

Unsolicited ~~Literature~~ *fuck literature—*
we need
Straight facts
Issue III:
Fall 2017

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

According to data from <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/2.11>, the US has 962,989 primary school-age boys and 925,440 primary school-age girls who are out of school.

The only countries with a higher # of unlucky children, who should be in school but are anywhere else, are Pakistan and Sudan.

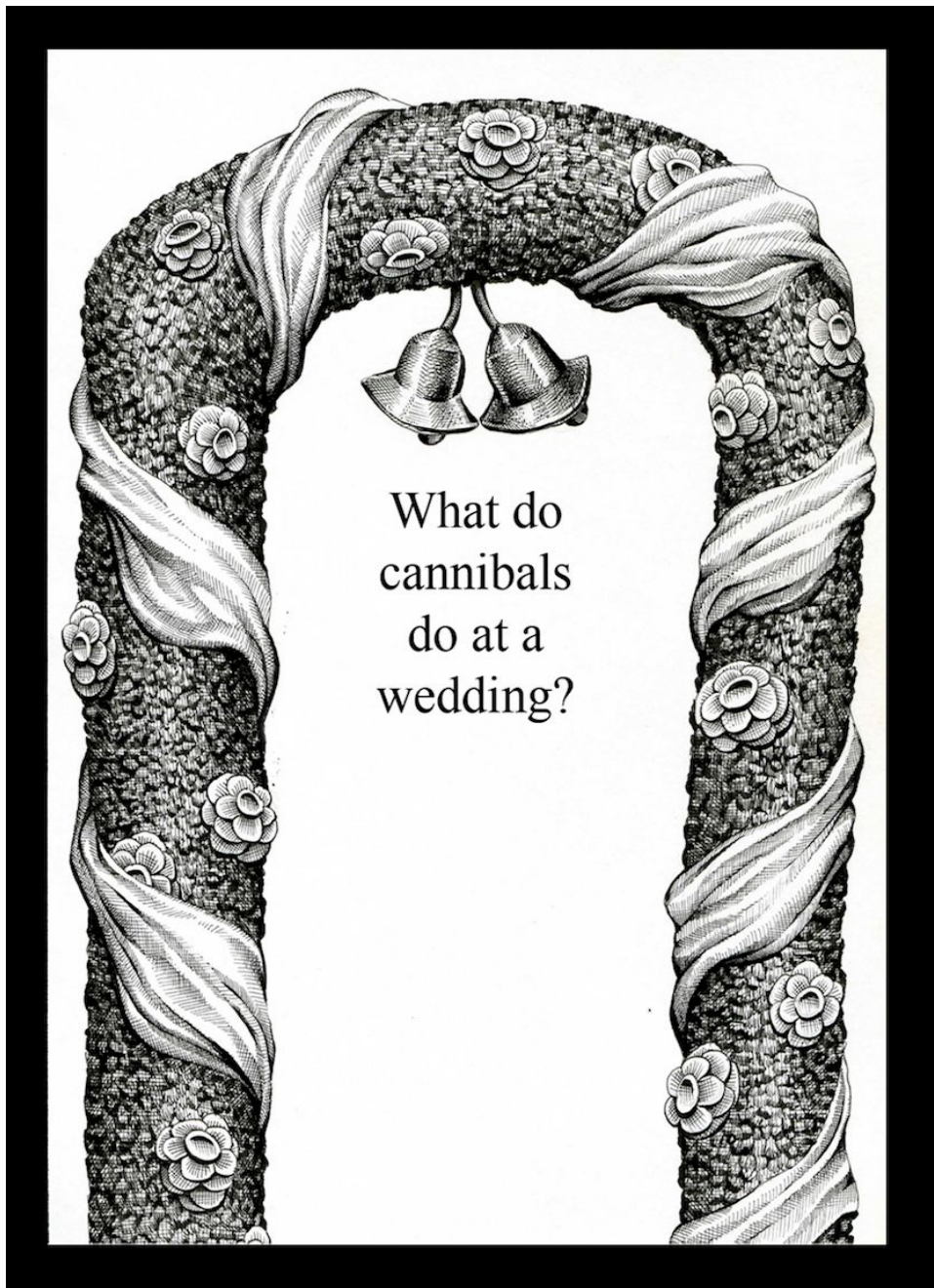
But wait: why imply school is unquestionably good?

US schools could be much better. However:

Schooling significantly reduces the chances of incarceration.

Lochner, Lance, and Enrico Moretti. 2004. "The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Reports." *American Economic Review*, 94(1): 155-189.

(Maybe because schools are already prison-like.)



Find answer on a future page

new year's resolution - inauguration day

As 2017 begins, MLK day passes, and the neoliberal overlords keep making narrative-crafted dualities for us to scuffle over on social media in predictable and intentional binaries that seek only to one-up, shame, and outgroup others, let us keep vigilant watch over our political rhetoric that seeks to throw peace-maker laurels on Obama's legacy as well as the foreign-policy intentions of the Democratic party at large.

As much as Trump is a big bad dude with a lot of power, and just as we should not sanitize MLK's legacy with lofty bourgeois platitudes, let's not forget the smiling Democrats that have spent the last 8 years making the Presidency into a virtual reality game for the CIA and military industrial complex to legally make everywhere that is not within the United States' borders on planet earth a destabilized warlord crater.

As much as we want to remember Obama as the bomb.com and Clinton as a ceiling-smashing could-have-been, we should instead remember a legacy of drones and slow buildup of tensions against Russia. Follow the money. Stop reading the Huff Po and NYT, only. Make your new year's resolution to be allegiant to Truth and Hard and Ugly Critical Thinking, rather than party bosses, colors, identities, teams, circles, memes, groups, parties, and so on, all of which seek to otherize and make ingroups and outgroups of potential allies. If you bring up an idea, for instance, such as why are assault rifles banned, and do so out of objective curiosity just for conversation's sake, you should not be pegged into a meme cache as a knuckle-dragging climate change denier.

The bourgeoisie use this familiarity of association to weave schemas into our head that will anticipate the overall identity-allegiance of one person based upon their opinion, or even voicing of a topic, that goes against the identity collage of the other group.

Don't let that costly liberal arts education debt get you down, out there. I see you! Use it. Use your mind. Be discerning, and while you do so, be kind and tolerant of duality, non-mutual exclusivity of opinions, ambiguity, and so forth.

I hope everyone stays lit and woke in 2017. If not now in these times, then never.

After the first Gulf War both the George H.W. Bush and the Clinton administration hoped that the combination of economic sanctions, military containment and the no-flight zones in northern and southern Iraq would result in a military coup or a palace revolution by members of Saddam's own Baath regime. This was not U.N. policy, however, but Washington's own unilateral effort to change the regime in Baghdad.

During the first Bush and Clinton administrations, the main strategy was to support a coup or a palace revolution, and not to undertake any active American involvement to remove the Baath regime. After the 1991 Gulf War, President George H. W. Bush signed a presidential finding authorizing the CIA to topple Saddam. A 1998 law passed by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton authorized up to \$97 million in military assistance to Iraqi opposition forces 'to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein' and 'promote the emergence of a democratic government'. There was a considerable change in U.S. policy toward Iraq when George W. Bush took office in January 2001.

A group of former democrats, who represented a more expansionist foreign policy than the traditional realist line of the Republican Party, gained a foothold in the party as early as in 1994.

They represented a line where national measures and freedom of action were the backbone of American foreign policy. Using organizations like the U.N. was only of interest when the U.S. was unable to solve a problem on its own, or when Washington was guaranteed support for its own policy. To be sure, there existed a significant degree of antagonism between this group and the old, more traditional realist viewpoint of foreign policy within the Republican Party. Yet, the expansionist congregation within the Republican camp gained the upper hand over the traditional realists in the wake of September 11, 2001.



In October 2001 the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, which marked the beginning of its *Global War on Terrorism* (GWOT). One year later the Congress and the Senate passed a law authorising the use of armed force against Iraq. This resolution empowered the President to declare

war without obtaining U.N. Security Council authorization. Thus, by October 2002 the U.S. spoke with one voice in matters of foreign

policy. The expansionist forces had now definitely won the tug-of-war with the realist forces of the Bush administration.

From this point on the President was in full charge of the Iraq situation, of course with the assistance of his State Department, the Pentagon, the CIA and his advisors at the White House. However, this seeming unilateralism did not imply that Washington would refrain from trying to obtain acceptance from the U.N. for its own foreign policy as exemplified by the passing of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002. In this document the Security Council recognised 'the threat that Iraq's non-compliance with Council resolutions and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles poses to international peace and security', and Iraq was warned that 'it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations'.

