

**INFORMATION REGARDING CALLS PRESENTED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY
2013 RAINBOW ROUND TABLE**

I TO ACCESS THE THREE WEEKLY CALLS via the Internet

A BBS RADIO Go To www.bbsradio.com ; click on Talk Radio Station #2; click on "64K Listen"

Thursday: 9 pm – 12:00 pm EST **Stargate Round Table** **Host: Marietta Robert**

Friday: 9 pm – 2 am EST **Friday Night Hard News** **Hosts: T & R**

Saturday: 4:30 pm – 2 am EST **History of our Galactic World & NESARA** **Hosts: T & R**

Friday, Saturday: From **10 – 11 pm EST**, for one hour, the call moves to the Conference Call Line [PIN below] and then returns to BBS Radio.

- During the radio show, use the following phone numbers to ask questions or make comments
530 – 227-7602 [line 1]
530 – 413-4522 [line 2]
530 – 530-413-5011 [line 3 & 4]

- **BBS Toll Free # in Canada, US** 1 – 888-429-5471 This number picks up whichever line is available.

B Conference Call: 1-860-970-0300

Thursday PIN #	87 87 87#
Friday PIN #	23 23 23 #
Saturday PIN #	13 72 9#

C Skype: **BBSradio2**

D Archives for the 3 Programs listed above:

- To access the **FREE BBS archives** for any of these programs:
- Go to [BBSRadio.com/ Station 2](http://BBSRadio.com/Station2); scroll down; click on **Live Talk Radio Shows**
- Scroll down to **Hard News on Friday with Tara and Rama**, and click on **"Library Archives"**
- When that screen comes up, click on ARCHIVES; when that screen comes up, check on the date you want. It opens in a new tab: you'll see the "free to listen box"; click the bars to play; use the tab to stop and start the tape.
- Right hand click on "direct MP3 Link" and then you can download the program to your own computer, or click on "Listen" without downloading the archived program.

- The **2013 website also has an archive section:**

<http://2013rainbowroundtable.ning.com/> look under the "Archives" tab for written notes.

II TO ACCESS OTHER CALLS SUPPORTED BY 2013 Rainbow Roundtable

- A Sunday, Mondays: 9 – 10:30 EST** **Cheryl Croci's Activation Calls**
By telephone only: 1 – 605-475-5950; PIN 9467441#
- B Tuesdays, 2nd & 4th of each month: 9:30 – 11:00 pm EST** **Ashtar on the Road**
Hosts: Fran; Susan Leland channels Ashtar, Mother Sekhmet
www.Ashtarontheroad.com
- Phone Number: 1 –605-562-3140; PIN 972400 #
 - Call is free [except for long distance charges]
 - Can also listen to the call via Skype
- C Wednesdays: 7:00 – 9:00 EST** **The Friends of The Aboriginal Moabite Nation Call**
By telephone only: 1- 712-432-0900 PIN 666238#
Replay # [good for 1 week] 1-712- 432-0990 PIN 666238#

Opening Meditation: D'Yanna

Housekeeping: Rainbird

Thank you!

- BBS:**
- A listener-supported radio program; we know the White Knights listen but they cannot contribute anything; part of our job is to pay for them too
 - **We need \$ 400 break** even for last week and this. Much gratitude for gifts!! Many, many thanks to all who contribute: the more people who take part, the easier it is for all.
 - What we hear and learn feeds our minds and our souls! And, as LM Nada said, it is also part of our contribution to the work being done by Tara & Rama and to the changes going on. **Every little bit helps!**
 - Go to BBS.com/Radio 2; find the listing for Friday Night Hard News; find the **Paypal** button
 - BBS appreciates getting checks through the mail – no fees taken off by Paypal
 - **NO COST TO ACCESS THE ARCHIVES** for any of the T & R PROGRAMS, or the one for Thursday night: Stargate Round Table, hosted by MariettaRobert
 - Re: archives of the other programs on BBS: the money we pay to listen to someone else's archives is put towards our BBS bill!
 - The mailing address for those who do not like paying electronically:
**BBS Network, Inc. [Attention: Don]
5167 Toyon Lane
Paradise, CA 95969**
 - A check / money order means all you send is received; using Paypal incurs a fee.

T & R: • **Now** they need money for food, gas IMMEDIATELY.

- Can donate via the Paypal button on the website: www.2013RainbowRoundTable.ning.com
- **Please notify them if you're sending something:** koran999@comcast.net
- Rama's mailing address for cheques, Money orders: Ram D Berkowitz
1704-B Llano St, # 249
Santa Fe, NM 87505
- **Phone contact** is via MariettaRobert: 317-773-0061
or by e-mail: stargatemarietta@gmail.com
- **Remember you can book a session with Mother, as well!**

MR: • Please remember to support MariettaRobert's show, too

Introductory Notes:

- **CUSTOMER SERVICE # 1- 888-710-8061** For use in case you cannot hear: **DON'T WAIT: CALL!!**
- **CONFERENCE CALL FROM 9 – 10 PM, EST: 1 – 641-715-3650** PIN#: 353 863#
- **716-748-0044 - use this number to hear the call very clearly: Link is courtesy BBS!**
- **NOTE:** Please use the following audio link to listen to the entire program.

<http://bbsradio.com/podcast/hard-news-friday-august-21-2015>

HARD NEWS

- T:** so much rotten in Denmark & also so many new, wonderful things to look forward to
- a young boy [Boyan Slat – featured on NHK] has a research team together; when he did his TED talk, he raised about \$2 M dollars in about 3 months
 - now he has a volunteer scientist and team members; will go out and estimate how much plastic is in the ocean. They have created booms with fine netting dangling from the underside of the booms, and laying the booms around the gyres. Using the energy of the gyre to push the plastic out towards the booms so they can collect it.
 - Say that in 10 years, they can collect about half of it
 - The ocean is the largest set of gills for the planet; the Amazon is 2nd largest

Greece, Macedonia: at the border the military and cops are abusing migrants; the migrants do not want to stop in Macedonia but go to the northern part of Europe

- Using pepper spray, rubber bullets, tear gas on little kids and babies

Black Lives Matter going to different parts of the world; now in Brazil

- the highest number of deaths of dark-skinned people is in Brazil; they help & support each other through all that happens
- they have welcomed BLM

R checked on **Obama authorizing Shell** to go to the Arctic: the 13 families leaned on him

Obama Donor: Mark Lazary, CEO of Avenue Capital Group – has raised millions of dollars
Reading: is an Obama donor tying Obama's hands on Puerto Rico debt crisis? **[SEE BELOW]**

- He **stands to gain** from that debt crisis.

US: The Pentagon 8 trillion dollars gone down the drain at the Pentagon **[SEE BELOW]**
2015-08-18 [The Biggest Scandal in US History That We're Still Not Talking About](#)

Israel: a war against women there; courts representing each religion in the country all remove the rights of women, no matter which religion
2015-08-18 The War on Women in Israel **[SEE BELOW]**

Audio: Democracy Now –2015-08-19 **David Cay Johnston: 21 Questions for Trump on Kickbacks, Busting Unions, the Mob & Corporate Welfare** **[SEE BELOW]**
Also: David Cay Johnston's article: 21 Questions for Donald Trump

NEW CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 641-715-3650 – PIN CODE 353 863#

[No Conference Call notes: due to a computer crash, all the notes were lost – had to re-do from the podcast, no CC notes included!]

BBS RADIO

Mother Sekhmet

Greetings in the Light of the Most Radiant One! In the Office of the Christ and only in the Office of the Christ, we invoke the loving energies of St Germain and the Violet Flame!

Greetings, Children of Ra!

