

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](http://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.

- Use the following phone numbers to ask questions or make comments during the radio show.

530 – 413 – 9537 [line 1]

530 – 763 – 1594 [line 2 & 3]

530 – 746 – 0341 [line 4]

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

**B Conference Call:** 1-213 -342-3000

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);
  - in the Left Hand Column, under MAIN MENU, scroll down to *Current Program Archives*;
  - when the new page comes up, scroll down to "Hard News on Friday" and, under that name, click on *More Archives*
    - when the new page comes up, you will see "Listen" or "Download MP3"
    - You can download the program to your own computer or listen directly.
- The **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 – 213 - 342- 3000; PIN 9467441#

**B Tuesdays, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of each month:** **Ashtar on the Road**  
**9:30 – 11:00 pm EST** Host is Fran; Susan Leland channels Ashtar & Mother Sekhmet  
[www.Ashtarontheroad.com](http://www.Ashtarontheroad.com)  
▪ Phone Number: 1 – 559 – 726 – 1300; PIN 163731#  
▪ 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:**            **Cheryl Croci**            [ See p.1 for info on her Sunday, Monday calls]

**Housekeeping:**                **Rainbird**

- BBS:**
- A listener-supported radio program; we can access program archives on BBS
  - We are being asked to do our part and start the year with a clean slate: **we need \$495** to complete our commitment for last week and this week.

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

- Go to BBS Radio.com/station2; find the listing for History of Nesara Call & the Paypal button
- **NO COST TO ACCESS THE ARCHIVES** for any of the T & R PROGRAMS
- Re: archives of the other programs on BBS: the money we pay to listen to other people's archives is put towards our BBS bill!

**MR:**    • Please remember to support MariettaRobert's Thursday Stargate Roundtable as well!!!!

- You can also mail a cheque or money order to  
BBS Network, Inc.        (Attention:Don)  
5167 Toyon Lane  
Paradise, CA 95969                      Please note on your cheque or MO that it is for  
Tara and Rama, and MariettaRobert.

**T & R:**    • **WE CAN GIFT T & R BY GIFTING BBS.**

- On the website: [2013RainbowRoundTable.ning.com](http://2013RainbowRoundTable.ning.com)  
there is a donate button on the home page and on the Blog page
- Please notify them if you're sending something:                      [koran999@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:stargatemarietta@gmail.com)
- Remember you can also have a session with Mother, as well!

**Every little bit matters! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

#### **HARD NEWS:**

**T:** The stuff coming up on the Stargate Roundtable on Thursday is astounding: it is about the new thinking that is replacing the old style. The people Marietta brings on deal with health and food: we just heard that the centre of California will **NOT BE GETTING WATER FROM THE WATER PROJECT:** means we have to pick up the slack.

- The seeds we need to keep in mind is not about beg-a-thons but about having a new dispensation on this planet: the knowledge of what does not work is important, and the knowledge of the new ways, the foundations, the principles for the interim are what we are discussing.
- Stargates have to do with the portals all around the planet – the ships are coming in all over the planet – they will not force themselves on us – those who do not want to see them may get a surprise! Those who have been working with the energies are going up to the ships already.

**Camp Loveway:** Guests: David Icke, Ben Stewart, Alana who has written a book on chemtrails.

- All talked of what is happening on the planet and being at the end of a grand cycle: creating a delicate dance of dichotomy for the powers that were – they are desperate to hold on to

power.

- As Ben said, if you go into revenge, hate, and the revenge of the Sith, you are going down the dark road.
- The March hare is bringing in intense, new energy – “The Event” is not what Mr Cobra says it is, but what We the People prepare.
- David spoke of the frequencies coming into the planet; the scientists are watching the events around the corona of the sun with quiet desperation: Nibiru is in the corona of the sun, and the scientists are freaked out over it.
- Spoke of the story that began 450 billions years ago when the Nibiruans, Enki and Enlil; the 13 families are desperately trying to gather all the gold they can get together to offer as a gift to the Nibiru folks.
- The Nibiruans are here on a peace mission and the gold dust.
- The 13 families want to offer the gold to these ones who were here before in exchange for mutual benefit, meaning domination and control. Enki and Enlil have already come back to love; the story of Jehovah, Lucifer and Lilith is the original story, and the story about Alcyone choosing to play in a certain way because we asked to be part of the grand experiment, divestiy within love, not diversity within war.
- The 13 families want a deal done dirt cheap; they do understand but they have been so filled with the energy of desperation to get one over on the people because they have genetically engineered the love out of their DNA and they are desperately asking for love in a strange way.
- Ben Stewart and the others have described is that the biomedical/miliitary/industrial/ congressional complex have created technologies that are not based in love, though in the right context, they can be used for love when there is balance.
- The chemtrails and all that is being added – Rama told them that HAARP is not functional; the ISS is being used for these dark deeds. This was news for David Icke, yet he understands that he does not hear what Rama hears. Each one of us has a tiny facet of the crystalline matrix; as Mother said, one or two more pieces need to be added & it will be complete
- The ships are landing in Buton, and the galactics are meeting regularly with the people; the Chinese and all the alphabet agencies see this and are powerless to change anything
  - We are moving up in energy, synchronicity – it is magnificent to see so many folllks waking up
  - the stories not discussed in any detail. Yet it is happening and is coming from places we least expect it to show up: it is about love and the higher frequencies showing up.
  - If you show up with weapons of war, you have to wait! Have to leave weapons of war at the door and out of our minds!!!
- Rama says he has to deal daily with his own thoughts, changing his reality and keeping thoughts & tongue pure – it's a delicate dance because the monkey mind draws you highter and thither. We must meditate every day.
- They also discussed all the shenanigans that are to distract us with not-so-nice stories having to do with the desperation; the ones who seem to hold power do not – all they hold is the fear card and it is not real. Ben S described it by referring to the movie **Revenge of the Sith**: a Senator lied to Skywalker and then he lost it.
  - If it looks fair and then feels foul, we are having mind games played with us

### **Right Left and Centre: Robert Scheer**

- Bringing up the fact that the desperation of these ones as they watch their financial assets vanishing: there is revolt all over the planet. This is not an extinction level event –
  - we are asked to keep the mind pure, the tongue pure and as we watch and listen, send the violet fire, the ruby ray, the three fold flame which change matter - this is mind over matter changing things.

- Ben talked of his films **Kymatica** and the others:
  - we are co-creators, we are in the morphogenic field
  - As we get up and meditate and focus on the love being poured into our lives, we focus on what we can be thankful for, not on how little [we think] we have.
- It is awesome to behold the energies and what is happening now: the frequencies of balance.

**T:** The Wind is at our back - as Carl Boudreau has said, and the green horse will help us

- This means we don't need to try hard, but let go easily and surrender.
- They asked the King {KOS} in 1990s what was the signal they need to look for: he said **SURRENDER.**

- The people in Ukraine did it overnight last night
- Parliament voted to oust President Yanokovich and after he abandoned the capital [Kiev is pronounced "Keev"]
  - And he went to his hometown Kahlkiv, on the eastern border by Russia. The east and the south is one sixth of the population of Ukrainians and speaks Russian
  - He has also refused to resign
- Meantime the Ukraine opposition leader was freed; Julia Tymeshenko who has a severe illness in her spinal cord
 

[T describes what a "herniated disc" really is - about the fluid in the spinal cord - can be healed if she has access to a Master and bioresonance technology and psychic healers who work without cutting the body into bits]

- The protestors occupied gov't buildings and offices, including the President's residence
  - He has issued a TV statement from his home town: he does not accept what is going on!
  - Calls it a coup d'etat has occurred by right wingers! [pot calling kettle black!]
- Parliament which supports the protestors has been meeting with all of them inside the parliament - the parliament members have come together with the people and they are passing law after law all morning: voted to oust him; to release Julia from prison, his main political rival - she was leading and was part of the gov't when she was arrested;
- the authorities in the country are listening to Julia who has been released from the prison hospital. She is now in Kiev
- The protestors seem to be in charge; the security forces and the parliament are obeying.

**R:** it is a challenge each day for every one of us: as he is out and about talking to all kinds of people. He used to talk to Howard Stern but he went off the rails; the shock jock story is over, yet listening to the news can throw us into the place of fear and fascination with the dark side: as Master Joda said don't give into fear and hate!

**T:** We know the don'ts, in response to Rama's comments

- the **first DO is Praise, Respect, Thank and Love the feeling whatever happens**
  - We are thinking with our heart, and feeling with our minds
- **Next DO is to apply the qualities of the Buddhist mind:** thinking with the heart and feeling with the mind
  - Love - has no opposite so it is applied first; love what you are saying and from that
  - Truth - higher knowledge brings truth
  - Peace - As we embrace higher truth, we have inner peace,
  - Freedom - freedom emerges from the inner peace, freedom to choose justice
  - Justice - always seasoned with divine mercy
  - Beauty -
- Anything that is going on is a disease of the mind; and the keeper, caretaker of the manna that comes is - The whale holds the akashic record as a human soul; the dolphins hold the manna from heaven: What people in the mountains eat as there is nothing else to eat
  - The dolphins holding the manna of the mind is a teaching in the Moorish teachings
    - The phoenix is on the flag of the Moabite Nation in the UN - it represents all the

indigenous peoples of the planet - no borders.