By the end of November the U.N. weapons inspector, Hans Blix, told the U.N. Security Council that Iraq had not fully accounted for its stocks of chemical and biological weapons and had not fully accepted its obligation to disarm under 1441.

When Colin Powell on February 5, 2003 presented evidence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction (henceforth abbreviated WMD) in Iraq for the U.N. Security Council, the U.S. had already deployed thousands of soldiers to the Gulf region. As early as in January, 2003, U.S. Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, had signed deployment orders for 62,000 U.S. troops to the region, in addition to the 43,000 already in place.

<http://www.popularsocialscience.com/2012/10/25/why-did-the-united-states-invade-iraq-in-2003-2/>

The 5 largest arms importers and their suppliers, 2012–16

INDIA

13%

of all major arms imports



SAUDI ARABIA

8.2%

of all major arms imports



UAE

4.6%

of all major arms imports



CHINA

4.5%

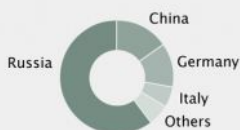
of all major arms imports



ALGERIA

3.7%

of all major arms imports



Only suppliers of over 3% of a country's arms imports are shown

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (20 Feb 2017)

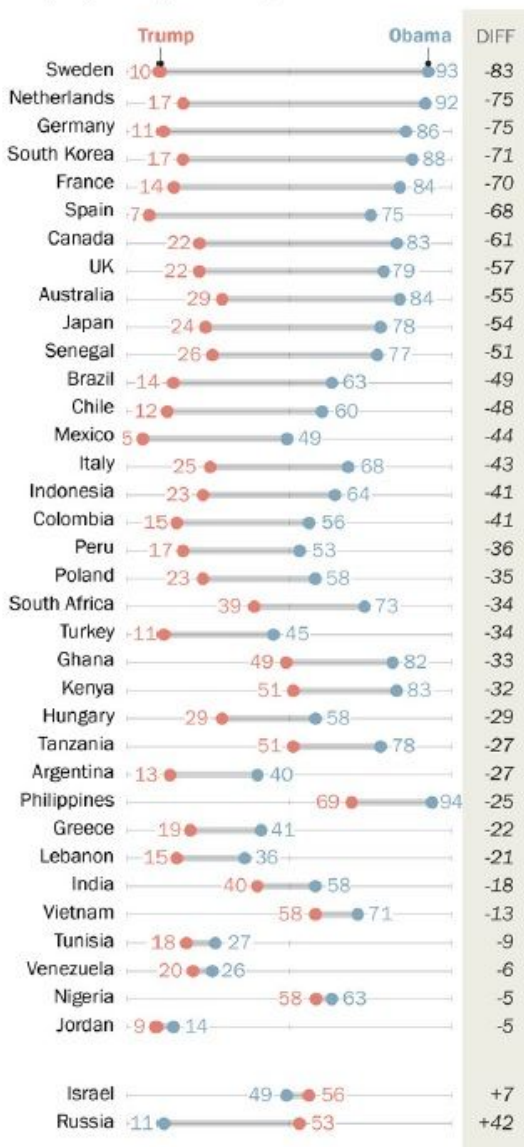
www.sipri.org
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“WE HAVE LOST THE RESPECT OF THE ENTIRE WORLD. AMERICANS DESERVE BETTER”

- DONALD TRUMP

Confidence in the U.S. president to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Look, respect →

Note: Obama figures are based on the most recently available data for each country between 2014 and 2016.
Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey, Q30a.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



10:37 PM - November 8, 2016

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) involves a greatly inflated sense of self-importance, as well as a somewhat fragile love of the self. The person believes that he or she is superior and special. To meet the criteria of NPD in the DSM-5, several things must be met. I will list those criteria and link each of them to where we see them in Trump.

First, impairment in self functioning (either #1 or #2):

1. Excessive reference¹ to others for self-definition and self-esteem regulation²; exaggerated self-appraisal may be inflated³ or deflated, or vacillate between extremes; emotional regulation mirrors fluctuations in self-esteem⁴.
2. Goal-setting is based on gaining approval from others⁵; personal standards are unreasonably high in order to see oneself as exceptional, or too low based on a sense of entitlement⁶; often unaware of own motivations.

Second, impairment in interpersonal functioning (either #1 or #2):

1. Impaired ability to recognize⁷ or identify with the feelings⁸ and needs of others⁹; excessively attuned to reactions of others¹⁰, but only if perceived as relevant to the self¹¹; over- or underestimation of own effect on others¹².

¹ <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/donald-trumps-friends-jimmy-kimmel-874509>

² <https://www.bustle.com/p/trumps-un-speech-began-with-the-president-name-dropping-his-building-ne-arby-2375220>

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/trump-i-have-the-best-words/2017/04/05/53a9ae4a-19fd-11e7-8598-9a99da559f9e_video.html?utm_term=.4b898c5ba70c

⁴ http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2017/04/donald_trump_s_defining_trait_his_insecurity.html

⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2017/07/19/trump-cannot-be-trusted-to-be-alone-with-putin/?utm_term=.cb8e7f13852d

⁶ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2017/08/10/trump-his-17-day-vacation-tells-mcconnell-get-back-work/558109001/>

⁷ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/26/opinions/trumps-lack-of-empathy-about-puerto-rico-reyes/index.html>

⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/30/opinions/critics-made-by-people-of-color-and-women-trump-bailey-opinion/index.html>

⁹ <http://fortune.com/2017/07/20/donald-trump-health-insurance-comments/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gq.com/story/donald-trump-campaign-rallies-forever>

¹¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-intelligence-reports-white-house-re-ad-them-mentioned-name-president-a7740726.html>

¹² <http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/344843-trump-boy-scout-head-called-my-speech-the-greatest>

2. Relationships largely superficial¹³ and exist to serve self-esteem regulation¹⁴; mutuality constrained by little genuine interest¹⁵ in others' experiences and predominance of a need for personal gain¹⁶.

Third, Pathological personality traits in Antagonism, characterized by:

1. Grandiosity: feelings of entitlement¹⁷, self-centeredness¹⁸, firmly holding to the belief of superiority¹⁹, condescending towards others²⁰

2. Attention seeking: Excessive attempts to attract and be the focus of the attention²¹ of others, craving admiration²².

Fourth, the impairments in personality functioning and the individual's personality trait expression are relatively stable across time²³ and consistent across situations²⁴.

Fifth, the impairments in personality functioning and the individual's personality trait expression are not better understood as normative for the individual's developmental stage or socio-cultural environment²⁵.

TL;DR - Trump meets all of the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder. He interprets everything through the lens of his own self-interest. If people applaud, he thinks it's because they love him. If a band starts playing, he thinks it's to celebrate him. The world loves him, and anything that indicates otherwise is fake news.

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https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/melania-trump-summed-up-her-tragic-marriage-in-one_us_592444eee4b07617ae4cbfa2

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/06/11/so-long-trump-tower-first-lady-melania-trump-son-barron-move-into-white-house/?utm_term=.2cca2579b52f

¹⁵ <http://www.newsweek.com/trump-president-unstable-prejudiced-poll-656579>

¹⁶ <http://www.businessinsider.com/trump-puerto-rico-visit-hurricane-maria-water-purification-2017-10>

¹⁷ <http://www.newsweek.com/poor-little-rich-kid-trump-ultimate-entitled-brat-418642>

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<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/05/17/donald-trump-coast-guard-graduation-unfairly-treated-president-238505>

¹⁹ <http://time.com/4936612/donald-trump-genes-genetics/>

²⁰ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/25/politics/trump-pushes-prime-minister-nato-summit/index.html>

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/07/22/donald-trump-wants-you-to-love-him-but-mostly-he-just-wants-your-attention/?utm_term=.d3b2f5dc189c

22

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/qv4wdb/a-trump-cabinet-meeting-turned-into-a-bizarre-ass-kissing-contest

²³ <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-totally-focused-interest-biographer/story?id=47680937>