Indeed, now is the time! We don't need any more fat cats on Wall Street
T: deal with the shenanigan cats, Mother

- They give the feline race a bad name! There is so much joy happening throughout all of the particles we are made of, every one of us at this time. It is so magnificent to be here at this time, in the body / temple of the living goddess.
- There is a lot coming to pass – and she calls it past tense! This is because Gaia /Vywamus started that drumbeat of that song, that heartbeat which is the energy folks are experiencing now, hearing all kinds of strange anomalous sounds, funny clouds in the sky.
- She cuts to the chase: yes, she and others are in the atmosphere; many of them are not cloaked; the 13 families are stacking up the bricks because they don't know what to do; they would like to put their heads in the sand and not think about what has gone down for the last 26, 826 years since Nibiru last passed by.
 - Well, the Nibiru is in orbit, and it is not about extinction level events; no asteroids coming in to shake up the so-called matrix which is going down by itself. She could say that Gaia / Vyamus gave us the red pill simply because the Archon-generated matrix can't keep up with the joy pouring in, even though there are so many cells screaming because of the flash of light going off within.
 - It is at this time that she shows up with Michael, Metatron, Maitraya; as they have diplomatic immunity in this universe, they concur with LM Nada and the 9 Council Members; there is that which we've asked for:
 - they [galactics] are here, so set a place at the table for Elijah as well as ET and they will discuss the finer details of mouse medicine and how to get'er done! It is about the magic within us all – that's how they get it done: one particle at a time. Yet it is happening so fast at quantum light speed that everyone's G string is in a knot and they can't figure out what is going on.
 - We have Mr Hair spouting out his euphemisms which are just nonsense: we are all equal in this sector.

T: apparently he doesn't know what that word means.

- He has some issues with self-worth; when you hang out with the Gambinos and others who bend at the knee to Opus Dei and other nasty characters . . .

T: and he and Hillary are running a human trafficking ring across the planet!
Hanging out with Gambinos and dragons – what a story!

- Yes,

T: they saw a tiny green dragon when they were at Rainbird's – a nice dragon

- Yes they have a way to calm the scales down

T: in the beginning, they all had feathers

- they are all beautiful in their uniqueness

T: they changed their DNA and maybe that is what happened

- Bad boys on the block and it is that as we are in these moments that 7 billion + souls are waking up, even Homer Simpson, Joe the Plumber, Dave the Carpenter.
 - Next step: they come in peace, mutual co-operation and understanding that we are them, and they are us; they are coming to visit their brothers and sisters [which is us!]
 - the adventure is not over, just beginning; as we receive the wizard's staff, understand / overstand that the 5 Infinity Stones are about creation. As we use these technologies that are only of the highest order from Metatron, Neptha El Ra, these frequencies can shift space time, matter, anti - matter. All is coming into play as we remember who we are: gods and goddesses of the Most high
 - As we started this story, we were creator sons and daughters of the Most High, at the 100th dimension just like Sol, our physical sun. This is a huge deal as it is a bit hard to comprehend

T: what's a huge deal?

- To comprehend going from a bag of water to a sun

T: that's what the imagination is for, right?

- Yes,
- T:** and the DNA adheres to the imagination
- Take a leap off the cliff with the white dog, and we'll go for a ride – not a bad ride.
- T:** the reversal of the aging process
- Imagine cleaning up half the plastic in the ocean and it is one kid's idea – showed what it looked like on NHK today
 - we are all doing what we were asked to do at this time which seems so chaotic; yet follow the rabbit up the rabbit hole and you will find nirvana – it is not hard.
 - Be aware this holographic program of samsara is already at an end.
- T:** brings up China and the military - China has been funding US military bases
- went into the deep pockets of the MIB and those pockets are Black Holes; it is about what they would like to do – get their hands on a few of the technologies that would destroy planets
 - but **they don't get to:** they get to find out what the Dark Void is about and think about what they have created in their own consciousness: greed, avarice, etc – when does the greed stop, as Ted Kennedy asked.
 - We are at the place where a Vermont farmer is telling us about billionaires, and a fake billionaire is telling us he is going to help fix the country - cannot fix his own life! It is a dichotomy and a bad joke to say the least!
 - All the distractions of the highest order – it is why she continues to say: do the meditations, bring in the frequencies daily that we know as creator gods and goddesses that we can move mountains and do anything: it is already within us and is activated.
 - The Atlantis Crystal Grid is on line, and all that is transpiring is in harmonious joy, ecstasy and, at the same time, don't mess with the bears – they have enough of their own issues!
- T:** the bears are being messed with by the fires. Firefighters from NZ and Australia are here to help in California and WA state - 350, 000 acres down like another time when it was 800,000 acres down from San Bernadino to Mexico
- Has to do with changing atmospheric conditions; there is quite literally a war going on in the atmosphere for control of us and our planet -
- T:** it is quite pathetic when 10s of hundreds of millions of years in advance – understands about free will choice – talks of cancer alley free zones, stop fracking zones – aren't they just sucking the blood of the Mother?
- Gaia / Vywamus has upped the ante here; this is why there are anomalous events every day – the only place the 13 families have to go is the high heart, the one place they won't go to – so we take them to the Void
- T:** talks of one young man who has 2 PhDs in science and physics, saying more nuclear plants are needed – it's safe; doesn't know if it's a program or not – he's very young and super bright
- maybe it's an A I program
- T:** and there's the other young man who's going to clean up the ocean and will probably have help from other sources
- she can only say they are visitors from our future & we make it: NESARA gets announced; these folks are a bad dream. We are on the big money – and it's right in this nano second!
- T:** looks like a biggie here: things going down that haven't happened in 20 years – China markets, etc
- We want to become a member of the Inter – galactic federation of worlds – it is already coming to pass. In the same breath, it is about walking the razor's edge every second because they are playing with brinkmanship games that are empty air: NO NUKES SAID THE CAPTAIN, and he means it – what's happening is now a deadly game of chicken
- T:** they set up the game: arrested an investigator with authority and documents in Estonia and took him to Russia; he got sentenced and is in a Russian prison: who's doing that: US black ops or Russian Black ops in collaboration?
- Cannot say

T: it's riling NATO because Estonia has a fast track NATO training program; and now China is building bases in the seas; has Abe's g-string in a wad, too! He wants to go to war using US connections. And North Korea wants to go to war and Kim is a CIA asset!

- Mr Kim wants some attention – what they want to get is coming to pass: Gaia / Vyvamus have amped up the energies in addition to the frequencies coming in from Galactic Centre

T: The depravity of it is showing up in the deaths of millions of children and it affects their brain development and other aspects to be undernourished for so long

- Understand / over stand at this time that the ones doing these acts . . . it is about the heros, the prophets – it is your time! The millenials and the baby boomers pull it off: Star Fleet is now in Session – we will be assigned to variousships; duty officer hands out the orders.
 - Send everything even more infinite waves of love – all of it is fading away, even though it looks like the depths of hell!
 - She has only the way in which she can share what she knows about creation – in and of itself, everything is connected; we all began with the Divine Spark, the Cosmic Orgasm – not just a Big Bang which cannot be created by the super collider & is now a pile of trash.
 - An expensive toy – yes, it can create anomolies in our time/space, time/space moment here; that is why they are in our atmosphere saying that, as Mr 19.5 does what he has to do, then we can go to the next level of the dance!

Greetings in the light of the Most Radiant One!
Kadoish, kadoish,

R: was exploring one of the cells in his leg! Wanted to find out what it was like to be a particle inside a cell and to feel what that was like as he watched a cell move about. He could see – he observed the cell shifting and becoming more cells: it is just a reflection of what is out in space – as we watch the solar winds come off the suns which are not fiery furnaces from hell – they are cold fusion – science we have not learned about.

T: experienced being very, very tiny

R: could say he was a nucleus, a proton – no different than watching solar systems move about – the vacuum is completely full, as Nassim says.

T: Bernie was saying that 5% of the whole planet in terms of the population and we have more people in prison than anywhere else on earth: that 5% are living in the illusion of freedom

R: message: had best learn about who and what we are – the energies coming in are so big!

Audio: Real Time with Bill Maher

[Guest List: August 21, 2015](#)

The Interview:

[Sen. Claire McCaskill](#) (**D-MO**) is the senior Senator from Missouri and the author of *Plenty Ladylike: A Memoir* about her 30-year career in politics. **Twitter:** [@clairecmc](#)

The Panel:

Charles Cooke is a writer for [National Review](#) and the author of *The Conservatarian Manifesto: Libertarians, Conservatives, and the Fight for the Right's Future*. He is the co-host of the [Mad Dogs and Englishmen](#) podcast, along with his National Review colleague



Kevin Williamson.