- In order to change the world, the ability to RECEIVE LOVE comes first, and the first law of LOVE is BE CALM.

**R:** his granny was born in Kiev in this life time: this brings in the White Russian Jew energy

**T:** the Caucus Mtns are here too so this also brings in the element of extreme Nazi energy: the Khazars became Nazis which is what Netanyahu and the Vatican is.

- McCain went to Kiev – **he was collaborating with the extreme southern Nazi energy** which is also found through Greece, Germany, Poland, Italy: runs through these countries
  - KOS has said **this energy will decapitated.**
- Right now, the news drives us all nuts because they are running around inside this energy, and having conversations about the new technologies is an uphill battle.

**R:** It's like when Gandalf rode Shadowfax in, blazing the white fire!

**Audio:** about the history of the area in Ukraine

- [Viktor Yanukovych](#) became president in Feb, 2010
- Role of Russia: Putin says there is interference from outside; speaker says not – the people need to work out what has to happen to unite the country

**Audio: Thom Hartmann Guest Stephen Cohen on Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives.**

*Wednesday Feb. 19, 2014*

Catch The Thom Hartmann Program **LIVE** 3-6pm ET M-F!!

**Read Thom's [latest Liberaally Yours](#) column online at The Daily Caller..be sure to add your comments & support your local liberal!**

**Hour One: How Obama could kill the Democratic Party / PLUS, Jordan Davis...murder by culture?** Joe Madison, [The Joe Madison Show](#)

**Hour Two: The Right Wing Machine Field Guide** - Lee Fang, [Republic Report](#)

**Hour Three: The New Cold War?** Stephen Cohen, [The Nation Magazine](#)

**T:** In answer to Cohen's question about **why Obama did not go to the Olympic Games:** his mission is to get NESARA announced & he needs to focus [Putin knows what's going on]

**Reading:** Rise of the Anti-Government Flash Mobs ~ First Ukraine, Now Venezuela **[SEE BELOW]**

**Audio: The Assassination of Hugo Chavez** – directed by Greg Palast

**Audio: Democracy Now ~ Amy Goodman**

2014, Feb 17 The Killing of Jordan Davis: Michael Dunn Faces 60 Years After Split Verdict in 'Thug Music' Trial **[SEE BELOW]**

2014, Feb 17 Untold History: More Than a Quarter of U.S. Presidents Were Involved in Slavery, Human Trafficking **[SEE BELOW]**

2014, Feb 17 Former FCC Commissioner Warns About Comcast-Time Warner Merger, "Mindless" Media Consolidation **[SEE BELOW]**

## **ASTROLOGY – Richard**

### **February 19, 2014 Pele Report, Astrology Forecast**

February 20, 2014 12:12 am · Kaypacha

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qKXioS2xSU&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qKXioS2xSU&feature=player_embedded)

[click here for the 3rd Quarter astrology chart](#)

***It's time to be honest about you and me,  
Our relationship, its purpose, our destiny,  
Are we on the same path of self transformation,  
or lost in fear, lies, and stagnation?***

[click here for the English transcription of the Pele Report](#)

[Pele Report mp3 only](#)

Wow, didn't even really get to the Sun in Pisces joining Neptune! A beautiful time to be connecting with our hearts, the hearts of others, and the mysteries of life.... maybe a little on the dreamy, lazy side of life this weekend but you deserve it... dream away! And then come back to your partner and see about realizing those dreams together. I'm blessed to connect with the Mayan energy here and am thankful to Miguel Angel and [www.casakin.org](http://www.casakin.org) for inviting me here.... check `em out! So Be It, So It Is, It Is Done..... In Lak'ech

### **The Astrology of March 2014 - Realignment**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=UUntBJzrpFGwsNmWtGbEIhHq&v=6Z22qVxoNJ4&feature=player\\_detailpage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=UUntBJzrpFGwsNmWtGbEIhHq&v=6Z22qVxoNJ4&feature=player_detailpage)

#### **Published on 21 Feb 2014**

Transformative forces now specifically target the structures, patterns and attitudes that define our identity and all of our relationship, at home, at work, in the world at large. Social, political, economic and cultural alliances and alignments go into flux. The psychological disorientation many are experiencing deepens. People work overtime to keep their personal and social affairs in order.

Accelerating transformation at the individual level psychological level supports accelerate change at the macro level.

Somehow it all adds up to progress as the demolition of old structures clears the way for progress.

#### **Comments by Richard**

Mercury is still retrograde and in Aquarius: still have to pay attention to our electrical equipment – keep doing the maintenance

## The Next Week by Richard

- Moon in Sag now since the morning – Mercury conjunct Neptune in March 20- 22<sup>nd</sup> when sun goes into Aries
- Sun is conjunct Neptune until Sunday – Sunday will be an excellent day for creative work, winter cleaning of garden

**Mon** – moon goes into Capricorn in the morning; 4 sextiles that day; Venus will be in Capricorn; it is now at 22\* Capricorn – now away from Pluto – that was the time of big change. Capricorn is about business

**Tues** – moon still in Capricorn, conjuncts Pluto in Capricorn early Tues am.  
How do you apply love to business and the business of gov't?

**Wed** – moon is void of course, moves into Capricorn; conjuncts Venus at midnight; T square between Jupiter, -- could generate a kick in the butt! It's a return to Aquarius

**Thurs** – 27<sup>th</sup> – Mercury at 19\* Aquarius

**Fri** – Mercury goes direct at 9 am – will be a wobbly day! A change of air flow  
Carl referred to winds blowing from one direction to another – it's frequency flow  
Could be tricky to maintain sense of being grounded.

**T:** as we are entering March, what about the new moon right at the start & what is the influence?

**Ri:** will remain tricky: new moon at 11\* Pisces; and Mars goes Retrograde on Sat am at 28\* Libra  
Which is close to the North Node – that energy flow is to bring us back to balance.

**T:** the rising sign is how other people see us; as you master Libra you can teach others to keep their balance.

- She talks of what they saw in Ukraine and the number of people who took over the streets and the PM's residence and the existing President literally fleeing in front of the energy of the new. Libra will ultimately do the balancing act, right?

**Ri: Good Omens** – a book he has just read: a sarcastic tale about an male angel and a demon; both have magical powers, both live in London, have been alive for 6,000 years, kind of friendly even though they are on opposite sides of the fence.

- Demon says: we don't really need to work so hard: leave humans alone and they will self-destruct – why work so hard to bring Armageddon forward?
- Angel says can't know the mind of god and what is in store for us
- There are hundreds of thousands of mentally ill on the planet: what kind of healing can you do?
  - Carl touched on this: these are the old energies being played out; feels like old karma being played out at the moment: it's a battle for balance, for mental health – Jupiter in Cancer – a virus going round called FEAR. H1N1 is minor; the major one is fear which is at the base of dictatorship, control freaks, etc.
  - Fear is the disease, understanding is the medicine

**T:** hates to see things go the extent it went to in Ukraine: everyone involved had to be prepared to go the lengths they went to

- Refers to the historian Stephen Cohen on the Thom Hartmann Show who knows the history of Ukraine: a major portion of Ukraine is connected to Russia; the other side to Germany, Latvia, etc etc . Putin had a lot to say about condemning a whole people if you hold them responsible for killing 6 million people; Cohen said he did not believe Putin was so evil: he was the one who suggested a tri-partite approach – the ultimate enemy, so-called, making the positive suggestion.
- Also said that economics is the way through which the power of fear is maintained: the illusion that without money, you will be destroyed. And then there is NESARA .

• Carl also said we are past the 50% position – no more going back, no more vacillating

**Ri:** pointed out that there is a lot of retrograde motion which is indicating that we need to go

back and review, and this is reviewing tolerance and cleaning up our own act. Rama says love the bad guys more.

- Talks about money and the reason for the necessity of the money system: it is an energy exchange system – labour for coins, for a meal, for food; money represents energy on the physical plane.