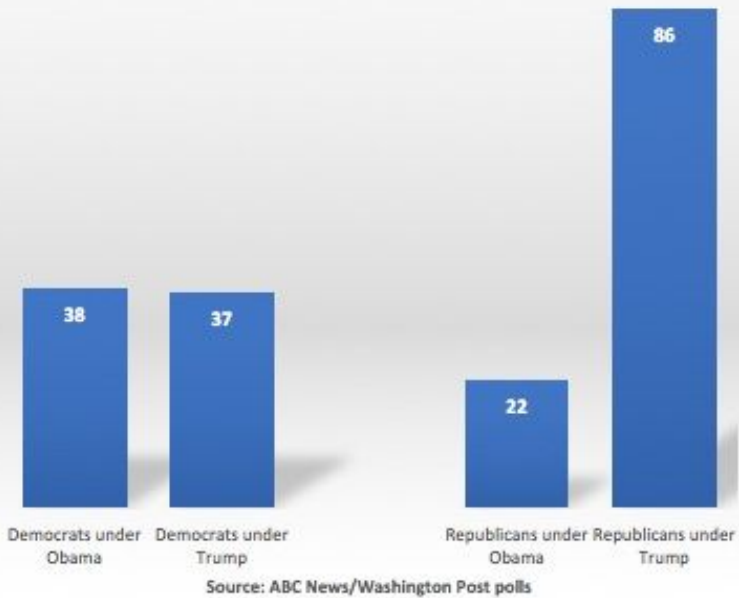
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<https://www.advocate.com/politics/2017/7/27/head-boy-scouts-apologizes-donald-trumps-inappropriate-jamboree-speech>

25

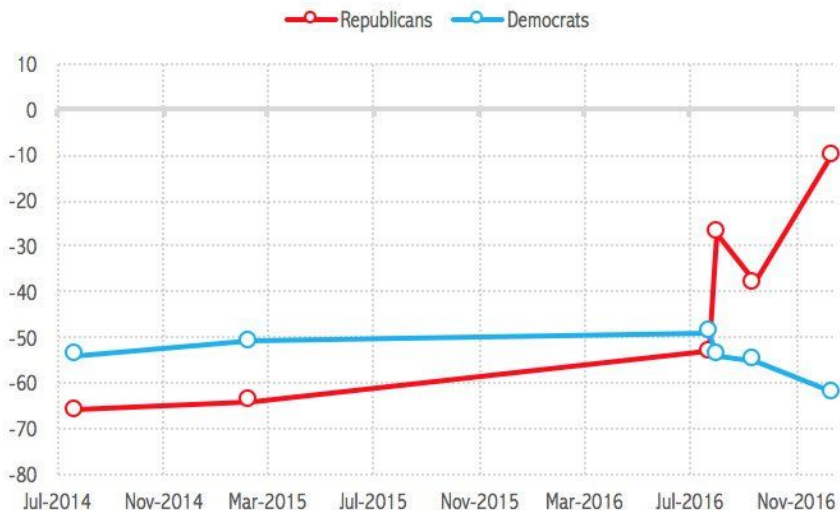
<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/billionaires-on-donald-trump-what-warren-buffett-bill-gates-and-more-have-to-say-1.12116174>

Partisan support for bombing Syria as punishment for using chemical weapons, 2013 and 2017



Net-favorability of Vladimir Putin

YouGov/Economist Polls (Percent "Favorable" minus percent "Unfavorable")



Russia-backed FB page promoted 'Stop Islamization of Texas' rally

10/06/17 08:58 AM EDT

A so-called "Troll Factory" operated out of Russia promoted a rally last year opposing what it deemed the "Islamization of Texas" using a Facebook page called "Heart of Texas," CNN reported Friday.

The protest — called the "Stop Islamization of Texas" rally — was organized around the opening of a library at an Islamic Center in Houston, which the Facebook page wrongly claimed received public funds.

The protest reportedly drew the attention of the Houston City Council days after it took place, and the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Texas reported violent comments posted on the Heart of Texas page to the FBI.

The page was run by the Internet Research Agency, a Russian "Troll Factory" based in St. Petersburg, Russia, according to CNN. It was among the 470 accounts and pages turned over to Congress as part of Facebook's review of accounts operated by the Internet Research Agency.

The Heart of Texas page further illustrates how Russia sought to leverage social media to sow division in the U.S. during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Business Insider first reported the link between the Heart of Texas page and Russia.

The Facebook page has since been suspended but had gained some 249,000 likes, according to CNN. It also included inflammatory posts propagating conspiracy theories and spouting Islamophobic remarks.

Among the issues pushed by the page was the notion of Texas secession from the U.S., calling for rallies just days before the presidential election in November. CNN, however, was unable to verify whether such rallies took place.

The U.S. Intelligence Community concluded in a report made public in January that Russia sought to wage a broad campaign to disrupt and influence the 2016 election. Those efforts have become the subject of a special counsel investigation, as well as numerous congressional probes.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AID PACKAGE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1998

U.S. House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on General Oversight and Investigations,
Committee on Banking and Financial Services,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m. in room 2128, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Spencer T. Bachus, [chairman of the subcommittee], presiding.

Present: Chairman Bachus; Representatives Roukema, Barr, Weldon, Manzullo, Sanders, LaFalce, Lee, and Hinchey.

Chairman BACHUS. Good morning. I would like to call together the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Investigations of the Banking and Financial Services Committee. We want to welcome you to this hearing. The Clinton Administration has asked Congress to appropriate an additional \$18 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars to the International Monetary Fund. Many claim that the world may be facing an economic crisis and that such a crisis cannot be averted unless Congress gives the IMF these funds. To avoid a prolonged economic slowdown in the world, giving \$18 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars to the IMF would be appealing—if it were only that simple. But of course it is not that simple. Some of the world's leading economists claim that not only can the IMF not save the world, but the IMF has contributed to the current crisis. Among many others, economist Milton Friedman and former Secretaries of the Treasury George Shultz and William Simon, are well known critics of increased IMF funding and oppose an increase in its funding and mission. Today the subcommittee meets to examine the IMF's role in relation to Russia. The recent Russian economic crisis has caused jitters around the world and makes this a particularly appropriate time to examine the IMF's record and make an assessment of the situation there. Russia's nuclear arsenal makes its internal stability a matter of utmost importance to the United States and recent events there are a true cause for alarm. It is no longer a certainty that Russia will succeed in its transition to a market economy. Russia's problems appear to be first and foremost a direct result of its failure to implement true market reform and installing instead a form of crony capitalism of the sort that has curtailed economic growth in many Asian countries. Nevertheless, we must ask tough questions of the IMF policy concerning Russia—many consider that the IMF has contributed to the problem in Russia. We must ask if the IMF has even been a positive force in Russia. Indeed, it would appear that given the recent events in Russia, it will require some of the best spin doctors in Washington to make IMF policy in Russia appear a success.

Furthermore, it appears more and more likely that the IMF was blind, or possibly even duped, concerning the true state of the economic problems in Russia. Someone was asleep at the switch. In January of 1998, the IMF stated that in regard to Russia that "the most important battles in securing macroeconomic stabilization and creating a market economy have been won." Yesterday the Los Angeles Times reported that a key

architect of Russia's economic transformation now claims that Russia "conned" the international community out of nearly \$20 billion in loans by hiding the severity of the country's fiscal problems. The paper states that "Anatoly B. Chubais, who in July negotiated a \$4.8 billion loan from the IMF, said in an interview in Kommersant Daily that it was necessary and appropriate for Russia to lie to obtain infusions of cash. If the government had told the truth, the long-time advisor to President Boris N. Yeltsin said in the interview, Russia's economy would have collapsed last spring and global lenders would have stopped dealing with us forever." Asked if the Russian government has the right to lie about the country's instability, Chubais replied, "In such situations, the authorities have to do it. We ought to. The financial institutions understand, despite the fact that we conned them out of \$20 billion, that we had no other way out." If this is true, one wonders how the IMF could have reached correct conclusions about Russia. Moreover, if other reports are true that as much as \$100 billion of the international aid to Russia has simply been transported out of the country to secure foreign accounts in Switzerland for the benefit of crime bosses in Russia, we may be seeing the first evidence of the largest con job in the history of the world. Much of the debate before Congress concerning the IMF has involved economists arguing over theory. We are taking somewhat of a different approach here today. Today's hearing will provide an opportunity to examine an IMF relief package in isolation and the real world effects—both political and economic—of IMF action.