Twitter: [@charlescwcooke](#)

Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD) is the U.S. Representative from Maryland's 4th District and a [candidate for Senate in 2016](#). She was first elected in 2008, when she became the first African American woman to represent Maryland in Congress.

Twitter: [@DonnaFEdwards](#)

Marc Maron is a comedian and host of the bi-weekly podcast "[WTF with Marc Maron](#)," for which he interviewed President Obama in June. He is also the star of "[Maron](#)" which recently aired its third season on IFC.

Twitter: [@marcmaron](#)

Mid-Show Interview:

[Dan Buettner](#) is a National Geographic Fellow and author of *The Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People*. He also outlined his research on longevity in a 2010 Ted Talk, "[How to Live to Be 100.](#)"

Twitter: [@danbuettner](#)

Audio: Laura Flanders

New Orleans: The Economics of Recovery: Oliver Thomas and Sunni Patterson

<https://youtu.be/XYIThkuetA>

Ten years since the flooding of New Orleans, we look at politics, community and the art of creative endurance an extended interview with a former insider turned political outsider, Oliver Thomas. Thomas was New Orleans' city council president at the time of Hurricane Katrina, and well on his way to becoming the next mayor. Since then, he's served time in a federal prison, having pled guilty to taking a bribe and recreated himself as a popular radio show commentator and playwright. A survivor like his city, he considers the choices made - for better and worse - in these past ten years. Also on this week's episode, New Orleans poet Sunni Patterson, and a few words from Laura on the floodwaters of gentrification.

Laura's commentary: [New Orleans' Deadly Floodwaters: Now From Gentrification](#)

August 26th, 2015

<https://soundcloud.com/grittv/new-orleans-deadly-floodwaters-now-from-gentrification>

It's New Orleans remembrance time; that time where, for the last ten years at the end of August, public attention returns for a bit to the city that abandoned its poorest. Poor people clinging to rooftops in the richest nation on earth: the pictures shocked the world and broke our hearts. Mostly black, in a majority black city, democracy failed as spectacularly as the public safety system. Not only the levees, but also the social contract was breached. A decade later, the city's back. The levees are rebuilt, tourism's thriving and the population's growing, but the social contract lies in shreds.

Let's remember. Hurricane Katrina didn't destroy New Orleans. The storm's eye passed to the east. It was the levee breaks that followed that wiped out entire neighborhoods. Public safety systems that had never served all residents well, failed the most vulnerable. A million were displaced, hundreds of thousands lost land and loved-ones.

Ten years on, the Census reports that the region's regained almost 94 of its pre-storm population. New Orleans is almost 80 percent as big as it was. More statistical successes are tallied in graduation rates from new private schools, people housed in new private homes, and patients cured in private hospitals. A

sprawling new University Medical Center was scheduled to open this month.

But instead of fixing its public accountability problems, the city's farmed those problems out to private contractors. Got a problem with that private school or home or hospital? You can protest, but watch out for the cops.

The poor black residents who were losing homes and loved ones ten years ago are still losing them, now to gentrification. If you are rich, and like your property prices to rise, it's good news that house prices are up fifty-eight percent since 2000. An employer? Wages are as low as they get and worker bargaining power has sunk lower than that. A whiter, wealthier city? You've got it. Entire neighborhoods have flipped from black to white.

But *democracy*, the principle that societies are held together by a diverse fabric, and being a member of one requires looking after one another? While some communities are still clinging on to their right to have a say in their city, that principle has long ago been left to drown. Money talks, and it has flooded everything.

And not just in the Big Easy. What's different about the flood of gentrification is there seems to be no shock in it. New Orleans's recovery numbers look a lot like the rest of the nation's. Recovery? Whose recovery? Whose city? Who's clinging to *your* rooftops?

You can watch my interview with former **[New Orleans City Councilmember Oliver Thomas](#)** this week on **[The Laura Flanders Show](#)** on KCET/LINKtv and TeleSUR and find our half hour documentary, [Recovery or Removal](#) at [GRITtv.org](#). To tell me what you think, write to: Laura@GRITtv.org.

Audio: balance of the David Cay Johnston interview with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now

Audio: Max Keiser 2015, Aug 20 **Keiser Report: \$32 trillion in pointless trading (E799)**

In this special episode of the Keiser Report from Chicago, Max Keiser and Stacy Herbert discuss the \$32 trillion in pointless trading each and every year, which results in bankers and brokers getting rich at the expense of churned chumps. In the second half, Max interviews Janet Tavakoli of Tavakoli Structured Finance about the latest use of derivatives to transfer wealth from the general fool public.

T: piece from **Joseph Campbell – The Hero's Journey in Film**

<https://vimeo.com/108682934>

from [Ciaran Michael Vejby Plus](#)

10 months ago

All Audiences

Contact: Ciaran Michael Vejby
ciaranmv@yahoo.com

Director • Editor
imdb.com/name/nm3280279/

"The Hero's Journey in Film" is a labour of love. Spanning 80 years of international film history, it consists of over 90 individual films. These all share the fundamental elements of the mythological hero's adventure as outlined in Professor Joseph Campbell's "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" (1949), a seminal work of literature which inspired independent film director George Lucas to create his own mythological saga with the "Star Wars" Trilogy.

Campbell outlines the key sequential elements of the heroic adventures as follows - "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." ("The Hero With a Thousand Faces," 23).

65 years later, the mythological hero's quest is alive and well in world cinema.

These universal themes transcend time and all cultural barriers. I hope with this film that you find your own answers and as Joseph Campbell was ever fond of saying, "Follow your bliss."

I do not own the rights to the contents of this film. For non-profit creative and education purposes only.

MUSIC:

'THE REUNION' from "WAR HORSE" by John Williams

'ACROSS THE STARS' from "STAR WARS: EPISODE II - ATTACK OF THE CLONES" by John Williams

'MAIN TITLE / LOCUTUS' from "STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT" by Jerry Goldsmith

'THE KEEPER OF THE GRAIL' from "INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE" by John Williams

'END CREDITS (RAIDERS' MARCH) from "INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE" by John Williams

'SUITE - FORREST GUMP' from "CAST AWAY: THE FILMS OF ROBERT ZEMECKIS & THE MUSIC OF ALAN SILVESTRI" by Alan Silvestri

'WONDERS OF THE NEW WORLD' from "THE ROAD TO EL DORADO" by Hans Zimmer

'BARBOSSA IS HUNGRY' by Klaus Badelt from "PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL"

'END CREDITS - CAST AWAY' from "CAST AWAY: THE FILMS OF ROBERT ZEMECKIS & THE MUSIC OF ALAN SILVESTRI" by Alan Silvestri

'ISENGARD UNLEASHED' from "THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS" by Howard Shore

'EPTESICUS' from "BATMAN BEGINS" by Hans Zimmer

Reading: Buddha in Redface

Closing: Rainbird

Music: Rumi / Coleman Barks – "Stay Bewildered in God"

INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NOTES

2015-08-18 Is an Obama Donor Tying the President's Hands on Puerto Rico's Debt Crisis?

Vulture-fund investor Marc Lasry—who raised \$500,000 for Obama in 2012—stands to gain if the commonwealth is not bailed out.

By [Ed Morales](#)

Marc Lasry, co-founder and chief executive officer of Avenue Capital Group, speaks at the Reuters Global Investment Outlook summit in New York, November 18, 2013. (Reuters/Mike Segar)



One thing that caught my attention while reading this [wistful, insidery feature](#) in *The New York Times* about President Obama's future (apparently a "post-presidential infrastructure" is involved) was a certain someone who attended a swanky dinner party at the White House recently. Sure, Toni Morrison was there, as well as Malcolm Gladwell and Eva Longoria, perhaps joining the prez in a taste of his fave, the extra-dry Grey Goose martini. But it wasn't a glamorous showbiz/intelligentsia name that attracted my notice; it was Marc Lasry, co-founder and CEO of the hedge/vulture fund Avenue Capital Group.