**Caller1:** yes, time to get back to the table and review all aspects of life: money, mental health care, having armies stand down, Ascension centres, a focus on the healing arts, the multi-cultural arts, healing therapies instead of pharmaceutical drugs, interactive programs

**T:** re heroin and meths: here is something new – the head of the mina loa gang from the western mountains of Mexico, the Mexican drug lord of all drug lords: he was captured today – the biggest transfer of power in terms of the – the most violent organization in Mexico and funds HSBC

**Caller:** talks about the new programs that help with addiction

**T:** the bio resonance machine should be in each healing centre

**Caller:** the kids know nothing about the body, mind and spirit connections – only about video games – the old healing modalities have to go

**T:** this does not just happen: this is WHITE KNIGHT STUFF! This means that the oligarchs are being arrested.

- Carl brought up small communities: T speaks of Olympia, WA where the new city council member who worked to get the small homes built: got a huge amount of money from the council and from an Indian tribe – the state and Indian nation working together – each one gets a building of 144 sf including a front porch!

- What is happening is due to the inhibitions placed on people: march will see those inhibitions lifted

**Caller2:** has been listening – has worked with kids all her life, those at risk, parents addicted to drugs; on the east coast and in CA and in WA and NYC and other places – knows what caller 1 is talking about.

- Recently, in the last year, she has asked her own guidance, spiritual support team what is next for her: she was teaching in the public system but what was given to her was what she personally had to do: to design workshops, a program to integrate through art and green activities to help the children – for her to design the program and they are giving her resources to tap into – it is about her doing it, do what you have to do and the resources that are out there will come to you – we have to do it!
- Caller has been initiated into many groups: what she is asking for is how to use what talents she has – cannot ask kids to do things when they are not ready
  - As we go through the next transition which is extremely powerful: we have to listen to our own guidance – she gets insights and lots of inspiration from what is on the calls but ultimately it is about US DOING THE WORK.

**Caller1:** knows she has to do is create the new centres

**Caller2:** she works with therapeutic health services in WA – has seen it all wherever she

- We cannot continue to complain about what is going on: we have to do what we have to do and then step back and watch how it works out
- There are resources that you can tap into right now – just have to do the research

**T:** there is a tie-in between what the 2 of them are saying

- There is so much going on that the overview is almost beyond us
- In spite of the lack of money, it has been a great gift because it forces us to fall back on ourselves and our own talents and that of others
- We all know what is needed and we don't discuss money any more – if it looks like something is not happening, then we need to step in – if we bite off more than we can chew it will come back to bite us. Yet there is no chance any more for the powers that were to change things – it is already over for them.
- She goes back to the story of the people who used to live in tents and now have the little

houses and how difficult that was to make it happen

**T:** Bill Maher had on Michelle Alexander on last night; she has written the book on The New Jim Crow and what is happening: how people are working with the kids and all kinds of things – change is happening.

- With N's announcement, 99% people in jail will be released

**Caller1:** concerned

**T:** she understands the crux of the matter

- There is a declaration of Peace – there will be no more recruiting centres anywhere – they will be gone overnight!!!

**Caller1:** talks about re-creating the programs for the kids -

**T:** even the media: all of the corporations that are controlling – they get the death penalty overnight – not down the road, but over night.

- The building will not take as long; the new curriculums for the schools are prepared; all is happening under the service - something so big under the surface that nobody will want to do the same thing any more!

**Music: We Have the Power** – the song sung the last time the Dalai Llama was here

- He will be here for 3 full weeks – he does not show up for 3 weeks, at Obama's invitation, in the face of China for nothing – **Yet President Xi, Putin and Obama ARE WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES.**

- All kinds of things are being developed and have been developed – there is a galactic realm that is in full operation too
- Ed Hicks who builds the spherical structures goes up and down to the ships like Rama
  - DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GALACTICS MANIFESTING THE LIGHT CITIES IN A FLASH.

**R:** Jeannie from Sedona, an elder, who says that the Light Cities are manifesting right now. Watch the movie called **The Guardian**

**T: We** have had to grind through the resistance until recently: now the wind is in our backs, as Carl boudreau says – the winds have changed!

- Time is not moving other than simulcast

• We have been forced to learn how to deal with the 3D energy which moves like molasses – SURRENDER IS THE WORD.

- Complaining comes from fear, too – if you let everyone out of prison, then what? If all the soldiers come home with PDS etc – then what? And all the people Reagan let out of mental institutions – then what?

• We've got things that have been built with anti – gravity technologies: hover crafts, etc etc **THE BEST IS YET TO COME; THE OVER NIGHT DEAL** and, for that to be real, we have to get past the mechanism we have had to learn in the old way.

• The regular medical people gave up on people and sent them to Micheal and Cynthia who lived in Georgia and, in 10 minutes, things changed !

- Look at the 3D level and if you can walk through the ghetto! She walked from 2 in the afternoon to 8 pm at night and she knew she had to get to the place in Chicago – she did not realize that MLK was going to be gone in 2 days.

• When you show up and do what you have to do – things change.

• When the lead balloon [the powers that were] is released from our necks, things can move.

• We have been told that and, though it appears to be not where we think it is, **it is!!!**

**Music: Odetta** – she begins with the quote & sings “This Little Light of Mine”

“...Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?  
Actually, who are you not to be?  
You are a child of God.  
Your playing small does not serve the world.  
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.  
We are all meant to shine, as children do.  
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.  
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

This passage is commonly *mis*-attributed to Nelson Mandela's 1994 Inaugural Address. **It actually comes from the book 'A Return To Love' (1992) by Marianne Williamson**

**T:** Rama got to talk to the Dalai Llama who said “Hello, Lord Rama! Don't forget your father is here.”

**Audio: Democracy Now**

2014, Feb 18 Julian Assange on Being Placed on NSA "Manhunting" List & Secret Targeting of WikiLeaks Supporters **[SEE BELOW]**

2014, Feb 18 Spying on Lawyers: Snowden Documents Show NSA Ally Targeted U.S. Law Firm **[SEE BELOW]**

2014, Feb 18 Attorney for Edward Snowden Interrogated at U.K. Airport, Placed on "Inhibited Persons List" **[SEE BELOW]**

**Audio: Breaking the Set                      2014, Feb 22**

**Pentagon electrocuting soldiers, Arizona's pro-hate policies, string of banker suicides**

**[http://img.rt.com/files/episode/22/b8/b0/00/bts2202\\_480p.mp4?event=download](http://img.rt.com/files/episode/22/b8/b0/00/bts2202_480p.mp4?event=download)**

In this episode of Breaking the Set, Abby Martin comments on the Pentagon's announced plans to use electric shocks to replace caffeine to keep American soldiers on alert. Abby then goes over a new Arizona law that allows business owners to refuse service to individuals based on sexual orientation, as well as deny equal pay to females, and skirt legal contractual obligations all in the name of religion, also highlighting other state government policies that are keeping Arizona from moving past the days of the wild west. Abby goes on to speak with Erin Ade, host of RT's 'Boom Bust' about a recent string of suicides that have hit the financial sector, questioning if they are symptomatic of a cut-throat industry that thrives on pressure,

stress and results. BTS wraps up the show with an interview with journalist and The Nation contributor, Lee Fang, discussing his investigation into Washington's 'Shadow Lobbying Complex', and the evidence proving that lobbying isn't decreasing at all, and instead it's simply going underground.

**Audio: Democracy Now** 2014, Feb 21 **Silencing the Scientist: Tyrone Hayes on Being Targeted by Herbicide Firm Syngenta** [SEE BELOW]

**Audio: Thom Hartmann** CONVERSATIONS WITH GREAT MINDS: [Professor Anthony Townsend](#) - *Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia*

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**AUDIO: MAX KEISER** Episode 566 2014, Feb 22

In this episode of the Keiser Report, Max Keiser and Stacy Herbert discuss the new game called the Hunger Gains. In a financialized zero-sum world, Housing Gains plus Hunger Pains equals The Hunger Gains. This game is sponsored by China, however, and if they withdraw their sponsorship by dumping their trillion in US Treasuries, a new game called working may have to happen. In the second half, Max interviews Alasdair MacLeod of [Goldmoney.com](#) about the redemption of emerging market currencies into the US dollar mirroring pre-WW1 bank runs, except on a global scale. With this ongoing global bank run happening, it is China that is buying up all the gold.

**Reading: The Rocks Cry Out, Ch 30**

**Closing:** Rainbird reads about the horse

**Music**

**T:** Reads the 10 Native American Commandments

## INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NEWS

2014, Feb 20 **Rise of the Anti-Government Flash Mobs~ First Ukraine, Now Venezuela**  
By [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#)

Global Research, February 20, 2014

Url of this article:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/rise-of-the-anti-government-flash-mobs-first-ukraine-now-venezuela/5369691>

*The US-supported opposition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is taking its cue from the anti-government protests taking place across the Atlantic Ocean in Ukraine. Failing to win any of Venezuela's elections by earning a popular mandate from the majority of the population in the last few years, the leaders of the mainstream opposition are now resorting to colour revolution tactics and a Ukraine-style disruption strategy. The aim of these opposition leaders in Venezuela is to manipulate the galvanized anti-government protesters into creating a political crisis in Caracas. Mainstream opposition leaders are doing this by instigating the protesters into taking steps that are geared at toppling the Venezuelan government.*

The same opposition leaders and their foreign supporters are using the cover of the undeniable misgivings about rising crime rates, political corruption, and economic turmoil in Venezuela as a disguise for what is essentially looking like an attempted coup. The socio-economic misgivings of a segment of the population are being used as a pretext to legitimize street action and violence aimed at toppling the government

It is ironic that many of those opposing the Venezuelan government in the name of democracy, equality, and security were once supporters of autocratic and openly corrupt governments before the Chavez era. Memory loss or outright hypocrisy is at play. When the same oligarch's that form and finance the Venezuelan opposition that is supporting and instigating the current anti-government protests were in charge of Venezuela, corruption was widespread, poverty rates were much higher, inequality was greater, and there was much higher inflation. Nor was Venezuela even a functioning democracy.