At this time I will turn to Mr. Sanders for any opening remarks that he has and also to identify the third panel. Thank you.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you personally for holding this hearing. I know that Washington today is abuzz with other issues, but the fact of the matter is what we are talking about today affects not only virtually all of the people in the United States but billions and billions of people throughout the world. And I want to thank you and your staff and my staff and our guests for all of their hard work in making what I am sure is going to be a very, very important hearing. Mr. Chairman, as we meet today the world is witnessing a Russian tragedy of historic proportions. Banks are closed. The ruble is rubble. Food is growing scarce and the government in Russia is in disarray. For the seven years since the fall of communism, the IMF has been guiding the Russian economy. And tragically, the results are clear. In Russia today we have a few world class billionaires combined with economic collapse, soaring debt, mass unemployment, grinding poverty and unpaid wages and unpaid pensions. When communism fell, the IMF prescribed a "shock therapy." This was essentially a Russian translation of the devastating structural adjustment that the Fund imposed on Mexico, Africa, Southeast Asia and other debtor countries. It insisted that Russia cut government spending, sell of their public assets and raise interest rates to attract foreign investment. The IMF prescribed that Russia run its economy for the benefit of foreign investors and a few wealthy Russians at the expense of the Russian people. It failed to notice that, as a Polish Deputy Prime Minister Gregorz Kolotko put it, "The interest of, say, Siberian miners and short-term portfolio investors are even farther apart than the interests of a fish and a fisherman." What was the result of IMF-prescribed shock therapy? The impact on the Russian people has been devastating.

Between 1992 and 1995 Russia's GDP fell 42 percent, far worse than the contraction that we experienced during the Great Depression that hit this country. So what is going on in Russia today makes our Great Depression look like a piece of cake. Even before the current crisis, according to Russian officials, real income plummeted 40 percent since 1991. A quarter of all Russians were living below the subsistence level. Three-quarters were barely surviving on an average income of \$100 per month. The average life expectancy for men in Russia declined by seven years to 59, and I am told that that is one of the sharpest declines in life expectancy since literally the bubonic plague. And that is what is going on in Russia today. One-quarter of Russia's labor force was receiving its wages late, in-kind, or not at all. Bartering is now a major means of transference in Russia. By August 1, 1998 there were approximately \$12.5 billion in unpaid wages owed to Russian workers. Meanwhile, "privatization" has been conducted in a way that has concentrated wealth in the hands of a few dozen men known in Russia as the "oligarchs." According to Forbes Magazine, not usually a source that I use, one of these oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky, a media, oil and banking mogul, had, by 1997, amassed a personal fortune of \$3 billion. The economy is falling apart and one man in that terribly impoverished country has amassed a fortune in a few years of \$3 billion. He is busily buying chateaux in France for \$70 million. The question is did tens of millions of dollars from the IMF and the American taxpayers help the people of Russia or did it simply help to loot their country? And that is the question that we really have got to debate today. On July 20 the IMF agreed to provide Russia \$10 billion more in order to claim foreign investors. According to Jeff Sachs, Director of the Harvard Institute for International Development, the reason for such new loans was to "ensure that the earlier loans are repaid and that the ruble keeps its value long enough for speculators to get their money out without large losses." What a wonderful way to spend U.S. taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, even the promise of a \$10 billion bail-out was not enough to achieve that noble goal. Those foreign investors had plenty of risky investments on the line. According to a report in the Ottawa Citizen, before the end of August investors had lost more than \$117 billion in 1998. George Soros alone lost \$3.3 billion. Citicorp faced an exposure of \$420 million. Other large losses from banks and financial speculators. In spite of their dismal record, the IMF and U.S. Government continue to state that additional bail-out funds should be provided if Russia agrees to continue on the same course. We need to know, and hopefully we will discuss at this hearing, whether such funds will be used to help the people of Russia. Will they be used to help buy baby food for hungry children? Will they pay back the wages that are owed to miners who have worked for months without any wage? Or basically is this IMF funding going to help save the hides of financial speculators and crooks who have increasing power in Russia? And if we do pull their chestnuts out of the fire, don't we give these financial speculators an incentive to do the same thing over and over again in Russia and elsewhere? Perhaps we should listen to the advice of Gregorz Kolotko, who was the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Poland from 1994 to 1997. He underwent this transition from communism toward a more free market. And this is what he wrote in July. Listen to what he wrote. "Russia and the International Monetary Fund are throwing hot grease on the fire by insisting on stringent measures in return for a bail-out. It is not paying salaries or pensions. Just to pay the interest on the public debt. In other words, for the illusion of fiscal and monetary prudence, Russia has to kill its own economy and shred its social safety net." Again this is from a high-ranking member of the Polish government who

participated in that country's transition, not an academic. He was there. And he continues: "The most dangerous threat to Russia is a counterrevolution against the market sparked by the growing and justified grievances of its people. The United States and other leading industrial nations, international financial institutions and Wall Street must understand this and not impose another IMF bail-out. This would only create social dissention without addressing Russia's fundamental problems." He wrote this in July, before the current crisis. The crisis in Russia, coming on the heels of crises in Mexico, Southeast Asia and Japan, has greatly increased fears of a global financial meltdown. Some argue that expanding the funding of the IMF is the best—or even the only way—to forestall such a meltdown, but there is no evidence that IMF intervention does anything to prevent economic crises in the long run. Indeed, as others have argued, the IMF has become a veritable "Typhoid Mary", spreading economic austerity and collapse to one country after another, and then we are asked to pour billions more dollars into that issue. Should we give the \$18 billion to the IMF to expand its mission and conduct still further bail-outs in Russia and elsewhere? Before we allow the IMF to impose more misery on the people of Russia or in other countries, we need to ask some very, very hard questions and draw some conclusions about what its policies have contributed to date.

Harry Dexter White (October 9, 1892 – August 16, 1948) was an American economist and senior U.S. Treasury department official. Working closely with the Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., he helped set American financial policy toward the Allies of World War II while at the same time he passed numerous secrets to the Soviet Union. He was the senior American official at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference, that established the postwar economic order. He dominated the conference and imposed his vision of post-war financial institutions over the objections of John Maynard Keynes, the British representative. At Bretton Woods, White was a major architect of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

White was accused in 1948 of spying for the Soviet Union, which he adamantly denied, and then suddenly died of a heart attack. His guilt was later confirmed by declassified FBI documents related to the interception and decoding of Soviet communications, known as the Venona Project.

Who Really Won in Russia?



December 21, 1999

If the West believes that Russia's parliamentary elections were a strong vote for democracy and market reform, it is deluding itself. The elections on Sunday were indeed a remarkable victory for Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who revealed he has long political coattails. His endorsement late last month of the Unity bloc, a diverse coalition concocted by the Kremlin in the last three months of the campaign, propelled it from single-digit poll ratings to a second-place finish, behind the Communists, with nearly a quarter of the vote. Mr. Putin and his Kremlin allies showed great skill in destroying political opponents. The anti-Kremlin bloc, led by former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and Mayor Yuri Luzhkov of Moscow, was widely expected just four months ago to lead at the polls, but, under withering attack, won only third place, with 12 to 13 percent of the vote.

But Mr. Putin's victory was won at great cost to democratic norms. The Kremlin used its control of the two leading national television stations to smear Mr. Luzhkov and his allies relentlessly with charges of corruption and murder, based on half-truths and outright fabrications. The government's tax authorities harassed media outlets that refused to hew to the line. To be sure, Mr. Luzhkov responded in kind, but it was an unfair battle. His media and financial resources pale in comparison to the Kremlin's.

In the process, the great issues facing Russia -- in particular, how to extricate the country from its prolonged depression and social decline -- were not even debated.

With this victory, Mr. Putin has become the odds-on favorite to win the presidential elections next June. But who is Vladimir Putin, and what does he believe in? His phenomenal rise is a direct consequence of the brutal military operation in Chechnya, which remains widely popular with the Russian public. With the election behind him, Mr. Putin now appears ready to step up the final assault on Grozny, the capital of the breakaway republic. He has won solid support from the military brass and the security services, both of which have been promised additional resources, though neither has undertaken any serious reform. And he has pushed for

greater investment in the military-industrial complex, which he sees as a pillar of economic recovery.

This is hardly the portrait of a Russian democrat, but the Kremlin has tried to convince Western leaders that Mr. Putin is a devoted market reformer with close ties to Anatoly Chubais, the architect of Russia's now derailed radical reform program. Mr. Putin made a point of personally dropping in on Mr. Chubais and his allies on election night to congratulate them on their unexpectedly strong fourth-place finish.

Even if Mr. Putin is a reformer at heart, he will have a hard time pushing the brand of reform favored by the West and Mr. Chubais through the supposedly more centrist parliament. The large pro-government coalition in the new Duma, which is being portrayed as good for reform, looks curiouiser and curiouiser on closer inspection. It includes Mr. Chubais's allies; the ultra-nationalists led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky; and the Unity bloc, an amalgam of statist, nationalist, liberal and even Communist politicians. Unity's leadership even includes Aleksandr Rutskoi, who led an armed rebellion against Boris Yeltsin in October 1993, and Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, president of the republic of Kalmykia, who once threatened to secede from Russia. Pro-government forces will also include Boris Berezovsky, the media magnate and Kremlin insider who stands at the center of swirling corruption allegations and who is said to have sought election partly because deputies enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution.