Lasry is perhaps more famous at the moment as the new-ish co-owner of the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks, a development that was so energizing for Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker that he signed a bill last week [subsidizing a new arena](#) for the team that, [according to the Times](#), would "cost the public twice as much as originally projected." But it turns out that Avenue Capital is one of the vulture funds that [owns some Puerto Rico debt](#), and is currently aligned with Candlewood Investment Group, Fir Tree Partners, and Perry Corp, which have formed what is known as the [GDB Ad Hoc Group](#) (BGF is the acronym in Spanish), a coalition of vulture funds that hold bonds issued by Puerto Rico's Government Development Bank.

Recently the GDB Ad Hoc Group has hired the law firm Davis, Polk & Wardwell to represent them in the upcoming battle with the Puerto Rico government, hoping to recoup their investment and avoid either the government's debt-restructuring proposals or a move by Congress to change federal law to allow the commonwealth/unincorporated territory/colony to declare bankruptcy. The irony here is that this is the same law firm that helped [orchestrate the US government's bailout of AIG](#), the bad-mortgage debt-swapping machine at the center of the 2008 recession. So the same law firm that pushed for the AIG bailout is gearing up to force Puerto Rico to pay up, while Obama, who also favored the AIG bailout, has not even hinted that he would offer one to the troubled island.

Obama is now wooing Lasry as a potential contributor for his post-presidential library and foundation.

"I haven't seen the kind of focus that is necessary from this administration to respond to the crisis," Representative Luis Gutiérrez told me in a phone interview earlier this month. While President Obama has yet to address the issue himself, he has directed White House press secretary Josh Earnest and Treasury Secretary [Jacob Lew to suggest](#) that although there will be no bailout, the bankruptcy laws should probably be changed to allow Puerto Rico to use them. These half-hearted executive-branch pronouncements have done nothing to change the fact that the Republican-dominated Congress has no interest in either the House bill proposed by Puerto Rico's resident commissioner Pedro Pierluisi or Senate legislation by Senators Charles Schumer and Richard Blumenthal to change the bankruptcy laws.

On the surface, it seems like a political move for the administration to play this situation with a barely there indifference—sound familiar, immigration-reform activists? As the 2016 election looms, even though Obama is leaving office, he might want to leave the Democratic Party's record as deficit hawks intact for whoever is nominated, and a Puerto Rico bailout would threaten that. But given the fact that Obama is having swanky dinner parties that continue his relationship with Wall Street types that have a) been bundlers of campaign contributions in the past and b) are now coming around to contribute major cash to a "postpresidential infrastructure and endowment," including a library and foundation, that "could cost as much as \$1 billion," there might just be an ulterior motive.

Marc Lasry is perhaps the kind of benefactor—[someone who raised \\$500,000 for Obama's last campaign](#)—the president and the Democrats think they should keep happy. After all, Lasry was [Obama's choice for ambassador to France](#) in 2013, but unfortunately "had to remove his name from consideration after a close friend was named in a federal indictment for playing in a poker ring with alleged ties to the Russian mafia." Just last May, Lasry threw a \$2,700-a-head fundraiser for Hillary Clinton, while [assuring MSN viewers](#) that she is "moving a little bit to the left."

Lasry's ties to big Democratic politics go back many years. A March 2010 (titled "Avenue Capital's Investor in Chief—He's Prescient. He's Well-Connected. Just Don't Call Marc Lasry a 'Vulture.'") describes him lunching with then-White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, in part to advise Emanuel on whether banks would resume lending again in the wake of the 2008 crisis. A 2012 *New York Times* article said "About 50 people paid \$40,000 each to crowd into an art-filled room" in Lasry's apartment to hear Obama and Bill Clinton speak. Last decade, Lasry's Avenue Capital even famously employed Chelsea Clinton, whose husband has more recently [flopped in making bad investments in Greece](#) while heading his own hedge fund.

Lasry, who was once a humble UPS driver whose parents convinced him to go to law school, seems to be at heart a gambler capable of rolling the dice with anyone in the global Wall Street hedge-fund casino dice game—as well as actual casino owners, like [Republican candidate and anti-Mexican bigot/misogynist Donald Trump](#). This partnership, which stretches back to Trump's Atlantic City casino bankruptcy in 2009, eventually resulted in Lasry buying him out and becoming the [chairman of Trump Entertainment Resorts](#) in 2011, a post Lasry eventually resigned.

The stories about Lasry in the business press describe him as the "don't call him that" vulture-fund investor; the optimistic gambler who "bets" on economies like those of Spain or Greece to "recover," and then profits from that. This 2012 [Bloomberg story](#) describes a regular poker game he has with other hedge-fund managers; one colleague assesses him as "good at figuring out

what the odds are. He's willing to take moderate risk."

Yet it's pretty hard to believe that someone who is [worth \\$1.87 billion, according to Forbes](#)—presumably an indication of good business sense—would believe that economies that are in a "death spiral" would miraculously recover. It's more likely that rather than believing in a Puerto Rican economy that had shown no signs of growth for so long, and whose economy was largely driven by government employment, Lasry bet that its inability to declare bankruptcy would yield a higher return once it defaulted. Avenue Capital was one of many vultures that began hovering over Puerto Rico in late 2013, when its junk-leaning bonds caused credit analyst Richard Larkin to say of the vultures, "[They can smell the blood and the fear.](#)"

So, since things haven't quite turned out as planned, and Puerto Rico—which, unlike almost any other economy in the world, has had negative growth for eight years—what's in all this mess for Lasry? A July 19 [Wall Street Journal article](#) on the Puerto Rico crisis provides a possible explanation for his interest in pushing back against bankruptcy or a debt restructuring that would give relief to Puerto Rico and its people:

Low default rates in corporate debt have led such distressed-debt specialists to instead focus on cash-strapped governments like Greece, Argentina and Puerto Rico. But while prices of Greek and Argentine bonds bottomed out at less than 20 cents on the dollar at the height of their debt crises, much of Puerto Rico's debt still trades between 50 and 70 cents, according to MSRB data. That means the hedge funds will need to recover more in a Puerto Rico restructuring than speculators in the Greek and Argentine defaults did to turn a profit.

If turning that profit entails austerity measures like lowering wages and cutting pensions and laying people off, thus pushing toward a human rights catastrophe—well, a smart investor has to get those 50 to 70 cents on the dollar somehow. It remains to be seen if Obama really has Lasry's back here, and if that's the main reason for continued silence from the president on this issue. But one thing is clear: If investors have their way, a chunk of the money the Puerto Rican people will be paying back is owed to an unrepentant gambler who has a privileged, back-door channel to the White House.

[Ed Morales](#) Ed Morales, a freelance writer based in New York, teaches at Columbia University's Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. He co-directed a documentary, *Whose Barrio?*, about the gentrification of East Harlem.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/is-an-obama-donor-tying-the-presidents-hands-on-puerto-ricos-debt-crisis/>

2015-08-18 **The Biggest Scandal in US History That We're Still Not Talking About**

by [mtosner](#)



The above is roughly what 8.5 Trillion dollars would look like... and those are \$100 bills. Take another look and let that sink in for a bit... I find it absolutely astonishing that the pentagon could lose track of this much money and for there to be no MSM coverage of this [scandalous amount of mismanagement and fraud](#). Where is the demand for accountability? Why is the first question to ANY candidate for president not "What would you do about the massive fraud and waste at the Pentagon?" Where are the hearings, nay indictments, that are warranted when a sum equal to 1/2 of our national debt can be sent to the pentagon to never be accounted for. More below.

We progressives need to work this scandal into every political conversation we engage in, especially when we talk to conservatives. Cutting government spending and accountability are *supposed* to be core GOP values.

Combine "[Known](#)" Pentagon waste ([like the 1.5 Trillion dollar F35](#)) with missing pentagon money and you have a good chunk of our entire national debt represented.

"What's that? Body cameras for all cops will be too expensive? How bout we find 1/10,000th of the money we sent to the pentagon."

"Oh really? There's 500 million in provable food stamp fraud going to poor people how bout the 8.5 TRILLION the pentagon can't account for?"

"Oh really? You *think* Obama care is going to cost us almost a trillion dollars over 15 years? How about the 8.5 Trillion that just disappeared into the ether at the pentagon? What's your take on that?"

"Oh really, you're concerned about deficit spending and the debt? Fully 1/3 of the national debt it is money we sent the Pentagon and they can't tell us where it went. It's just gone."