Despite the Venezuelan governing party's democratic mandate, which includes winning most the municipal seats during the country's December 2013 elections, the US-supported Venezuelan opposition wants to use flash mobs to oust the government and to take over the country. Of the 337 mayors elected in December 2013, the final vote counts awarded 256 mayor positions to the ruling party and its coalition of pro-government forces. This amounted to a win of seventy-six percent of the mayoralties in the South American country's municipal elections, which confirms that the majority of the population supports the current Venezuelan governing party and its political allies.

Despite their short comings, the governing United Socialist Party of Venezuela and its political allies have one of the most democratic mandates in the world. In relative terms of fair voting, the government in Caracas has much more democratic legitimacy than the governments in countries like Britain, Canada, France, and the United States, which portray themselves as champions and models of democracy. The governing United Socialist Party and its coalitions, including the Great Patriotic Pole (GPP) coalition, have gone to the poles more times and for more issues than any of the current governments in Britain, Canada, France, or the US. On any occasion where constitutional issues or major issues involving Venezuela's political structures were being contemplated, the government and governing party let the Venezuelan voters make the decisions

through popular referendums.

From 1999, the period that the Chavez era started in Venezuela, until 2014 there has been six referendums dealing with the country's national constitution, union structures, and even an opposition motion to have President Hugo Chavez removed from office through an electoral recall at the polls. Four presidential elections, four parliamentary elections for the National Assembly, and four regional-level elections for state governors and legislatures have all taken place too. Nicolas Maduro's election as president in April 2013, just a few months after Hugo Chavez had won the presidential elections in October 2012, reconfirmed the support and confidence that over half of the population had for the government. Moreover, not only has there been four municipal-level elections, but municipal leaders began to be democratically selected by election ballots instead of being appointed; it was the leaders of the US-supported opposition that preferred to appoint municipal leaders outside of electoral mechanisms instead of letting the people decide themselves through voting.

### **The Mainstream Venezuelan Opposition is Anti-Democratic**

What the US-supported opposition has been trying to do is to take over Venezuela outside of electoral mechanisms. It does not care about democracy or what the majority of Venezuelan citizens want. Where the mainstream opposition leaders have failed to get popular support or to win via the ballot box, they have used trickery and every option available to them for taking over the South American country. This includes the use of force, instigation of violence, attempted coups, intense propaganda campaigns, continuous collusion with the US government, and deliberate price hikes.

The leaders of the 2014 anti-government protests are the same Venezuelan mainstream opposition leaders that supported and collaborated in the 2002 coup, executed by a small circle of military officers, that was coordinated with the US Embassy in Caracas and US Ambassador Charles Shapiro. Although the USA falsely claims any involvement, Ambassador Shapiro would quickly run to meet the coup leaders and even joyously take photographs with them after they had their soldiers kidnap President Chavez. Through access to US federal government documents under the Freedom of Information Act, it has been indisputably proven that the CIA was even given the coup's conspiracy plans five days before the Venezuelan opposition launched their illegal and short-lived takeover of Venezuela.

The leaders of the mainstream opposition have continued to lie shamelessly since that day. Paradoxically, they have also been major benefactors of many of the democratic mechanisms of political and legal recourse that Hugo Chavez created for Venezuela as a means of increasing democratic participation and the channels of empowering people and any form of democratic opposition against the government. Mainstream opposition leaders used one of these avenues of recourse against the government in 2004 by petitioning for the removal of President Chavez, which resulted in a national referendum. The mainstream opposition leadership, however, refused to recognize the electoral results of the very same 2004 referendum that it had initiated to remove Chavez through an electoral recall by voters, just because the results were not what it wanted.

During the same 2004 referendum, the mainstream opposition leaders even tried to manipulate the Venezuelan voters and create a political crisis through a doctored recording intended to

discredit the government by alleging fraud by Chavez. Their argument was fallacious, because the recording was a parody that was being circulated for months before the election. The opposition leadership merely decided to use it as an excuse to allege fraud and to delegitimize the whole referendum and the Venezuelan government.

Members of the same opposition later boycotted the parliamentary elections in 2005 after they had created an electoral crisis prior to the voting. Originally, the National Electoral Council of Venezuela wanted to use fingerprint scanners to securely register voters, but the Venezuelan opposition refused to participate if this took place. One of the reasons for the move to use fingerprint scanners was to reduce fraud or attempted fraud during elections. After the National Electoral Council backed down on its decision to install fingerprint scanners, the main opposition parties still boycotted the 2005 parliamentary elections and nevertheless tried to delegitimize the Venezuelan government.

These same opposition leaders have tried to utilize technicalities, in attempts to manipulate the law, to also take over and divide the government and its allies. When President Chavez got sick and then eventually died, the mainstream opposition forces tried to use constitutional pretexts under Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution to push National Assembly President/Speaker Diosdado Cabello to assume the interim presidency, hoping it would create a rift between him and Vice-President Maduro that would divide and ultimately weaken the Chavistas and the United Socialist Party.

After Nicolas Maduro won the April 2014 presidential elections, Maduro's opposition rival from the Coalition for Democratic Unity (MUD), Governor Henrique Capriles Radonski, refused to even recognize the electoral results and unceremoniously declared fraud. With the initial support of the US government, Governor Capriles refused to accept the results even after an audit of more than half the votes was conducted through his insistence. Capriles then demanded that all the votes be recounted, which was accepted by the National Electoral Council. Capriles, however, made additional demands including a call for the full audit of the voter registry and essentially a retracing of all the votes cast (not merely a vote count). Even when the National Electoral Council with great hardship tried to meet his increasing demands and did verify that Maduro won the election fairly, Governor Capriles refused to admit defeat and said that the election was a hoax. Even the US government was forced to back down from supporting him.

After his defeat, Governor Capriles instead instigated his followers into igniting violence in the streets. US-based organizations like Human Rights Watch (HRW) totally ignored the role that Capriles and the opposition played in igniting the violence, instead taking the opportunity to criticize the Venezuelan government. HRW actually had this to say about the street violence that MUD leaders had started: "Under the leadership of President Chavez and now President Maduro, the accumulation of power in the executive branch and the erosion of human rights guarantees have enabled the government to intimidate, censor, and prosecute its critics." Not once were the violent actions taken by the mainstream opposition or the corruption of their leaders in the states or municipalities that they administer ever mentioned by HRW.



Governor Capriles and the leaders of the mainstream Venezuelan opposition have deliberately been trying to instigate violence and a loss of human life as a tactic to delegitimize the Venezuelan government and to justify the mainstream opposition's strategy to work outside of any democratic framework. It cannot be emphasized enough that their aims are to increase political chaos and to disrupt Venezuela's political stability with the goal of creating a vacuum to justify acting outside of the democratic framework of elections.

The objectives of the Venezuelan oligarchs controlling the mainstream opposition are not to establish a just society or to weed out corruption and crime in Venezuela. Their objectives are to reassert and entrench their privileged positions in Venezuelan society and to undo the reforms that Hugo Chavez enacted to help the poor in Venezuela. They want the law to cater to their needs and to merely serve as a tool of enforcing their dominance. Through the major private corporations that they own they have been increasing prices. Moreover, in many cases organized crime is tied to Latin America's oligarchs themselves.

When asked about Chavez's legacy, many of the supporters of the mainstream opposition parties will admit that Chavez helped the poor, but emphasize that Chavez "did nothing for the country (Venezuela)." In what has the possibility of being cataloged in the psychological research on class, [privilege, and perceptions](#) of entitlement by [Paul Piff of the University of California in Berkeley](#), this attitude exposes the psychology of entitlement that is the motivation for the mainstream Venezuelan opposition: many of these individuals (who are clearly "individuals" in the sense of being individualistic) see themselves as "the country" and exclude the Venezuelan poor from being part of the country. Thus, bridging the gap between poor and rich or improving the quality of life for the underclass citizens of Venezuela means nothing to these supporters of the mainstream opposition and does not even psychologically register as doing anything worthy to improve Venezuelan society. Only service to them and their interests can be categorized as legitimate and noteworthy.