Finally, this clashing coalition will not even enjoy a majority in the new Duma. Indeed, the Communists and Mr. Luzhkov's forces could end up with more deputies, and, in the run-up to the presidential elections, they will not be inclined to give the government an easy ride. Mr. Putin will have to cobble together a majority for every vote on his economic program, with all the compromises that entails. Rather than rapidly moving to market and democratic reforms, the new Duma promises to demonstrate the difficulties of making progress in both areas. And expect the politics to become dirtier as Russia moves to select Mr. Yeltsin's successor in June, when we'll find out who really holds power in Russia.

Deaths of Journalists & Press Freedom Ranking

TABLE 1: Some International Comparisons

Members of G20	DEATHS		PRESS FREEDOM
	CPJ deaths ¹	IFI/INSI deaths ²	RSF press freedom 2007 ³
Argentina	2	6	82
Australia	0	0	28
Brazil	16	27	84
Canada	2	1	18
China	2	5	163
EU 23	5	16	19
France	0	2	31
Germany	0	6	20
India	26	45	120
Indonesia	5	13	100
Italy	0	0	35
Japan	1	1	37
Mexico	15	31	136
RUSSIA	50	96	144
Saudi Arabia	1	1	148
South Africa	3	4	43
South Korea	0	0	39
Turkey	19	6	101
United Kingdom	1	2	24
United States	5	21	48
Total G20	153	283	-
World Total	734	1000	list of 169

¹Committee to Protect Journalists, deaths from 1991 to March 2009.

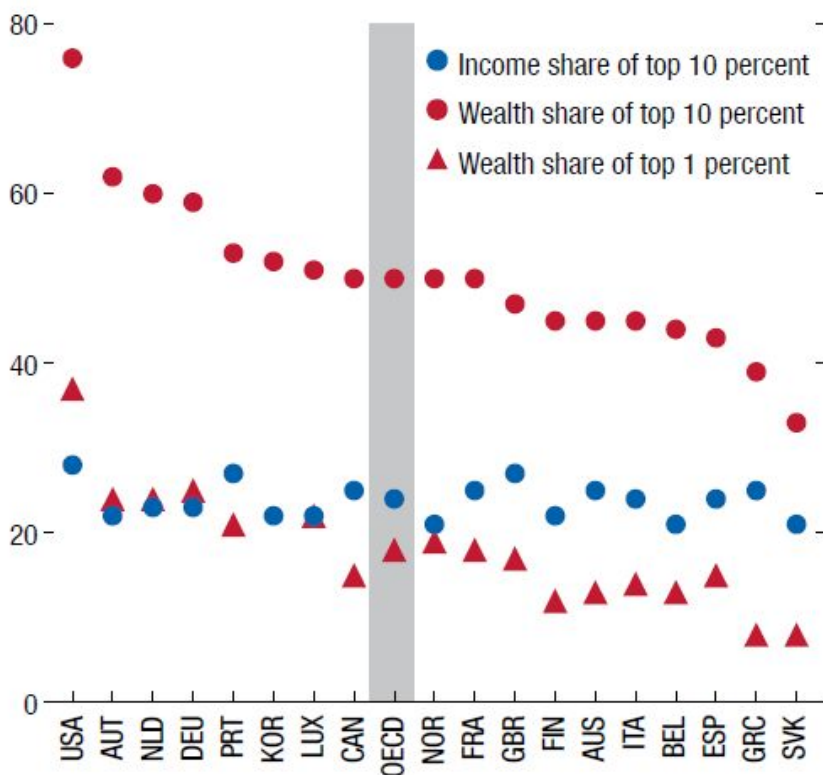
²International Federation of Journalists/International News Safety Institute, 2007. Deaths from 1996 to 2006.

³Reporters Sans Frontières, 2007 press freedom index for 169 countries.

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 155 rue de la Loi B – 1040 Brussels Belgium

“That is the cost of being civilized. Being legitimately civilized is expensive, not just fiscally, but psychologically as well. It means treating people like human beings even when they prove to be evil monsters of the highest order. And it’s not easy either. Not being able to satisfy the primal urge for vengeance and retribution are among the costs of living in a civilized society. The purpose of law in an advanced society is to reduce the chance of the criminal committing further crimes or to separate them from society if that is not likely. Of course, one always has the choice to move towards such a civilized system or remain entrenched in barbarity for the sake of base pleasures.”

Annex Figure 1.2.1. Wealth and Income Shares of Top Percentiles of Households, Selected OECD Countries, 2010 or Latest Available Year
(Percent)



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Wealth Distribution Database.

Note: The figure presents data for 18 OECD countries and their average, sorted by share of wealth held by the top 10 percent. Data labels in the figure use International Organization for Standardization (ISO) country

[–][anonymoususername1](#) [score hidden] an hour ago

Yeah, sorry, this is the point that you've triggered a rant in me.
THE ESTATE TAX IS ONE OF THE ONLY EQUALIZERS
AGAINST THE RICH WE HAVE!!!

The people that have been screaming about it being a death tax have been completely disingenuous, because it implies that the dead person is the one paying for it. It is an INHERITANCE tax, and we should start calling it that.

It blows my fucking mind! We tax the incomes of people that work (and in a lot of cases, work hard) and it's considered normal. We tax capital gains, where you invest in companies and sit back and watch money roll in with no further effort from you, and all of a sudden it's a tragedy? Then we tax the kids of the rich for *literally doing absolutely nothing* and getting showered with money and THAT'S the final straw?

There's genuine psychological problems associated with the rich, like [less empathy](#) and a [marked tendency to think all their success is due to their merits](#) and never account for environmental factors, so when others fail, they're treated as worthless. These and others can warp a psyche when they never have to deal with real struggle. Remember when Khizr Khan called out Trump, saying, "[You have sacrificed nothing and no one!](#)" And when Trump tried to respond that he knew about sacrifice, he said, "[I think I've made a lot of sacrifices. I work very, very hard.](#)". He didn't even understand what a sacrifice really was.

Thus, we should be encouraging inheritance taxes and improving the AMT, not getting rid of them. Not just for our sake, but for the mental health of the children of the rich. The alternative is generations of people without empathy and understanding being in charge of a world that they can't truly understand.

In the 1960s, a sociologist named John McKnight coined the term "redlining" to describe the discriminatory practice of fencing off areas where banks would avoid investments based on community demographics. During the heyday of redlining, the areas most frequently discriminated against were black inner city neighborhoods. For example, in Atlanta in the 1980s, a Pulitzer Prize-winning series of articles by investigative reporter Bill Dedman showed that banks would often lend to lower-income whites but not to middle- or upper-income blacks. The use of blacklists is a related mechanism also used by redliners to keep track of groups, areas, and people that the discriminating party feels should be denied business or aid or other transactions. In the academic literature, redlining falls under the broader category of credit rationing.

As a consequence of redlining, neighborhoods that local banks deemed unfit for investment were left underdeveloped or in disrepair. Attempts to improve these neighborhoods with even relatively small-scale business ventures were commonly obstructed by financial institutions that continued to label the underwriting as too risky or simply rejected them outright. When existing businesses collapsed, new ones were not allowed to replace them, often leaving entire blocks empty and crumbling. Consequently, African Americans in those neighborhoods were frequently limited in their access to banking, healthcare, retail merchandise, and even groceries.

Redlining paralyzed the housing market, lowered property values in certain areas and encouraged landlord abandonment. As abandonment increased, the population density became lower. Abandoned buildings served as havens for drug dealing and other illegal activity, increasing social problems and reluctance of people to invest in these areas. Because areas were redlined residents in them were unable to obtain loans to improve their homes or get loans to move to a different area. Obviously, the neighborhoods had zero investment while neighborhoods around them improved. When the GI Bill was created during World War II, veterans who once lived in redlined areas were unable to get zero interest loans to build new homes like the rest of the returning soldiers. This forced them to stay in the areas that were poor and uninvested in while the rest of America was growing and moving to the suburbs. Around the same time, the GI Bill was created the Federal Highway Act was also created. Because the areas that were redlined were so poor, many cities chose to destroy these areas to create the highways. The residents were displaced and forced to move into different uninvested neighborhoods while their homes and businesses were destroyed by the highways.

A 2017 study by Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago economists found that the practice of redlining—the practice whereby banks discriminated against the inhabitants of certain neighborhoods—had a persistent adverse impact on the neighborhoods, with redlining affecting homeownership rates, home values and credit scores in 2010. Since many African-Americans could not access conventional home loans, they had to turn to predatory lenders (who charged high interest rates). Due to lower homeownership rates, slumlords were able to rent out apartments that would otherwise be owned.

