market Place** -- <http://youtu.be/VskqOLueWs>

Hugh Masekela – **Ibala Lami** -- <http://youtu.be/Lz4xdLIz96s>

Hugh Masekela – **Chileshe** -- <http://youtu.be/aLSLqpMXFdE>

Hugh Masekela – **Khauleza** -- http://youtu.be/WBC_3P_iC38

Hugh Masekela & The Graceland Band – **Bring Back Nelson Mandela** -- <http://youtu.be/epjCOEdBBxU>

Hugh Masekela – **Old People, Old Folks** -- http://youtu.be/7JJY71_Zf5g

Hugh Masekela & Sibongile Khumalo – **District 6** -- <http://youtu.be/z7Kd9DiUauc>

Hugh Masekela – **Mama** -- [REDACTED]

Hugh Masekela – **What Is Wrong With Groovin'?** -- [REDACTED]
[v=wxUnOzKoy3o](http://youtu.be/v=wxUnOzKoy3o)

Hugh Masekela & Herb Alpert – **Skokiaan** -- <http://youtu.be/rgyCUWAaV3s>

Dave Mathews Band & Hugh Masekela – **Proudest Monkey** -- [REDACTED]
[v=jmmODnes2XU](http://youtu.be/v=jmmODnes2XU)

U2 Featuring Hugh Masekela – **I Still Haven't Found What [REDACTED] Looking For** -- http://youtu.be/DJIqm7Y_qbY

Hugh Masekela – TEDxObserver – **The Western Influence on Africa** Youth -- <http://youtu.be/7Qx7R43-LQM>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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