### **Students Are People, They Should Not be Romanticized**

The imagery of student activists has been a key characteristic of the anti-government protests in Caracas. It is worth quoting the [February 14, 2014 statement](#) of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) about the opposition protests in Venezuela. The COHA declared that it viewed "with great alarm the violence perpetrated against the democratically elected government and civilians

in Venezuela that has resulted, as of February 12, 2014, in three confirmed deaths, 61 persons wounded and 69 detained.” The COHA also noted in the same statement that the bloodshed in Caracas came “on the heels of generally peaceful marches held on the 200th anniversary of the battle of La Victoria, a battle in which students played a critical role in a victory against royalist forces during Venezuela’s war of independence.”

Students should not be romanticized as the exclusive defenders or proponents of civil liberties or democracy. Perceptions that view students this way without any assessment are romantic, wrong, and disconnected from the reality on the ground. Student groups can also represent various class and group interests that clearly contradict equality and justice in their societies or the broader world. The romanticization of students and student movements as justice-seekers merely gives these groups blank cheques and moral credit, when students and student movements should be supported on the basis of their motives and the understood causes they are promoting.

In Venezuela’s fellow Latin American country of El Salvador, medical school students from private universities doing their residencies refused to allow those Salvadorian medical school students doing their residencies that were trained in Cuba to do the same examinations as them. They fallaciously argued that the Cuban medical school standards were lower and equated the standards of education and training with the costs of the universities and medical schools. What they demanded was that the Cuban-trained doctors do an additional year of residency.

While the Salvadorian government argued that the examination results would declare who was qualified and who was disqualified, the non-Cuban medical school students resorted to protests and political tactics by blockading the examination halls and trying to disrupt the Salvadorian healthcare system instead of letting the test scores speak for themselves. These Salvadorian medical school doctors, mostly from private universities, wanted to merely eliminate their better trained Salvadorian rivals by imposing additional restrictions on their Cuban-trained counterparts by forcing them to do an extra year of residency.

The medical school protest in El Salvador was clearly a question of economic competition and personal interests and not one of justice, fairness, professionalism, or standards. If it was a question of standards, the Cuban-educated doctors were their superiors. The medical school students ultimately forced the Salvadorian government to put restrictions on the Cuban-trained medical school doctors instead of fairly settling the matter through the universal examination that all medical school graduates must do, which means they used pressure to bypass the most logical and fair means of deciding the matter. Moreover, it is worth noting that whenever the Salvadorian government has asked for doctors to volunteer their services to help in community health initiatives it has always been these Cuban-educated doctors and residents at the forefront that have offered their services and not their counterparts.

Looking back at Venezuela, it is important to identify the nature of the student involvement in the anti-government protests and to note that the students are actually divided into pro-government and anti-government camps. It is also critical to point out that the opposition leaders of the anti-government protest are hiding behind the images of the student activists to gain wider support for their objective of delegitimizing the Venezuelan government. In the words of the [COHA](#): “While some groups of students marched in celebration of the Day of the Student, anti-government demonstrators used the occasion to protest episodic shortages of some basic goods, persistent

crime, and to demand the release of students who had been arrested in earlier demonstrations.”

It is also important to point out that the faction of students that the mainstream opposition leaders are hiding behind generally comes from privileged families that can afford to send their children to private universities and post-secondary institutes of higher education. The perceptions of students in these private universities and schools can be radically different from their public university counterparts about subjects like neoliberal economics, privilege, and governing. Although proper survey work and research is needed on the matter, the students in private post-secondary institutions in Venezuela and other polarized parts of Latin America are more prone to support coups, holding different perceptions about the military being used to bring the groups that they support into power by overthrowing legitimate governments, and the unequal distribution of wealth. These types of views have been psychologically conditioned through group-think that has been hammered in by propaganda, peers, families, and the media that caters to their class and lifestyles.

### **Constructing False Narratives About the Anti-Government Protests and Hiding the Riots**

A distorted narrative about the anti-government protests and riots is being constructed. Many of the anti-government protesters with legitimate grievances about crime and inflation themselves are being misled by the protest leaders. As mentioned earlier, there is no denying that there is a crime problem or inflation in Venezuela, but, again, it cannot be overemphasized that the motivations of the mainstream opposition are not socio-economic grievances. These grievances are merely being used as pretexts by the opposition leaders to manipulating the protesters.

Furthermore, it must be understood that the Venezuelan opposition, in the first instance, owns almost all the mainstream media in Venezuela. The Venezuelan opposition literally has a choke-hold on most the news whereas the government only owns public television, receives support from community-based radio stations, and is allowed by law to get all the networks in Venezuela to release important public messages. In this context, the opposition leadership has used its control over the media to paint a false image of the events on the ground and to heavily distort the image of the Venezuelan anti-government protests in the minds of its grassroots followers and to whitewash the riots and acts of vandalism that have also taken place in parallel to the protests. Communication and Information Minister Delcy Rodriguez has also commented on this, saying that the government will prosecute those that are knowingly providing a cover for the violence in the streets through media distortions.



The Venezuelan opposition has been fighting a continuous propaganda war. The distortion of the anti-government protests is merely its newest chapter. The mainstream opposition is now involved in a propaganda campaign similar to the one launched in front of the Miraflores Palace in 2002 that led to the attempted coup against President Chavez. Opposition leaders pushed for violence and then when blood was spilled because of their deliberate instigation, they used the carnage to justify undemocratically removing the democratically-elected Hugo Chavez by force.

The opposition leadership has engaged in a dishonest campaign. Doctored images and false stories are being used by mainstream opposition supporters to depict the Venezuelan government as an authoritarian regime that is using brutal violence against unarmed civilian protesters. Unflattering pictures of Argentine, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Chilean, Egyptian, Greek, and Singaporean police and military forces in crowd control mode and anti-protest operations have been circulated and passed around through mass communication and social media by Venezuelan opposition forces as actions taking place in Venezuela during February 2014. This even includes pictures of government supporters that were hurt by opposition supporters and an edited photograph from a homosexual pornography video where the police are forcing a civilian to give them fellatio or oral sex which was circulated by the anti-Chavez actress Amanda Gutierrez as the brutal group raping of an unarmed anti-government protester in Caracas by the government's riot police.



**Rafael** (@rafaelemm)

#sosvenezuela @CNNEE @NTN24 asi trata la GNB a nuestras mujeres que protestan pacificamente pic.twitter.com/hwlkwBMVID



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**Image of unknown woman beaten by Egypt's military echoes around world**

The arrest and brutal treatment of this young woman reminds us that the revolution is far from over.

Abdul Samad  
The Guardian, Sunday 18 December 2011 22:04 GMT



Egyptian soldiers beating and dragging a young woman during clashes in Tahrir Square. Her image has become the latest icon of the revolution. Photograph: Reuters

**Amanda Gutierrez** (@amandagubertz)

Me llegó esto! Disculpen pero! Mi deber es compartirlo!  
[pic.twitter.com/LZt30yHDvh](http://pic.twitter.com/LZt30yHDvh)



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*(Foto real, tomada de una página para adultos)*

BoundinPublic.com

### Who is Leopoldo Lopez Mendoza?

The leader of the current anti-government protests in Venezuela is also worth talking about. Leopoldo Lopez Mendoza is a former employee of Petroleum of Venezuela (Petróleos de Venezuela), S.A. (PDVSA) and the former mayor of Chacao. He comes from one of Venezuela's wealthiest families. Lopez's family is part of the anti-Chavez oligarchy which once ruled Venezuela

like it was some sort of personal estate.



His family background or wealth alone should not be held against him, but his individual actions should. Lopez himself has no qualifications as a proponent of democracy. Lopez's actual record says the opposite; he openly supported the suspension of democracy in Venezuela and was involved in propping the short-lived 2002 coup government in Caracas. Not only did he sign the Carmona Decree to dissolve all the democratic institutions of the country and to dismiss the judiciary and all elected officials in the executive and legislative branches of government, he was also a key figure in instigating the anti-government protests and violence in front of the Miraflores Palace that was used as a pretext to declare Chavez illegitimate.

Several years later, in 2007, Lopez and Alejandro Pena Esclusa were [taped openly planning to create a political crisis](#) in Venezuela by creating instability. Since Esclusa did most the talking, Lopez distanced himself from being Esclusa's co-conspirator. Lopez never directly says anything in the tapes about the destabilization strategy, but his track record from 2002 and 2014 show that he has utilized it.