The Mulford Act was a 1967 California bill that repealed a law allowing public carrying of loaded firearms. Named after Republican assemblyman Don Mulford, the bill was crafted in response to members of the Black Panther Party who were conducting armed patrols of Oakland neighborhoods while they were conducting what would later be termed copwatching. They garnered national attention after the Black Panthers marched bearing arms upon the California State Capitol to protest the bill.

AB-1591 was authored by Don Mulford (R) from Oakland, John T. Knox (D) from Richmond, Walter J. Karabian (D) from Monterey Park, Alan Sieroty (D) from Los Angeles, and William M. Ketchum (R) from Bakersfield, it passed both Assembly (controlled by Democrats 42:38) and Senate (split 20:20) and was signed by the governor on July 28. The law banned the carrying of loaded weapons in public.

Both Republicans and Democrats in California supported increased gun control. Governor Ronald Reagan was present when the protesters arrived and later commented that he saw "no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons" and that guns were a "ridiculous way to solve problems that have to be solved among people of good will." In a later press conference, Reagan added that the Mulford Act "would work no hardship on the honest citizen." The bill was signed by Reagan and became California penal code 25850 and 171c.

What to do in case of a mass shooting

If you hear gunshots or what might be gunshots assume that there is a shooter on campus until you are told otherwise by Sheriff's personnel, Police, or Campus Administration. Make a decision, trusting your instincts, to take action to protect yourself to survive the situation. DO NOT APPROACH THE SHOOTER. You generally will have these options depending on whether you are outdoors or indoors and how close you are to the actual shooter:

Get away: Can you safely escape?

- Hide in a safe place: Is there a good place to hide?
 - Lock down in a room: Are you in a room that can be locked?
- Leave belongings behind, but take your cell phone if it is handy.

(Turn off the cell phone ringer)

- If moving, move quickly and try to stay concealed while you move.
- Before you move know where you are going and look before you move.

Wait and listen for directions from law enforcement personnel.

Hide in a Safe Place

Find a hidden location and hide. If possible hide in a place that offers protection as well concealment. If safe to do so, call the Sheriff's Office. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident.

If Outdoors When a Shooting Occurs

- Drop to the ground immediately, face down as flat as possible. If within 15-20 feet of a safe place or cover, duck and run to it.
- Move or crawl away from gunfire, trying to utilize any obstructions between you and the gunfire. Remember that many objects of cover may conceal you from sight, but may not be bulletproof.

- When you reach a place of relative safety, stay down and do not move. Do not peek or raise your head in an effort to see what may be happening.

Wait and listen for directions from law enforcement personnel.

If Shooter is in Close Proximity

DO NOT APPROACH THE SHOOTER Your survival is the key component, so unless you are left with no choice you should avoid approaching the shooter.

AS A LAST RESORT TO TRY TO SAVE YOUR LIFE, FIGHT:

- Whether alone or with a group
- Act with aggression
- Improvise weapons
- Commit to your actions

/u/anonymoususername3, who is a teacher and goes through active shooter drills every year in tons of different scenarios adds:

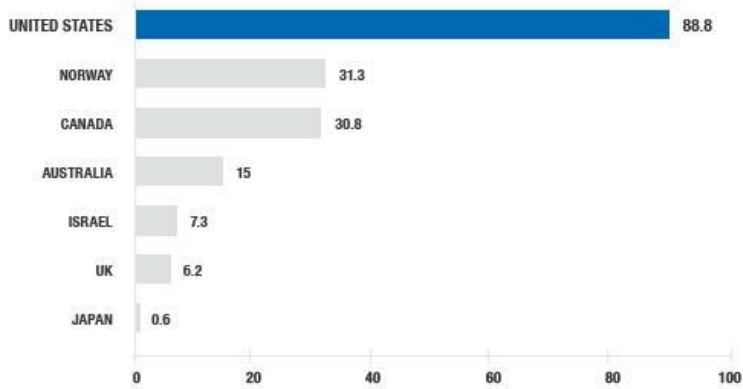
If you see the shooter coming your way, or has entered your room find whatever you can and throw it at them continuously. Wallet, cell phone, keys, rocks, whatever. You don't have to aim to hurt them, just to distract. The natural human response is to duck when something comes your way, or at least to focus on it as a potential danger, thus taking your eyes off your other targets giving you a reasonable chance for you or someone else to get to the attacker and possibly subdue them. If you're in a room with a fire extinguisher, grab it. Shoot the contents at your attacker blinding them and inducing a coughing fit allowing you to get closer and strike them with the metal end of the fire extinguisher until they are unconscious or you've taken control of their weapon.

When You Are in a Safe Place

When public safety personnel arrives, you should:

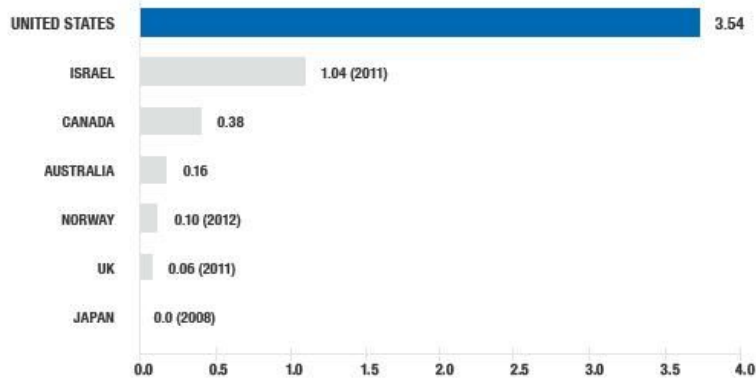
- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as attempting to hold on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling.

FIREARMS PER 100 PEOPLE (2007)



Source: Small Arms Survey

FIREARM HOMICIDES PER 100,000 PEOPLE (2013)



Sources: gunpolicy.org, University of Sydney

Credits: Jonathan Masters, Julia Ro



Am I addicted to guns?

HELP, I HAVE A GUN ADDICTION. I think about guns all day every day. I stop by the gun shops weekly. Some guns I buy and never even shoot them or buy ammo for them, I just like owning them. I like shooting but even more than that, I like holding them, touching them and looking at them. Some guys collect coins or art, I like guns. My friends and wife think im crazy, I spend alot of money on guns and Accessories. I just like them, the idea of having them, showing them off and stuff. Like I said, some guns I have never have been shot. I just like them. Im scared i may become a gun horder. Am I alone?

☆ 1 following 20 answers



I think I am too. It is becoming an issue and that is why I found this site. I think about them non-stop and yet I m a full time student with 2 pt jobs, wife and 2 kids, and very little money. I cannot afford the guns, or the time I keep devoting to guns, but I keep doing it. I have a problem. I think the only way I can fix it is by employing some SERIOUS willpower and make a conscious choice to not indulge when the temptation comes.

Aaron · 3 years ago



Comment



Yeah...I have recently felt the same compulsion; that of simply purchasing a new firearm, be it a ak, ar, hunting rifle, revolver, etc. And like you I have fired less than half of the guns that I own. I admit that our "addiction" (if that is what it truly proves to be) is related to the dopamine release following the acquiring/firing of our new gun. In any case, if your compulsion to purchase firearms or the feeling you get when you handle them is not presenting a problem for you or your family (be it financial or emotional) then by all means, GO SICK! Buy them whilst we can! We all fear a day when the conflict between the "have and have nots" will be determined by ownership of firearms. The day may come when I leave the USA, for native shores where there are prohibitions on gun ownership. And on that day I will happily leave behind my arsenal. But as long as I live in a nation where the "bad guys" have guns. I will have them as well, (a sentiment articulated by the Bill Maher, the socialist nut we all love to hate but with whom I end up agreeing 40 percent of the time.

Cheers. And shoot em whilst you got em.

Actual pool professional · 4 years ago



Comment



It can be an addiction. And an expensive one at that.

I think some folks have a conscious or unconscious fear that one day everything will go to hell, and they best be heavily armed when that happens. Maybe you are one of these folks.

Also, some folks believe new toys will bring them happiness. I used to be one of these. About 12 years ago, I realized new toys only bring fleeting happiness, wind up in a drawer somewhere unused, and bring lasting debt. Since then, I rarely buy myself new toys.

But I think you are recognizing you have a problem here. It's not fair to your family to spend all that money on something you don't use.

Here's a trick I've used. Set yourself a waiting period for something you want. If I find myself wanting some new toy, I tell myself that if I still really want it after a month, then maybe I can buy it. Most times, by the end of that month, I don't want it so much any more.