"College for everyone will cost too much? You must be really pissed at the 8.5 Trillion, with a 't', dollars the pentagon's spent and can't tell us where it went."

Bringing up this "open secret" exposes their hypocrisy, and draws attention to the lack of corporate media attention to this HUGE SCANDALOUS level of waste by the Military/Industrial/Media (<-should be new addition to the lexicon) complex [ownership of government](#). It seems for few hundred million in "be all you can be" ad buys the MSM will keep it's mouth shut. We need to press so called journalists to bring this issue front and center. No candidate should be allowed to talk about government waste or big government with out being asked the follow up "What would you do about the massive 8.5 Trillion dollars the pentagon can't account for?"

In short; nothing reinforces our position that the money for valuable social and infrastructure programs (that have provable returns on investment) is actually there than this scandal. [We need to harp on this until we get some answers](#) and we need to leverage it more to shut down debate about desperately needed social program spending. Money visualization grabbed from this site you should check it out [HERE](#) <http://demonocracy.info/...>

[Tue Aug 18, 2015 at 9:19 PM PT](#): Here's an additional point : 8.5 Trillion dollars represents about \$70,000 from each of the 123 Million US households.

[1:00 AM PT](#): Updated this diary as the totals were misinterpreted although the crux is the same. Also of note is this is scandalous because the Pentagon has been required by law to be "audit ready" since 1996, but *still* has no real accounting systems.

[7:42 PM PT](#): Help Some kids out if you enjoyed this diary <http://www.dailykos.com/...>

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/08/19/1413372/-The-Biggest-Scandal-in-US-History-That-We-re-Still-Not-Talking-About?detail=email>

2015-08-18 The War on Women in Israel

Sexist laws and institutions threaten all women in Israel, but Arab women are beset from all sides.

By [Samuel Thrope](#)

Shirin Batshon, a lawyer who worked on the Taybeh court case for the feminist organization Kayan. She now holds a fellowship through the Fulbright foundation in Washington. (Courtesy of Shirin Batshon)

In 2009, a couple from the village of Taybeh in the West Bank were in the midst of a bitter separation. Their marriage had already dissolved in acrimony, with various legal battles under way, when the husband turned to the Islamic court and sued for arbitration.

The husband's appeal to Islamic law was not a sign of his or his wife's piety. For Israeli citizens of all faiths, divorce, like marriage itself, remains almost exclusively the province of religious law and institutions. Each recognized religious community—Muslims like this couple, but also Jews, Druze, and the various Christian denominations—has its own autonomous court system that rules on these personal status issues according to its own religious law. This is the reason why a couple of the same sex, or of different religions, cannot marry in Israel.

Gender inequality is built into the religious legal systems; this inequality is expressed in different traditions in different ways, but it is a trait that all share. In practice, the religious courts of all denominations are also consistently more lenient on men, in part because women cannot be appointed judges or hold other positions in the courtroom. For many women, the mere experience of sitting through a trial in such a hostile, male environment can often be degrading and shameful.

The particular remedy that the husband from Taybeh sought has a long history in Islamic jurisprudence. In arbitration, the judge orders each side to appoint a family member or other figure who will negotiate on his or her behalf to resolve the couple's outstanding differences. If reconciliation proves impossible, the arbitrators can recommend that the court decree the marriage dissolved.

Little information has been publicly released about the couple; even their names have been withheld by a court order. However, this much is clear: The wife is a fighter. Knowing full well the consequences of her actions, she informed the judge that she had selected a woman to represent her as arbitrator.

The court balked. Islamic courts in Israel had never permitted women to be arbitrators, though Muslim legal authorities are divided on the issue and women can serve as religious judges elsewhere in the Islamic world (including the Palestinian Authority).

Predictably, the Taybeh court rejected the wife's request, but, determined, she did not back down. After losing again on appeal, she took her case to Israel's Supreme Court, and in a 2013 decision Justice Edna Arbel overturned the ban. Far from a narrow ruling on the issue at hand, the decision was used by Arbel to reinforce the centrality of gender equality in Israeli law and its application

even to the religious court system. “The religious courts, like all courts and authorities of the state,” she wrote, “are subject to the basic principles of the system, including the principle of equality.”

Justice Arbel’s lofty words aside, the woman’s victory in this case is the exception rather than the rule. This is not only true in the sense that there are few instances in which women’s rights are vindicated in the religious court system. Arab women citizens—many of whom told me they prefer the terms “Palestinian” or “Palestinian citizen of Israel” to the more common “Israeli Arab”—face particular challenges that are distinct even from those of Palestinian women in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. These challenges rarely receive the attention that they deserve from mainstream Israeli society and institutions. Or, in fact, any attention at all.

Elana Sztokman’s [*The War on Women in Israel*](#) (Sourcebooks; Paper \$14.99) is a recent example of just this kind of erasure. Sztokman, an American-born former executive director of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance and a prominent writer on Jewish women’s topics, has written a scathing condemnation of rising gender discrimination and attacks on women in the Jewish state. The book focuses on the growing influence of radically anti-woman ideologies within Israel’s ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, Jewish community, and on the wider public.

Sztokman argues that the state is complicit in these ideologies’ spread. While the decision to preserve the Ottoman practice of separate religious courts at the state’s founding in 1948 was largely a boon to the country’s then small Haredi community, Sztokman contends that today Israel’s mostly secular leaders, whether because of profit, indifference, or political calculation, have colluded with the most radical elements within Haredi society at the expense of women’s rights. “The idea that an extreme version of Judaism practiced by a small minority,” she writes in a typical passage, “can come to be considered important enough to support with the entire law force of a seemingly democratic state—even to the detriment of the majority of citizens—is nothing less than frightening.”

That insight makes the fact that Arab women do not appear in *The War on Women in Israel* all the more frustrating. Despite its inclusive title and democratic message, the Israeli women whose difficulties Sztokman chronicles and the Israeli women heroes and activists she lauds are all Jewish Israelis. “My primary interest in this book is the plight of women,” she explains in a footnote, one of the book’s two references to Palestinians. “It’s not that I’m not concerned about discrimination against Arabs or Palestinians; it’s just that the Palestinian conflict is so widely researched...and gender is not.” With one stroke, Sztokman dismisses Arab women from Israeli society, relegating them to the separate domain of the Palestinian conflict.

Aida Touma-Sliman—51, dynamic and bespectacled, her shoulder-length curly hair shot with gray—is a committed feminist, the founder of the influential Women Against Violence organization and former editor of the communist daily *Al-Ittihad*. At a conference at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University before Israel’s elections last March, she seemed to be everywhere at once: on stage, greeting well-wishers, answering the phone, and talking with younger supporters, pausing only long enough to give a flawless, sound-bite-ready television interview with a natural politician’s flair.

Touma-Sliman is a longtime member and perennial candidate of the Arab-Jewish socialist party known in Hebrew as Hadash, and, with the party’s unprecedented win in the recent elections as part of the combined Arab bloc known as the Joint List, she was elected to the Knesset for the first

time. She now serves as chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, the first Arab woman to head a parliamentary committee.

When I told Touma-Sliman about the lack of Arab women in *The War on Women in Israel*, the seasoned activist just laughed. Arab women's voices and perspectives, she said, are hardly heard in Israeli public discourse. "Arab Palestinian women are on the margins of Israeli society," she explained. In the eyes of most Israeli Jews, women "are 'good Arabs' as long as we do our utmost to be invisible."

Using a metaphor that I heard from other activists, Touma-Sliman described Arab women as trapped in three circles of discrimination: along with Jewish women in Israel's macho and militaristic society; with Palestinian men as part of the country's Arab minority, many of whose members continue to feel under siege in the wake of last summer's violence and the unvarnished right-wing racism that accompanied the election campaign; and as Arab women within conservative and traditional Palestinian society.

Though women from different communities are affected by these pressures differently—an educated urbanite from Haifa, for instance, has more resources at her disposal than a Bedouin woman from the Negev desert—the problems that all Arab women face are compounded because of how these three circles interact and reinforce one another.

This can most clearly be seen, perhaps, in the case of violence against women. Even though Arab women only make up some 10 percent of Israel's population, according to police figures 25 percent of the 71 women murdered by their partners from 2009 through 2013 (the latest year for which data is available) were Arab, as were some 15 percent of the victims in cases of domestic violence overall.