Lopez additionally has a record for dishonesty and corruption, which he says is fabricated by Chavez. The facts, however, speak for themselves. While Lopez was a state employee working for Venezuela's national petroleum company, PDVSA, he had his mother, who also worked for PDVSA, divert at least \$160,000 worth of PDVSA funds to him in 1998. Lopez has claimed that he did nothing wrong and merely used the money to create Primero Justicia, an opposition group. Venezuelan law, however, clearly prohibits donations from being made by the state or any of its bodies to its employees or public officials. Venezuelan law also prohibits the employees of state institutions from giving donations directly to their family members or any organizations involving family members, because of the clear conflicts of interest and risks that such acts entail.

The new Venezuelan government did not become aware of how Lopez and his mother diverted states funds during the pre-Chavez era of unaccountability until Lopez was investigated for corruption and found guilty of misusing public funds while he was the mayor of Chacao. Albeit Lopez was allowed to continue his term as mayor with intense monitoring until it finished in 2008, he was banned from running for public office until 2014 as a result of the corruption charges.

## Who Perpetrated the Violence in Caracas?

2014 has arrived and now Leopoldo Lopez is up to his old tricks of instigation. Again it has to be mentioned that to justify the 2002 coup the leadership of the Venezuelan mainstream opposition made sure that there would be bloodshed and a loss of life. Lopez and his cohorts made sure that people would die by planting armed gunmen among the protesters that would start firing at the security forces. Once nineteen people died, the opposition-controlled mainstream media constructed a false narrative to sell the military coup to the Venezuelan people and the international community as a noble reaction against a government that had lost all legitimacy by killing its own people.

In this context, it is important to ask the question of who is perpetrated the violence in Caracas? Violence was instigated by armed gunmen among the US-supported opposition to justify the coup in 2002 through bloodshed. The same methodology of instigating violence has been used again in 2014. [Video evidence](#) shows at least one armed gunman instigating violence during the protests. Footage from Caracas also clearly shows that thuggery is taking place while segments of the anti-government forces are clearly instigating violence and chaos. Unarmed bystanders and civil servants have been attacked by them, including vehicles belonging to the public transportation system and their passengers. This is the same ilk that attacked public [hospitals and clinics in 2013](#) as a means of disrupting daily life in Venezuela after Maduro took over. Moreover, Lopez's supporters have attacked government officials and offices with baseball bats and Molotov cocktails and done everything possible to instigate fighting with the clear aim, as Lopez himself describes, of making the Venezuelan government collapse.





The same oligarchs that control most the mainstream media in Venezuela have been waging an economic war to cripple their own government and country with the aim of getting enough ordinary citizens to support their takeover of the state. Even though they are trying to portray Lopez as a [maverick leader](#) acting on his own, the oligarchs view President Nicolas Maduro as a weak leader and are seeking to use the crisis to both get concessions, either secret or public, and to amplify the internal tensions in the United Socialist Party with the aim of breaking it.

A good and bad cop strategy has been applied in Venezuela. While one faction of the opposition exerts force, the other opens a negotiating front with the government. While pressure has been exerted from the street by Lopez, [Capriles begun a dialogue](#) with Maduro. In this regard the anti-government protests in Venezuela, specifically the violent riots, have been used by the opposition as a tool to try to make the political gains that the mainstream opposition could never earn through democratic means in the last few years. In addition to demonizing a democratically-elected government, this same strategy has also been applied through the anti-government protests and riots in Ukraine.

### **The Geo-Strategic Challenge to the US from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

[The US has a major role](#) to play in supporting all this too. There should be no mistake about this. The US government has its hands involved in the anti-government protests and riots in Venezuela, just like it has played a role in the anti-government protests and violence in both Ukraine and Syria. The US Embassy has continuously been coordinating with the mainstream opposition for the overthrow of the government in Caracas. Just like in the case of Ukraine, the US government has promoted the opposition leadership and made biased statements in their favour. Over the years, the US government has also repeatedly lied by referring to Venezuela as a dictatorship and to the mainstream opposition there as disenfranchised democrats.

Venezuela and the organizations that it has created in the Western Hemisphere are seen as major political, economic, and strategic regional threats by Washington. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) are viewed as threats to the domination of the United States and competitors to the Organization of American States (OAS) and any US economic regional plans, such as the Free

Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA/ALCA), for Latin America and the Caribbean. Regime change in Caracas would be the prerequisite to dismantling the Bolivarian Bloc consisting of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, and several other actors in Latin America.

Despite the media misinformation and all the pressure on the Venezuelan economy, a large numbers of Venezuelans still continue to support the government and to vote for the United Socialist Party and its political allies. The majority of the Venezuelan population supports their government, because of the significant improvements that the Chavez era brought to their lives by increasing the quality of life for a significant amount of Venezuelans. There should be no illusions, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a deeply polarized country and still has many problems, but it became a substantially better place in the Chavez era. The Venezuelan autocrats of the past are now masquerading as democrats with the aim of just getting all their old privileges back.

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## 2014, Feb 17 The Killing of Jordan Davis: Michael Dunn Faces 60 Years After Split Verdict in 'Thug Music' Trial

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/the\\_killing\\_of\\_jordan\\_davis\\_michael](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/the_killing_of_jordan_davis_michael)

A Florida jury has convicted Michael Dunn of three counts of attempted murder for opening fire on a car of unarmed black teenagers during an argument over loud rap music at a gas station. But the jury deadlocked on the most serious charge, the first-degree murder of 17-year-old Jordan Davis, forcing the judge to declare a mistrial on that count. Dunn, who is white, shot at the vehicle carrying Davis and his friends 10 times. He then fled the scene, went to a hotel with his girlfriend and ordered pizza. He never called the police. Citing Florida's Stand Your Ground law, Dunn's attorneys had claimed the shooting was justified because he had felt threatened by the teenagers. But prosecutors said the teenagers were unarmed and never left their vehicle. Legal analysts say Dunn could face at least 60 years in jail for the attempted murder convictions against the three other teens. The jury in the trial was 2/3 white and did not include any black males. The verdict was reached on Saturday, one day before what would have been Davis' 19th birthday. We speak to Michael Skolnik, editor-in-chief of GlobalGrind.com, who attended the trial.

**Transcript** This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

**AMY GOODMAN:** A Florida jury has convicted Michael Dunn of three counts of attempted murder for opening fire on a car of unarmed black teenagers at a gas station during an argument over loud rap music. But the jury deadlocked on the most serious charge, first-degree murder of 17-year-old Jordan Davis, forcing the judge to declare a mistrial on that count.

Dunn, who's white, shot the vehicle carrying Davis and his friends 10 times. He then fled the scene, went to a hotel with his girlfriend and ordered pizza. Citing Florida's Stand Your Ground law, Dunn's attorneys had claimed the shooting was justified because he had felt threatened by Davis, who he claimed was [armed]. But prosecutors said the teenagers were unarmed and never left their vehicle.

Legal analysts say Dunn could face at least 60 years in jail for the attempted-murder convictions against the three other teens. The trial drew comparisons to the George Zimmerman trial, when he was found not guilty in the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. After the verdict was announced, Jordan Davis's father, Ron, told reporters that children should never be collateral damage.

**RON DAVIS:** He was a good kid. He was—it wasn't allowed to be said in the courtroom that he was a good kid, but we'll say it: He was a good kid. There's a lot of good kids out there, a lot of good nephews, a lot of good grandsons, granddaughters, nieces, and they should have a voice, that they shouldn't live in fear and walk around the streets worrying about if someone has a problem with somebody else, that if they get shot it's just collateral damage. There is no such thing to parents that their child suffered collateral damage. We, as all human beings, we love our children, we love our families, and we don't accept a law that would allow collateral damage to our family members. We raise them not to fear each other. We raise them to be good citizens in America. And we expect the law to be behind us and protect us. And that's what I wanted the law to do, is protect Jordan as we protected Jordan.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Ron Davis, the father of Jordan Davis. Sunday would have been Jordan's 19th birthday.

For more, we're joined by Michael Skolnik, who attended the Michael Dunn trial last week, editor-in-chief of [GlobalGrind.com](http://GlobalGrind.com), also on the board of directors of the Trayvon Martin Foundation.

Michael Skolnik, welcome to *Democracy Now!*

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Thank you.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, talk about the significance of this split verdict. It was a hung jury on—or mistrial, the mistrial on the most serious charge, but could face up to 60 years in prison for the attempted-murder charges.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Yeah, this was a very long deliberation, Amy. We went 31 hours-plus in deliberation of this jury. It was obvious in the second day the jury was sort of confused on how they could charge Michael Dunn on self-defense on one charge, not the other charges. At the end of the day, after three-and-a-half days of deliberation, this jury came back with a mistrial of murder one of Jordan Davis, but also found him guilty of the attempted murders on the three other boys. Michael Dunn looks at a minimum of 60 years in prison, a maximum of life in prison. However, there still could be another trial of Jordan Davis's charge, and it looks like there will be.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, Angela Corey said she will rebring the case. Now, Angela Corey, of course, was the prosecutor, the chief prosecutor, they shouldn't argue it in court, in the case of George Zimmerman.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Yes, and she also was the chief prosecutor who argued against Marissa Alexander. So, Angela Corey is certainly the complicated figure in all of this, but she did—

**AMY GOODMAN:** And Marissa Alexander, just to remind our audience?

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Is the young lady who shot a gun into the air against her abusive husband and got a 20-year sentence under the Stand Your Ground law. She claimed Stand Your Ground, and they found her guilty of a 20-year sentence. And now she will be retried. But I do think that this is a complicated case, because we will see another trial in probably three to six weeks again, have to relive what we just lived through the past four weeks of Jordan Davis's trial, and with the same witnesses on the stand.