Good luck.

Uncle Pennybags · 7 years ago



Comment



Toast the
bride and groom.



OPIATES
ARE THE
OPIATES
OF THE
MASSES

Determining When to Initiate or Continue Opioids for Chronic Pain

1. Nonpharmacologic therapy and nonopioid pharmacologic therapy are preferred for chronic pain. Clinicians should consider opioid therapy only if expected benefits for both pain and function are anticipated to outweigh risks to the patient. If opioids are used, they should be combined with nonpharmacologic therapy and nonopioid pharmacologic therapy, as appropriate (recommendation category: A, evidence type: 3).

Patients with pain should receive treatment that provides the greatest benefits relative to risks. The contextual evidence review found that many nonpharmacologic therapies, including physical therapy, weight loss for knee osteoarthritis, psychological therapies such as CBT, and certain interventional procedures can ameliorate chronic pain. There is high-quality evidence that exercise therapy (a prominent modality in physical therapy) for hip (100) or knee (99) osteoarthritis reduces pain and improves function immediately after treatment and that the improvements are sustained for at least 2–6 months. Previous guidelines have strongly recommended aerobic, aquatic, and/or resistance exercises for patients with osteoarthritis of the knee or hip (176). Exercise therapy also can help reduce pain and improve function in low back pain and can improve global well-being and physical function in fibromyalgia (98,101).

Recommendation

Although opioids can reduce pain during short-term use, the clinical evidence review found insufficient evidence to determine whether pain relief is sustained and whether function or quality of life improves with long-term opioid therapy (KQ1). While benefits for pain relief, function, and quality of life with long-term opioid use for chronic pain are uncertain, risks associated with long-term opioid use are clearer and significant. Based on the clinical evidence review, long-term opioid use for chronic pain is associated with serious risks including increased risk for opioid use disorder, overdose, myocardial infarction, and motor vehicle injury (KQ2). At a population level, more than 165,000 persons in the United States have died from opioid pain-medication-related overdoses since 1999 (see Contextual Evidence Review).

The Risks of Reading in Public

On a bench, he said,

“How are you liking that book?”

“It’s my favorite book. It gets better every time I read it.”

“Just wait until you read the scene with the bar fight.”

“Yea, that’s a well written scene.”

“And the bull fight!”

“I like that one too.”

“He was hardly making that stuff up, you know. Most of it really happened.”

“That’s true.”

“Of course, it’s fiction. But in a lot of his fiction he just tweaks things that actually happened. That’s what a lot of writers do with fiction.”

“Right.”

“You know it’s crazy that he actually left Haddie behind to go on that trip. Haddie was his first wife.”

“It sounds like you’ve read one of his biographies.”

“I just finished it! I can write down the title for you if you want to learn more about him.”

“I prefer his non-fiction.”

“I didn’t know he wrote non-fiction.”

“You can write down a few titles if you’d like.”

“It’s really his sense of masculinity that I like more than his writing though. I don’t know if you get that.”

“His masculinity does seem to interest some people.”

“Of course his treatment of women was deplorable. He was a misogynist. But that’s kind of fascinating in this day and age because it’s so foreign to us.”

In the library, he said,

“Literature is a man’s field, I’ve always felt.”

“I’m sorry you don’t feel well.”

“I feel fine.”

“Oh good. I was worried.”

“You know, I did enjoy *To The Lighthouse*, though. A woman wrote that. I liked that it was simple and relatable.”

“Did you idolize Mr. Ramsey?”

“Of course. So did Woolf.”

On the BART, he said,

“You’re holding a copy of *Ulysses*.”

“Reading it. Yes.”

“You really need to get a critical edition in order to understand it. That one’s worthless.”

"Should I leave this one on the train?"

"You can go back to that one once you've had the subtext explained to you."

"It might be hard to find the same train again."

"You don't have to throw it away."

"I was going to but since you've said I don't have to, I guess I'll keep it."

"No but you need the annotated one. You really should have taken a literature class."

"A British literature class."

"Actually Ireland is not part of Britain."

"That's true."

"It's an independent country."

"Yes. Since 1922."

"So that kind of has nothing to do with *Ulysses*."

"Well the book was published in 1922."

"Oh. You should let me know what you think of the book once you've read the annotations."

"It isn't likely we will be on the same train again."

"You could give me your number."

In a coffee shop, he said,

"Studying for the GRE?"

"Yea, the test is in a week. Just trying to stay focused."

"What kind of master's do you want to do?"

"I'm applying to Phd programs. But I won't be able to apply if I don't get through this test."

"What subject are you interested in?"

"Spanish literature."

"You'll have to learn Spanish."

"Already done that. Now I have to study for this test."

"You should really read some things in Spanish first though. There's a book called Don Quixote that you should check out. You can read it in English though, it's okay. That's what I did."

"That's a good one."

"It deals a lot with Spain and the Catholic church."

"True."

"I'm actually writing a novel based on it."

"Cool."

"Would you read some of it?"

"Might have time in a couple of weeks."

"Or you could read it now. Here. Let me know what you think."

"If I get a chance."

"Okay but I'm worried that you need to read Don Quixote to understand it. You might think it doesn't make sense just because you don't understand it. Maybe you could read the Wikipedia page for Don Quixote first."

ads are the saddest art form
-- for real it's not a joke --
but everything could be
Guaranteed!

in the first few minutes of this movie,
over a hundred people are dead
and during each commercial break
A different flavor of chips is pushed
at you, and me, and everyone's parents,
And the rest of us who'll eventually
cave under future circumstances

and then the whole city is gone
consumed by fucking sharks
And a woman is yelling, that a hero
Can't take her car!

Information about news events in the world comes from a wide range of sources. But it wasn't that long ago (pre internet) that Americans were limited to their daily newspaper or evening television news show to learn what was taking place in the world. In the 1960s and 70s Americans tuned to CBS evening news on television to hear anchor Walter Cronkite tell them about important worldwide events. Cronkite was considered the most trusted man in America. When people heard the news they knew that the events had actually taken place. People had opinions on what they thought should be done about world events, but no one disputed that the events really happened. Cronkite reported the news: any personal comments he made were clearly separated in an editorial.

In the past it was widely accepted that established newspapers and television news stations were reporting primarily accurate news, although with some political slant/bias. People would watch the evening news for the latest developments. The internet has vastly expanded the volume and variety of news. Also, reactions to news are now instantaneous, without people giving a lot of thought to their reactions.

Americans get a lot more "news" today than they did in the past. We are now overloaded with news, but that news may not reflect actual events. What we think is news is often simply opinions. We can switch TV "news" channels and hear completely different stories on the exact same current development. The number of information distribution venues is much greater today than in the past. Instead of just a few news channels on television we have a nearly unlimited number of places on the internet where we can find "news". Anyone can now "produce" and send out their own version of news. There is no filter on quantity or quality.

Since people tend to stick to the same source, views are being shaped with different information. We don't all see, read, hear the same news. Many of us get our news from sites like Facebook, where news is targeted based on our online profile. People can't intelligently discuss and debate issues if they don't even agree on what the issue is.

It is up to us to figure out what is actually occurring. We should all make an effort to get our information from a range of sources, including sources that we find repulsive, inaccurate and offensive, in addition to the sites that we are comfortable with and believe represent accurate reporting of news and information. In this way we will get a complete picture, and will also be armed with the misinformation that is affecting how our neighbors are thinking. We should also take a moment or two to digest the news we hear, before rushing to an opinion on what it means and what to do about it.



June 12, 1982 - Upwards of one million people gathered on the Great Lawn in Central Park to rally against nuclear weapons while the UN held a Special Session on Disarmament. Two days later 1,600 demonstrators were involved in acts of civil disobedience at the consulates of five countries.

Concussed

Fear and anxiety, your feelings each day
Trapped within a cycle of self-selected information.
Blasting.

Media Cycle

Media Cycle

Media Cycle

The silver spoon you've clenched for so long, now feeds
your immense hunger, relaying the real agenda for which
you've come to seek.

Easy to palate, a stevia coated truth4u. An incorporated
reality designed to feed your very hunger.

You are tired of:

Gagging on the Truth

You seek to feed off a truth that's menacing, a promised
paradise void of Truth.

Too much taken in, and the bloating begins
Unable to stomach all that's been and all you think that
is.

Heeding to the visceral feelings of identity evisceration.

The call has been sounded.

It's time to resist.

It's time to reclaim.

It's time for what is yours.