Just as alarming is the fact that every year Arab women are murdered by their families in what are commonly known as "honor killings." However, these cases of what activists call "femicide" are not simply families' retaliations for the shame of a daughter or sister's perceived sexual transgression. According to research by Women Against Violence, reinforcing male authority is as much at issue. "As women have gained mobility and freedom in decision-making, men in the family have increasingly felt their authority being threatened and have thus increased their control over women's lives," Touma-Sliman wrote in the 2005 collection *"Honour": Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence Against Women*. With these crimes, "men try to stabilise a changing world by using violence against women."

This violence is exacerbated by the Israeli criminal-justice system. Activists have reported that investigations of femicide are often closed for lack of evidence, even though the perpetrators were well known, or in which family members who are found guilty walk away with reduced sentences. Women who complain to the police, seeking help and protection, are often either ignored or, worse, handed over to community notables who return them to their families and to danger. In at least two instances, in 1997 and 1998, activists provided the police with a list of women in the town of Ramle who had been threatened by their families but were afraid to come forward themselves. Despite the warnings, women from these same lists were later murdered.

Activists have long argued that there is a sinister motivation behind these lapses. The justice system, they claim, often closes cases in which Arab women are murdered by their families for

political reasons, using the excuse of a lack of sufficient evidence.

It is the fact of overlapping discrimination, in these instances and others, that convinces Touma-Sliman that feminists cannot concentrate on one area alone. "I don't believe a feminist struggle can separate between struggles, that it can say: I want to fight violence against women but don't make it political, don't talk to me about settlers or the Palestinian people," she said. "That's not the feminism I know. Feminism is a movement not only for individual liberation, but for structural change to build a more just society."

"I don't believe a feminist struggle can separate between struggles"—Aida Touma-Sliman

Israel's policy, described by Sztokman, of religious control over marriage and divorce is not directed specifically against Muslims and Christians. Divorce strictures in Judaism often mean that Jewish women suffer as much or more. Rabbinic law stipulates that a man must grant his wife a bill of divorce—a *gett*—of his own free will for the marriage to be dissolved. If the man refuses to grant the *gett*, women are left in limbo, sometimes for years, unable to marry again.

Nevertheless in the case of the religious courts, too, Arab women are caught in overlapping circles of discrimination. "Palestinian women are silenced when they talk about the damage family law does," said Shirin Batshon, 36, a dynamic and poised feminist lawyer and activist originally from the city of Lod. "Not only by the state, but also by the Palestinian political leadership."

In 2013, Batshon composed an open letter to Haneen Zoabi, then the only female Arab member of Knesset with the Balad party, asking her to promote the issue of civil marriage for Israel's Arab citizens, an issue that Balad had not supported. As Batshon sees it, this lack of support for marriage and divorce reform does not come from religious belief or traditionalism. "Part of the conservatism here has to do with the fact that this is a society under constant attack from outside," she said when we met in her Haifa office. "It needs to protect itself; it's the psychology of a minority that needs to protect its tradition and its culture."

"Look at what happened with the Arab parties," Batshon continued, referring to the Joint List, which was just forming when we spoke. "Balad, which defines itself as a secular, democratic party, needs to sit with the Islamic movement. Do you think that they won't pay a price? If once there was a chance that Balad would want to advance civil marriage, today there's no chance. But who caused this to happen? Among other reasons, it's the attack on the minority."

"If I take the example of the arbitrators, what happened?" continued Batshon, who worked on the case for the Palestinian feminist organization Kayan. "The Sharia court didn't agree to appoint a woman. No one got involved from the Palestinian leadership. So what did that woman have to do? She had to go to the state, which also discriminates against her in other areas, and to say: 'Protect me from the Sharia court.'"

For decades, Palestinian women have been left behind in the Israeli workforce. In 2014, according to government figures, about 31 percent of Palestinian women in Israel were employed, a rate far lower than in any other sector in Israeli society. Studies have consistently shown that this low figure among Arab women has little to do with conservative or traditional opposition to women working outside the home; as with other Israelis, the rising cost of living means that for most Palestinian families, having two incomes is an economic imperative.

Recently, the Israeli government has begun working to increase employment in the Arab community and among women in particular; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first post-election meeting with Joint List head Ayman Odeh in May dealt, among other topics, with employment. Working with programs developed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and other international NGOs, the government is seeking to correct the lack of investment in infrastructure, childcare, education, and job training in Arab communities that activists—and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in a 2010 report—have identified as obstacles to women's integration into the workforce.

Nabila Espanioly, one of Israel's most prominent feminists, has no doubt that investment is crucial for creating social change for Arab women. But she insists it is only part of the story.

Espanioly, 60, heads the Al-Tufula Center based in Nazareth. Stately and unhurried, the German-trained clinical psychologist described how Al-Tufula grew from its founding as a pedagogical center in what started as Nazareth's first nursery in 1989—the bottom floors of the center's building are still given over to brightly colored playrooms and pint-size jungle gyms—to become a multipurpose organization working on all aspects of women's empowerment. Like Touma-Sliman, Espanioly has also had a long career in the Hadash party. She was set to enter the Knesset just before the previous government fell, and lost to Touma-Sliman in the internal election for the second-place slot on the Hadash list.

For Espanioly, the main obstacle to Arab women's employment is political: institutionalized racism against Arabs in the labor market, both by employers and on the government level. Rather than speaking about a glass ceiling blocking Arab women's career advancement, she uses the metaphor of a sealed room to emphasize the impenetrable barrier that she argues excludes Arab women from the larger Israeli economy.

Espanioly recalled a study, conducted as part of the Israeli Democracy Institute's Caesarea Economic Policy Planning Forum led by Technion professor Yosef Jabareen, comparing the labor market in Israel to that of neighboring countries. While elsewhere in the region education leads to better performance in the job market, the same is not the case for Arab citizens in Israel.

"When you see that Saudi women are able to be integrated in jobs when they are more educated," Espanioly explained, "but for Palestinian women in Israel education doesn't support them entering the job market, you have to ask why. And the answer is that most of the jobs are in the Jewish economy. And we are connected to the Jewish economy. So if the Jewish economy doesn't open up to the Palestinian woman, education is creating the opposite effect."

I met Rajaa Natour, a poet and activist originally from the small village of Qalansuwa in central Israel, at a trendy cafe in Jaffa, the historically Palestinian port city now part of greater Tel Aviv. Natour, 43, is a poet—her work was recently published in the Hebrew-Arabic bilingual anthology *Two*—and a feminist activist and educator. She smokes incessantly, and talks fast, more quickly than you would imagine a poet would speak.

The coordinator of the "Just Right" project on behalf of Coalition of Women for Peace, Natour said that her traditional family is skeptical of her work and her outspoken political commitments. "Every time I post a status on Facebook, they call me and say: 'Have you gone crazy? Haven't they arrested you yet?'" she explained. "They don't say that they don't believe in the work that I

do, but I know that they don't."

As Natour emphasized, activists inherently upset the cultural expectations for Arab women, which can lead to conflicts with family and society. "The concept of what it is to be a Palestinian woman is very specific," she said. While going off to study in university is acceptable, "in the end, she should come back to the village. That's the narrative. Every woman that goes off this path and decides to live alone, far from the village or from the city where she grew up, and to do something political or to be an activist—it's just not something common."

Natour described Arab feminists as beset from all sides: family and community on one hand, and the state and the Jewish majority on the other. Even Jewish feminists, who would seem to be natural allies, are not engaged in a common struggle with Arab women. She identified part of the problem as structural: Every women's organization is preoccupied by its own particular population, making for a diffuse feminist constellation that precludes a unified movement.

But just as important for Natour is the fact that the mainstream Israeli feminism is dominated by Ashkenazi Jews of European ancestry. Her natural partners, as she sees it, are Mizrahi women, the descendants of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, many of whom came to Israel as refugees in the 1950s and '60s. Recent years have seen the revival of interest in Mizrahi identity among Israelis, expressed in music and culture as well as politics, and a reinvigorated discussion of how Mizrahi Jews were, and continue to be, subject to Ashkenazi dominance.