**AMY GOODMAN:** In closing arguments, Assistant State Attorney John Guy urged jurors to convict on all of the charges.

**JOHN GUY:** If Jordan Davis had a gun, that defendant would have never left the scene. If Jordan Davis had a gun, he would have called the police. If he was truly acting in self-defense, he wouldn't have been running from everybody, he would not have lied to the police, he wouldn't have changed his story.

**AMY GOODMAN:** During his testimony last week, Michael Dunn admitted he shot Jordan Davis. He claimed he feared for his life.

**MICHAEL DUNN:** When this "I should kill that [bleep]" comes through, now I'm paying attention to what they're saying.

**ATTORNEY:** OK, that kind of got you to perk up?

**MICHAEL DUNN:** Yes. And in an even more elevated voice, I hear, "I should [bleep] kill that [bleep]!" And now he's screaming. But he said he was going to f'ing kill me, but after he opened the door, then he looked at me and said, "You're dead, [bleep]!" I became even more fearful at that point. OK, say over here is my glovebox. I'm looking out the window, and I said, "You're not gonna kill me, you son of a [bleep]!" And I shot.

**ATTORNEY:** OK. And do you even recall how many times you shot?

**MICHAEL DUNN:** I do not.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Michael Dunn. And again, explain the sequence that is not disputed about what happened after he shot into the car.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Yeah, there is no dispute that Michael Dunn shot Jordan Davis. Tommy Storns, who was Jordan Davis's friend who was driving the car, is a hero. He drove the car backwards and then tried to drive away as Michael Dunn was shooting. Michael Dunn gets out of the vehicle, onto the ground in a police stance, shoots at the car again as the car is driving away. The young men get away. Michael Dunn's girlfriend comes out of the convenience store, the gas station convenience store.

**AMY GOODMAN:** She had been buying stuff.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** She had been buying a bottle of wine and a bag of chips. They get in the car. They drive to a hotel three miles away. They spend a night at the hotel, order pizza, watch a movie, drink rum and coke, walk their dog, leave the gun in the car. He claims he was so afraid these guys were going to come find him. He leaves his gun in the car. The next morning, as they see the news reports that Jordan Davis was killed, in fact, they get in the car, they drive two-and-a-half hours home to Satellite Beach. He claims—Michael Dunn claims that he called his law enforcement neighbor friend, which he didn't; in the court they proved the neighbor friend called him, asking him if he wanted to hang out that night. Michael Dunn said, "No, my girlfriend's not feeling good." And the police—because of the young homeless man in the gas station who wrote down his license plate number, the police knew where Michael Dunn lived, went to his house and brought him out of the house in handcuffs.

**AMY GOODMAN:** As with the George Zimmerman trial, prosecutors largely ignored the issue of race during the proceedings. Damning letters written by Michael Dunn during his pretrial imprisonment were never introduced to the jury. Dunn wrote family members that he thinks the justice system is biased in favor of African Americans. He wrote, quote, "This jail is full of blacks and they all act like thugs. This may sound a bit radical, but if more people would arm themselves and kill these [bleeping] idiots when they're threatening you, eventually they may take the hint and change their behavior." But that was never brought up in court, Michael Skolnik.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** No, it wasn't brought up in court. I think that there is a great sensitivity to bring up race in both the Zimmerman case and in this case. We have to ask a lot of questions why. Certainly as New Yorkers, we want to talk about these issues, but as I was in Jacksonville—this is the South—they are not ready to talk about these issues. I think the state prosecutor was a

little concerned to bring these issues up. However, I would say this, Amy: These statements and Michael Dunn's actions showed the judge that he was a threat to society, and that's why he's been in jail ever since he killed Jordan Davis. It is a good thing that he will serve at least 60 years in prison, because from these statements that he's made to his daughter and his fiancée and his grandmother, it is clear that he's a threat.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The attorney for Jordan Davis's family released a video interview of Charles Hendrix, who was Michael Dunn's former next-door neighbor. Hendrix said Dunn was a man with a history of violent behavior, insurance fraud, cocaine use. The neighbor claimed Dunn had once bragged about putting a hit out on someone and that his first wife said he had held a gun to her head and threatened to kill her. This is an excerpt of Dunn's former neighbor's interview.

**CHARLES HENDRIX:** An attitude about him like he was smarter than everybody else. And I found that not only annoying, but quite amusing, because I didn't find him as near as intelligent as he thought he was. He knew about computers, but he didn't appear to know a lot about interpersonal relationships and how to get along with people. That was just my perception. He had an air where he was light and friendly, and he laughed, but if you disagreed with him, he would get boisterous and try to be overbearing and try to intimidate people with his size and his voice. He appeared to me to be very selfish, and that there wasn't much that he wouldn't do to get what he wanted or get his way.

**AMY GOODMAN:** This is Charles Hendrix, Michael Dunn's former next-door neighbor, more of the interview.

**CHARLES HENDRIX:** I think that there's entirely too many people in this country that are getting killed needlessly because people that should never, ever get their hands on guns are able to get them. And Michael Dunn is one of those people. I believe that if he had been subjected to some sort of psychological evaluation or if they had really done a background investigation on him to find out his propensity to be violent and a bully, that possibly—possibly, not 100 percent, but possibly—he would have never gotten his hands on a weapon.

There are several times where he made comments that "I can't wait for somebody to try something with me when I have my gun." I'm the type of person, that's the last thing I'd want to be contemplating. You know, I don't want to have a confrontation with somebody while I have a gun. Anybody that does, they're predisposed, in my opinion, to kill somebody. If you're looking for a confrontation just because you have a gun—there's no question in my mind that people that are looking for problems when they have a gun someday are going to find it. And when I heard about this incident with Michael Dunn, I said, "There you go. I knew it. Sooner or later he's going to kill somebody." I had said that to my wife. I had said it to my daughter. "Sooner or later, this guy is going to kill somebody. He thinks that a gun makes him safe and makes him all-powerful."

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Charles Hendrix, Michael Dunn's former next-door neighbor, in a video released by Jordan Davis's family. Michael Skolnik, so they never saw this video, and they never saw the letters that Dunn wrote from jail.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** No, they didn't. They never saw this video. Part of the reason, he was on the witness list, Mr. Hendrix was. He was in an area of the country where they got hit by a huge

snowstorm last week, so it was an issue of travel, getting him to Florida, if they were going to call him. But also, much of what he said is hearsay and not really admissible in court, so I'm not sure how much of that testimony we just heard would be admissible in court. It's part of the reason why they didn't play that interview or bring him onto the witness list—on the witness stand.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And to explain the scene at the gas station, when there was the car of Michael Dunn, his girlfriend goes into the store to buy stuff, into the gas station convenience store, and the teenagers are in the next car. They're in a car playing music.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** They're in a car a foot and a half away from Michael Dunn's car. So the idea that Jordan Davis got out of his vehicle and approached Michael Dunn with a gun seems absurd and almost seems physically unable to actually do that, because the cars were so close to each other. Michael Dunn shot basically point-blank into Jordan [Davis's] car.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, first Dunn gets—asks them to turn down the music. They do. Then they turn the music up, and then he gets—

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** And then they get into a verbal conversation. Michael Dunn says to him—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Where the kids don't get out of their car.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** The kids do not get out of their vehicle, and Michael Dunn says to them, "You don't talk to me like that," and then shoots Jordan Davis three times into his car. The kids drive away. He keeps shooting. One thing I think is important, Amy, about the Mr. Hendrix interview, the significance of him leaving the scene, not going into the store and saying, "Oh, my goodness, a kid with a gun in the SUV was just going to shoot at me. They drove away. Someone, call the cops. Someone, go out and get a license plate number." If he didn't leave the scene, would he have been drug-tested? Would he have taken an alcohol test? He had four drinks at the wedding, which he admitted to, that he had just come from. Mr. Hendrix says he had used cocaine in the past. Was he high? Was he drunk? Did he go back to the hotel to sober up? If the jury knew that information, would we have a different verdict now?