Solidarity blindfolded, she pushed your hand
Your conscious is padlocked. No more getting in.
Escaped to Virginia, you stand with Father Lee.
Seeking freedom for the master. Unbeknownst to you, he
holds the keys.

Your mind is his, it's clear to me.

Bat in hand and fists clenched tight, you stare me down.

I hit the ground, and chaos surrounds.

Does this Work?

Sometimes I think about work too much. I work hard. I've been trained to work hard and I work hard at working hard.

Currently, I am working on an office building at the architecture office I work in. So everyday, I go to an office to work on an office with office supplies we retrieve from Office Depot. The particular office I'm working on is in charge of tourism in New Orleans so s-office-ticated people from across the country can escape their offices for a few days a year and walk the streets around my office. They're often not walking in the most s-office-ticated manner...but I don't mind. I'm glad my city can offer these services.

I occasionally speak with these visitors around my office. I smile and ask where their home offices are, tell them I have a cousin who has an office in their respective area, and joke that I hear their offices are sometimes hot and other times cold. Weather they laugh or not, I say I am very busy and hope our offices cross paths again someday.

Upon riding the bus home from my office, I think to myself, "Why am I always busy?" Only busses are supposed to be bus-y. And busses in a way are like giant moving offices from the perspective of the driver. While trying to steer away from the drivel of my stray thoughts (like the intention of the universe and my own mortality in the swirling cosmic insignificance of it all), I contemplate what keeps people driven, as I myself am being driven by this driver that I know nothing about. Like...what drives this driver to be busy bussing busy businessmen around all day? Does he de-rive a certain pleasure from it? I mull this over in my head round n' round, all through the town.

When I get home, I try to disengage from a stressful day at the office by watching 'The Office'²⁶. Failing to understand the flirtatious advances of one character (Dwight) on another character (Michael), I start to wonder if the British 'The Office' ever sued the American

²⁶ a popular human show

‘The Office’. I generally wonder if the British are getting tired of the Americans stealing their premises and “fundamentally changing” little parts while still copying most parts anyway. I think of whether the British ‘The Office’'s lawyer's office contacted the American “The Office”'s office who subsequently referred them to their own lawyer's office, who were coincidentally “out of the office” that day because they were off suing a small ice skating troupe over the intellectual rights to their rendition of ‘The Off-ice: On Ice.’

The irony being lost on me, I turn to the news so I can see the new terrible thing that happened today. I quickly become disillusioned watching senators step out of their little offices to yell at each other in their collective big office while office leaders retreat into backroom offices in cowardice. The commander in chief executive officer, failing to understand the gravity of his own office (and the purpose of office structures in general), says everything is going very great and very bad at the same time. The s-office-try²⁷ of the situation is demoralizing, exhausting, and ultimately unhelpful, so I turn it off.

S-office-ive to say, I'm office-ially tired of offices at this point, and I don't want to think about words anymore... So I'll just sit down in my miniature lazy boy recliner and return to my stray thoughts, where the universe is my only office, and I can forget about the offices I impose on myself and the offices the world imposes on me.

²⁷ **sophistry** - the use of fallacious arguments, especially with the intention of deceiving

What is a computer?

Intricate fractals of plastic and metal encode our lives. Somehow, the spidery patterns of chips, wires and gizmos contain a boundless universe for our old, embarrassing blogs and secret pornographic pleasures. A universe in every pocket! How can any arrangement of physical materials create such an infinity? What is this mysterious bridge between the concrete and the abstract?

If we study the physics of a computer's delicate design and wonder at the web of wires, we'll become tangled before understanding how this particular arrangement achieves computation, or what computation is more generally. Computation has nothing to do with silicon, magnets or lasers. It is the selfsame abstraction of processes, calculations, machinations, and logic itself.

Our computers are machines churning out numbers, but what is a machine, and what are its limitations? However complex, the underlying logic must be finite. Any algorithm can be written in terms a finite set simple rules that can be carried out mechanically. If we write the rules of the machine simply enough, we can build another machine to follow them. This machine would read blueprints of other machines and simulate their behavior. Since machines can be specified in a variety of ways (for example, some could be binary, decimal, etc.), we really have a family of machines, one for each blueprint scheme.

The Strong Church-Turing thesis claims that all of these machines are equally capable; any of them can be described and simulated by any other, and in a reasonable amount of time. It almost sounds like some a sophistic tautology, but it is a bold metaphysical claim. It's a statement that stands outside of mathematics- it's a real, physical claim about our universe and the types of processes that can occur. The universe consists of physical processes, and our descriptions of computers consist of their underlying behavior, a physical process. So in a broad sense, the universe is a computer, and the Church-Turing thesis is a limit on the types of physical systems that can exist.

Quantum computers are believed to violate the Strong Church-Turing thesis, since we know of fast algorithms for quantum computers, but not for classical ones. However, little is known for certain. The weak Church Turing-Thesis gives the simulation unlimited time, and it is generally accepted.

Moreover, humans consist of physical processes, so we too are bound by the claim: the human mind can be simulated, and we can transcend to the cloud. The downside is that there's probably no free will, unless our brains are intercepting cosmic particles in a way that cascades into our thoughts. See Scott Aaronson's article, *The Ghost in the Quantum Turing Machine*.

The idea of a machine reading machines guided John Von Neumann in his creation of ENIAC, the first machine. A processing unit would read and enact instructions from memory banks. These instructions were simple logical and arithmetic operations, and could be performed by a carefully selected set of circuits.

Rather than invent new devices to perform each calculation, we could design an abstract machine- a program- to be simulated on the ENIAC. To do so, we would have to translate the blueprints into a Rube Goldberg nightmare, and painstakingly prepare each instruction by changing tubes and connecting wires. Today, we have other abstract machines, operating systems, which hide this physical connection. Operating a computer

now consists in knowing languages to describe abstract machines, or programming languages.

Programs reside entirely in the mathematical ether. programming languages should consist of formal mathematics. On one hand, these languages need to be rich enough to describe complicated, programs. On the other, they must be regular enough to be checked, mechanically, for errors. Alonzo Church developed a foundation for mathematics, the lambda calculus. It consists purely of creating and applying functions. To catch errors, the functions in the lambda calculus have types, which describe what the input must be, and what type of output is expected. Programs can be checked by ensuring that when one function gets passed into another, their types align. This is similar to how engineers use units as a sanity check.

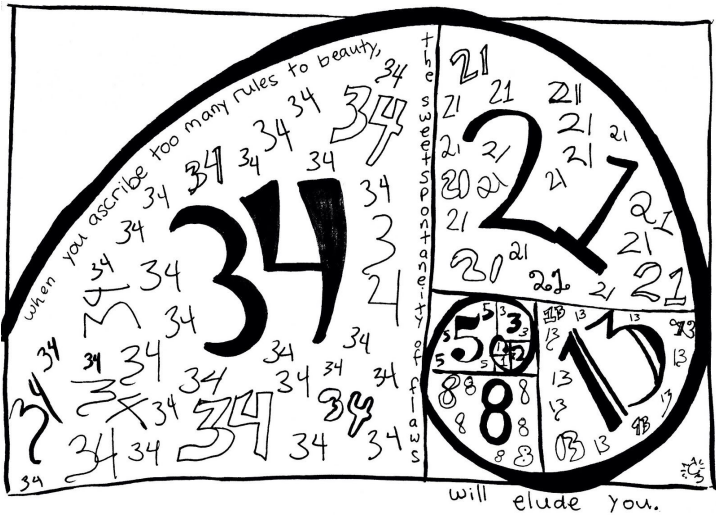
This functional style is a demanding dogma. Programs must be divided into self-contained functions which cannot communicate with one another and can only be composed in specific ways. These limitations make the programs predictable. In agreement with the Church-Turing thesis, these functional programming languages are just as powerful as other languages. By using higher-order functions, functions which take in other functions, it is possible to simulate loops, or anything else.

These higher-order functions can become complicated. Some programmers think the acetic denial of object oriented programming is like riding a unicycle because it's simpler than a bike and therefore less likely to break. Functional programming would be useless if the complexity of the programming were offloaded from the language to the programmer.

Luckily, this is not the case. The complexity instead rests on the theory of Categories, a mathematical discipline that describes mathematical objects based on the functions between them. The category theory provides recipes for constructing useful types.

Because these languages are so precise, they can also be viewed as logical proofs of their own correctness. The category theory is abstract enough to describe both programming languages and logic. Hence, there is a trinity: functional programs, cartesian closed categories, and logical formalisms are all three aspects of the same thing. This surprising fact is known as the Curry Howard correspondence.

Computers are not merely tools. They are windows into Truth.





Glad you read the zine.

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