"What dialogue do I have with Ashkenazi women, really?" Natour asked. "Of course, they are oppressed in some way as women, but if we're talking about political dialogue, I want to work with Ethiopian women and Mizrahi women, who are oppressed in similar ways—who understand me when I talk about racism, that when people talk in Arabic on the bus it's like setting off a bomb."

"To engage in a cooperative struggle doesn't mean that you take my side," she added. "You don't become a Palestinian. You're still a Jewish woman who is fighting the occupation because it also oppresses you. You're against racism because it oppresses you, against dispossession because it oppresses you—and not only Palestinians."

[Samuel Thrope](#) Samuel Thrope is a Jerusalem-based writer and the translator of Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *The Israeli Republic*.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/the-war-on-women-in-israel/>

2015-08-19 **David Cay Johnston: 21 Questions for Trump on Kickbacks, Busting Unions, the Mob & Corporate Welfare**

<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/360/dn2015-0819.mp4?&start=2873.0>
<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/audio-m4a/dn2015-0819.m4a?&start=2873.0>

Guests [David Cay Johnston](#), Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter previously with *The New York Times*. He's currently a columnist for Al Jazeera America as well as a contributing writer at *Newsweek*. His latest book is *Divided: The Perils of Our Growing Inequality*.

To talk more about Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump, we are joined by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Cay Johnston, who has covered Trump off and on for 27 years. He recently wrote an article for *The National Memo* titled "21 Questions for Donald Trump." David Cay Johnston is an investigative reporter previously with *The New York Times*. He's currently a columnist for Al Jazeera America as well as a contributing writer at *Newsweek*. His latest book is "Divided. The Perils of Our Growing Inequality."

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AMY GOODMAN: David Cay Johnston is an investigative reporter previously with *The New York Times*. He's currently a columnist for Al Jazeera America as well as a contributing writer at *Newsweek*. His latest book is *Divided: The Perils of Our Growing Inequality*.

David, welcome back to *Democracy Now!* You have been covering Donald Trump for more than 30 years. Can you talk about who Donald Trump is?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Well, Donald Trump is not at all who people think he is, and I'm very surprised that conservatives are embracing him. For example, Donald's most famous building, the Trump Tower, instead of building it as a steel girder building, he chose to build it out of concrete, a 58-story—he says 68 stories—a 58-story concrete building built by a company called A&S [S&A Concrete] construction. And who owned [S&A] construction? "Fat Tony" Salerno, the head of the Genovese crime family in New York, and Paul Gambino—I'm sorry, Paul Castellano, the head of the Gambino family. Trump used the same company for other projects that he built, even though they were more costly than using steel girder construction.

When he tore down the Bonwit Teller building to make way for the Trump Tower, he had about a dozen union house wreckers on the site and about 150 Polish workers, all of them illegally in the country, who he paid \$4 to \$5 an hour and who did not have hard hats. And Trump claimed in a lawsuit that he had no idea that these workers were there in any way other than an appropriate way. And a federal judge mocked him, pointing out that they were easy to spot because they were the ones who had no hard hats.

Donald's personal helicopter pilot, Joseph Weichselbaum, was a convicted major cocaine and marijuana trafficker whose criminal case landed before, of all people, Judge Maryanne Trump Barry, Donald Trump's sister. Now, Judge Barry recused herself, but she also, in the process, made

every other judge in the federal system aware of the sensitivity of this particular case.

And in addition, Donald Trump has been found in the past repeatedly to have not paid people he owed money to. It is a standard business practice of his. He has let people think that he fixed Wollman Rink in Central Park for free. He was paid \$10 million, but some of his contractors were never paid, because he told them this was a public service project. And he's been sued innumerable times for racial discrimination of his businesses. He's been found to have engaged in racial discrimination. He's not at all who he appears to be.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Well, and, David Cay Johnston, you also note that he's not even a billionaire, as he so often claims, that in some years he hasn't—

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Well, he wasn't one in—

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: In some years, he hasn't even paid taxes.

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: He wasn't one in 1990. Yeah, in 1990, when I revealed that—he claimed he was worth \$3 billion back then, and I got a hold of his banker's net worth statement that showed he was worth negative-\$295 million, and as—I was at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* then. We ran across the top of the front page, "You are Probably Worth More Than Donald Trump." I think the record now is pretty clear. He's probably worth a billion or somewhat more than a billion, but nowhere near \$10 billion.

But important to that is that Donald, in all likelihood, despite claiming a \$400 million annual income, probably doesn't pay any income taxes, because there's a special provision in federal tax law that if you're a real estate developer or operator, and your losses, your paper losses for the depreciating value of your buildings, which are really going up in value, exceed your other income, you can live tax-free. And I have three years of Donald's tax returns from the late '70s, early '80s that show large negative income and no federal income tax.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And you've challenged him to release his taxes?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Oh, yeah. I think the likelihood that Donald will release his tax returns, even if he's the Republican nominee, is extraordinarily small. I mean, look how hard Mitt Romney, who benefited from another provision of the tax code that would have allowed him to live tax-free or virtually tax-free as the sole owner of Bain Capital management, fought to only release two years of his tax data, even though his father set the standard at 16 years.

AMY GOODMAN: We were just talking, David Cay Johnston, about his wanting to change the Constitution to end birthright citizenship. Your thoughts?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Well, the racist right in this country has proposed repeal of the 14th Amendment for a long time. You haven't heard about it in the mainstream news, because it seems a crazy, fringe idea. I noticed Lindsey Graham—you ran a tape of him saying, "We have evidence of people coming here to have their babies." I've asked several politicians over the last few years, you know, "What evidence? You know, point me to people." Well, you don't get anything from these folks. But let's assume that it's true, somewhat true. Why would we amend the Constitution and take away a right, a right we fought a war over, in which over 600,000 people, about 38,000 of them black Americans, fought, to take away this constitutional right that has been now unquestioned in the law for more than a century and a half?

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And among the questions you raise, there's also about Trump's operations in Atlantic City, with his casinos there and his questionable relationships with possibly other mob figures in Atlantic City. Could you talk about that?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Sure. Well, Donald never had a dollar invested in Atlantic City. And by his own account in *The Art of the Deal*, he brags about deceiving his partners, the directors of the old Holiday Inn motel company, who owned Harrah's casinos. And he boasts about tricking them and deceiving them. He needed to buy a particular piece of land. And Donald always says he's such a great negotiator. So who did he send to negotiate with the representative of Nicky Scarfo, the head of the Atlantic City crime family? Well, he sent his lawyer, Harvey Freeman. He didn't go himself. And I think that's consistent with Donald having so assiduously avoided the draft. Donald is not a guy to put himself in any position that he thinks might represent any kind of physical danger to him whatsoever.

AMY GOODMAN: David Cay Johnston, you also talk about how he discusses his experience as a manager allowing him to run the federal government far better than President Obama or Hillary Clinton. Can you talk about that?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Oh, yes. Well, you know, *Fortune* magazine does these analyses of who's a good employer. Wegmans supermarkets, where I am here in Rochester, New York, is often cited as a really good employer, and with good reason. So they looked at 496 major companies, and Trump's casino company was at the bottom or almost at the bottom in terms of management competence, how it treated its workers, its return to its investors—every metric they had, near the bottom. Donald is not a manager. He is a dealmaker.

And the principal elements of Trump deals are these: You borrow a lot of money. You then arrange later to pay back less than you owed, whether you do it through private transactions, by threatening to go to bankruptcy court, or actual bankruptcy, in the case of his casino company. You don't pay people who work for you or vendors what's promised.

And what I don't understand, Amy, is not one major news organization has even tried to check these things out. I got one phone call from *The Washington Post* about this [piece](#), "21 Questions for Donald Trump." Nothing has appeared. And that's because, in this country, politics reporters cover the horse race, and they do not vet the candidates the way they should. And Trump, if vetted properly, would quickly disappear from the polls.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And does that go to explain why he continues to rise in the polls among Republican voters despite this incredible record of all these years?

DAVID CAY JOHNSTON: Well, I think—see, I don't think people know about his actual record. He is appealing to the worst instincts in us. He is appealing to racial instincts. And, you know, let's recognize that, well, in polite society, you can't say, "I don't want to sit next to a black person or a brown person or an Asian person on the airplane or in a restaurant or at work." You can't say that. And so, there's an undercurrent of people who hate that. They want to live in a white society. They want to imagine this is a Christian country, even though the Constitution expressly in Article VI makes clear it's not a religious country in any way. And Donald has provided a way for those people who harbor these bad thoughts, I would argue, they harbor these inhumane thoughts, to channel them through him.

And they are so enamored of this, they ignore the fact that he is proposing to create a massive police state, to round up people, to have a—we were required to have adjudicatory hearings, although Donald likes to think he would be dictator—and spend enormous amounts of money on removing people from the country, including children born here who are citizens, and erecting a wall, which will do absolutely nothing to stop people coming here in an effort to find a better life. So, people who harbor these awful feelings and suffer from the social disease of white skin privilege just aren't really thinking through what Donald is proposing, which is a massive new government program that's totally contrary to the Republican promise of less government.

AMY GOODMAN: David Cay Johnston, we want to thank you for being with us, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter, previously with *The New York Times*, now writing for Al Jazeera America as well as a contributing writer at *Newsweek*. We'll link to your [column](#) on your "21 Questions for Donald Trump" at democracynow.org.

2015-07-10 21 Questions for Donald Trump

I've covered Donald Trump for 27 years. Here are some questions for him.

By [David Cay Johnston](#) / [The National Memo](#)

<http://www.alternet.org/21-questions-donald-trump>

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I have covered Donald Trump off and on for 27 years — including breaking the story that in 1990, when he claimed to be worth \$3 billion but could not pay interest on loans coming due, his bankers put his net worth at minus \$295 million. And so I have closely watched what Trump does and what government documents reveal about his conduct.

Reporters, competing Republican candidates, and voters would learn a lot about Trump if they asked for complete answers to these 21 questions.

So, Mr. Trump...

1. You call yourself an “ardent philanthropist,” but have not donated a dollar to The Donald J. Trump Foundation since 2006. You’re not even the biggest donor to the foundation, having given about \$3.7 million in the previous two decades while businesses associated with Vince McMahon’s World Wrestling Entertainment gave the Trump Foundation \$5 million. All the money since 2006 has come from those doing business with you.

How does giving away other people’s money, in what could be seen as a kickback scheme, make you a philanthropist?

2. New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman successfully sued you, alleging your Trump University was an “illegal educational institution” that charged up to \$35,000 for “Trump Elite” mentorships promising personal advice from you, but you never showed up and your “special” list of lenders was photocopied from *Scotsman Guide*, a magazine found at any bookstore.

Why did you not show up?

3. You claimed The Learning Annex paid you a \$1 million speaking fee, but on *Larry King Live*, you acknowledged the fee was \$400,000 and the rest was the promotional value.

Since you have testified under oath that your public statements inflate the value of your assets, can voters use this as a guide, so whenever you say \$1, in reality it is only 40 cents?

4. The one-page financial statement handed out at Trump Tower when you announced your candidacy says you’ve given away \$102 million worth of land.

Will you supply a list of each of these gifts, with the values you assigned to them?

5. The biggest gift you have talked about appears to be an easement at the Palos Verdes, California, golf course bearing your name on land you wanted to build houses on, but that land is subject to landslides and is now the golf course driving range.

Did you or one of your businesses take a tax deduction for this land that you could not build on and do you think anyone should get a \$25 million tax deduction for a similar self-serving gift?

6. Trump Tower is not a steel girder high rise, but 58 stories of concrete.

Why did you use concrete instead of traditional steel girders?

7. Trump Tower was built by S&A Concrete, whose owners were “Fat” Tony Salerno, head of the Genovese crime family, and Paul “Big Paul” Castellano, head of the Gambinos, another well-known crime family.

If you did not know of their ownership, what does that tell voters about your management skills?

8. You later used S&A Concrete on other Manhattan buildings bearing your name.

Why?

9. In demolishing the Bonwit Teller building to make way for Trump Tower, you had no labor troubles, even though only about 15 unionists worked at the site alongside 150 Polish men, most of whom entered the country illegally, lacked hard hats, and slept on the site.

How did you manage to avoid labor troubles, like picketing and strikes, and job safety inspections while using mostly non-union labor at a union worksite — without hard hats for the Polish workers?

10. A federal judge later found you conspired to cheat both the Polish workers, who were paid less than \$5 an hour cash with no benefits, and the union health and welfare fund. You testified that you did not notice the Polish workers, whom the judge noted were easy to spot because they were the only ones on the work site without hard hats.

What should voters make of your failure or inability to notice 150 men demolishing a multi-story building without hard hats?

11. You sent your top lieutenant, lawyer Harvey I. Freeman, to negotiate with Ken Shapiro, the “investment banker” for Nicky Scarfo, the especially vicious killer who was Atlantic City’s mob boss, according to federal prosecutors and the New Jersey State Commission on Investigation.

Since you emphasize your negotiating skills, why didn’t you negotiate yourself?

12. You later paid a Scarfo associate twice the value of a lot, officials determined.

Since you boast that you always negotiate the best prices, why did you pay double the value of this real estate?

13. You were the first person recommended for a casino license by the New Jersey Attorney General’s Division of Gaming Enforcement, which opposed all other applicants or was neutral. Later it came out in official proceedings that you had persuaded the state to limit its investigation of your background.

Why did you ask that the investigation into your background be limited?

14. You were the target of a 1979 bribery investigation. No charges were filed, but New Jersey law mandates denial of a license to anyone omitting any salient fact from their casino application.

Why did you omit the 1979 bribery investigation?

15. The prevailing legal case on license denials involved a woman, seeking a blackjack dealer license, who failed to disclose that as a retail store clerk she had given unauthorized discounts to friends.

In light of the standard set for low-level license holders like blackjack dealers, how did you manage to keep your casino license?

16. In 1986 you wrote a letter seeking lenient sentencing for Joseph Weichselbaum, a convicted marijuana and cocaine trafficker who lived in Trump Tower and in a case that came before your older sister, Judge Maryanne Trump Barry of U.S. District Court in Newark, New Jersey, who recused herself because

Weichselbaum was the Trump casinos and Trump family helicopter consultant and pilot.

Why did you do business with Weichselbaum, both before and after his conviction?

17. Your first major deal was converting the decrepit Commodore Hotel next to Grand Central Station into a Grand Hyatt. Mayor Abe Beame, a close ally of your father Fred, gave you the first-ever property tax abatement on a New York City hotel, worth at least \$400 million over 40 years.

Since you boast that you are a self-made billionaire, how do you rationalize soliciting and accepting \$400 million of welfare from the taxpayers?

18. You say that your experience as a manager will allow you to run the federal government much better than President Obama or Hilary Clinton. On *Fortune Magazine's* 1999 list of the 496 most admired companies, your casino company ranked at the bottom – worst or almost worst in management, use of assets, employee talent, long-term investment value, and social responsibility. Your casino company later went bankrupt.

Why should voters believe your claims that you are a competent manager?

19. Your Trump Plaza casino was fined \$200,000 for discriminating against women and minority blackjack dealers to curry favor with gambler Robert Libutti, who lost \$12 million, and who insisted he never asked that blacks and women be replaced.

Why should we believe you “love” what you call “the blacks” and the enterprise you seek to lead would not discriminate again in the future if doing so appeared to be lucrative?

20. Public records (cited in my book *Temples of Chance*) show that as your career took off, you legally reported a negative income and paid no income taxes as summarized below:

1975	Income: \$76,210 Tax Paid: \$18,714
1976	Income: \$24,594 Tax Paid: \$10,832
1977	Income: \$118,530 Tax Paid: \$42,386
1978	Income: (\$406,379) Tax Paid: \$0
1979	Income: (\$3,443,560) Tax Paid: \$0

Will you release your tax returns? And if not, why not?

21. In your first bestselling book, *The Art of the Deal*, you told how you had not gotten much work done on your first casino, so you had crews dig and fill holes to create a show. You said one director of your partner, Holiday Inns, asked what was going on. “This was difficult for me to answer, but fortunately this board member was more curious than he was skeptical,” you wrote.

Given your admission that you used deception to hide your failure to accomplish the work, why should we believe you now?