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to turn to an [article](#) from Ta-Nehisi Coates in *The Atlantic* called "On the Killing of Jordan Davis by Michael Dunn." In it, Coates writes, quote, "Jordan Davis had a mother and a father. It did not save him. Trayvon Martin had a mother and a father. They could not save him. My son has a father and mother. We cannot protect him from our country, which is our aegis and our assailant. We cannot protect our children because racism in America is not merely a belief system but a heritage, and the inability of black parents to protect their children is an ancient tradition. ... I insist that the irrelevance of black life has been drilled into this country since its infancy." Your response?

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Sadly, I think it's true. I would say this: I spent a lot of time with Lucy and Ron over the past, you know, four or five days. And as we saw in the opening clip of Lucy talking about praying for Michael Dunn.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Lucy, Jordan's mother.

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Lucy is Jordan's mother—talking about praying for Michael Dunn, we prayed for Michael Dunn in the family room. We prayed for Jordan. We prayed for the other three families, the young men who were shot. I would say this: As certainly we are upset over this

verdict, but there were people in that jury room who were fighting for Jordan Davis. There were jury members who were fighting for Jordan Davis. The three young men who got shot at, who were—Michael Dunn tried to kill them, as well—are lucky to be alive, and they also have justice for the families.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And how do you know that Jordan Davis—that Michael Dunn will be sentenced to at least 60 years in prison?

**MICHAEL SKOLNIK:** Well, under the law, attempted-murder charge is a mandatory minimum of 20 years. He got three of them convicted. You have to serve them consecutively, so it's 20, 20 and 20, which is 60 years, and then it could go to life. There's one more charge he got convicted of, which is shooting bullets into a moving vehicle. That's a 15-year charge. There's no minimum on that, but it looks like probably at least three. So he's looking at at least 63 years in prison. He's 47 years old. He'll die in prison.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Michael Skolnik, head of [GlobalGrind.com](http://GlobalGrind.com), thanks for being with us. He was at the trial, editor-in-chief of *Global Grind*, also on the board of directors of the Trayvon Martin Foundation. Let's end with Jordan Davis's mother, Lucy McBath, who spoke Saturday after the verdict.

**LUCY McBATH:** It's sad for Mr. Dunn that he will live the rest of his life in that sense of torment, and I will pray for him, and I've asked my family to pray for him. But we are so grateful for the charges that have been brought against him. We are so grateful for the truth.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was Lucy McBath, the mother of Jordan Davis. This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. When we come back, on this Presidents' Day, who's missing? We'll look at the black history of the White House. Stay with us.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/the\\_killing\\_of\\_jordan\\_davis\\_michael](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/the_killing_of_jordan_davis_michael)

**2014, Feb 17      Untold History: More Than a Quarter of U.S. Presidents Were Involved in Slavery, Human Trafficking**

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/untold\\_history\\_more\\_than\\_a\\_quarter](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/untold_history_more_than_a_quarter)

As the country marks Presidents' Day, we turn to an aspect of U.S. history that is often missed: the complicity of American presidents with slavery. "More than one-in-four U.S. presidents were involved in human trafficking and slavery. These presidents bought, sold and bred enslaved people for profit. Of the 12 presidents who were enslavers, more than half kept people in bondage at the White House," writes historian Clarence Lusane in his most recent article, "Missing from Presidents' Day: The People They Enslaved."

**Transcript**

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

**AMY GOODMAN:** As the country marks Presidents' Day today, we turn to an aspect of U.S. history often missed: the complicity of American presidents with slavery. The first person of African descent to enter the White House was most likely a slave. The nation's capital, Washington, D.C., once hosted markets where human beings were sold for profit. Slaves built some of the country's most famous landmarks, including Philadelphia's Independence Hall, Boston's Faneuil Hall, James Madison's Montpelier. Last week, President Obama mentioned the role of slaves in building one specific landmark: Thomas Jefferson's plantation estate in Charlottesville, Virginia. Obama was touring the home of America's third president with French leader François Hollande. This is what Obama had to say about Monticello.

**PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA:** This house also represents a complicated history of the United States. We just visited downstairs, where we know that slaves helped to build this magnificent structure, and the complex relations that Jefferson, the drafter of the Declaration of Independence, had to slavery. And it's a reminder for both of us that we are going to continue this fight on behalf of the rights of all peoples, something that I know France has always been committed to and we are committed to, as well.

**AMY GOODMAN:** President Obama speaking last week during French President François Hollande's visit to the U.S.

We're joined now by Clarence Lusane, who has documented the racial history of Washington, D.C., and the presidency. His most recent [article](#) is "Missing from Presidents' Day: The People They Enslaved." Clarence Lusane writes, quote, "more than one in four U.S. presidents were involved in human trafficking and slavery. These presidents bought, sold, and bred enslaved people for profit. Of the 12 presidents who were enslavers, more than half kept people in bondage at the White House," he writes. Clarence Lusane is author of *The Black History of the White House*, a member of the D.C. Commission on African American Affairs, also professor at American University in Washington, D.C.

Professor Lusane, welcome to *Democracy Now!* So, talk about this history of slavery and U.S. presidents.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Well, I'm glad that you pointed out that President Obama, when he went to Jefferson's home, pointed out the slave history there. But it's also important to note that the most

iconic building in the U.S., the one that represents the country to the world, the White House, also was a place where slavery existed. Not only that, it was built by slaves. And none of that has been publicly acknowledged. There is over a million people who visit the White House every year, who go on tours, who come for meetings, and you can go through that building and never have a sense of that important history.

And that's critical because I think Presidents' Day should be a period of critical reflection, not some kind of blind celebration, but it should be one where we really try to get a better sense of the country's history. And part of that history, part of what I think resonates even to this day, is that, significantly, before the Civil War, nearly every U.S. president was a slave owner, which meant that they were compromised on the issue of slavery, and that had repercussions that, you know, redounded through history. So it's really critical, I think, that we have that acknowledgment, because we grow up, we go to school, we have history classes, and none of that history is told to us.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, give us a black history of U.S. presidents, as you call it.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Well, in looking at the White House—and I use that as the prism to try to look at this longer history that basically led up to President Obama—one of the things that we find that's missing in that history is the voices of people, particularly African Americans, who were enslaved during that long, long, long history. And that was critical because when you think about George Washington, Madison, Monroe, all of the early presidents, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, they wrote the Constitution, they wrote the Articles of Confederation, all of these documents, these founding documents that extol the principles of democracy, liberty, equality, they were living a contradiction. And that contradiction is that every single day of their life, every moment in their life, they were surrounded by people who were enslaved.

Now, fortunately, because of some of the historic records that have been kept, we now know who some of those people were. George Washington, for example, when he was president and his presidency was in Philadelphia, had at least nine individuals with him who were enslaved—Oney Maria Judge, for example, who was a young woman of about 22 who escaped from George Washington. She escaped—this was in 1796, when she found out that Martha Washington was planning to give her away as a wedding gift. And she made contact with the free black population in Philadelphia, was able to escape. Now, this is remarkable because we're talking about a young woman who basically traveled nowhere by herself, who escapes from the most powerful person on the planet, pretty much, certainly most powerful person in the United States. Her story is important because she lived—she outlived Washington. She lived to be, I believe, in her eighties and lived a life where she learned to read, became active in her community. You also had Hercules, who was Washington's cook, who also escaped from Washington.

So there are people who we were in and around the White House who had stories to tell that are part of that history that we literally were never taught about for all of the years that, you know, we took schooling and we took classes in history. And so, I thought it was important, and there are others who have written to re-enter into the historic narrative the stories of these individuals, because they really are critical if you really want to understand the politics of George Washington or the politics of Thomas Jefferson or any of the other presidents who held slaves.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Tell us about Paul Jennings.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Paul Jennings, again, is another fascinating character. He was enslaved to the Madisons, to James and Dolly Madison. He was, in fact, the first individual to actually write about working in the White House. He published a memoir—this was in the late 1860s—that talked about the time when he was in the White House. And he was there in 1814. He was there when the British literally were burning down the city, and was part of the contingent of folks who were attempting to get materials out of the White House and preserve them before the British came. So he really had a fascinating history.

He was supposed to be free when James Madison died, but Dolly Madison basically reneged on the deal. So he—it took him a few years to buy his freedom, which he eventually did. And then he actually came to help Dolly Madison. She fell on hard times. She wasn't wealthy. She wasn't a wealthy person, and she wasn't part of the social elite of Washington. And so, when she fell on hard times and her family and friends abandoned her, Jennings would often bring her food and bring her money and basically would look after her. But what was also important about James Jennings is that he also was—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Paul Jennings.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Paul Jennings, I'm sorry, is that he was also central to the largest attempt at escaping from slavery that happened in Washington, D.C. This happened in 1848. For a number of reasons, the escape attempt failed, but Jennings was never brought in. He was never seen as being part of it. And it was only literally after his death that it was revealed that he had played a very critical role in that. So, my point is that you had these individuals who were enslaved to presidents, who really had fascinating kinds of stories and fascinating kinds of lives that we should know about, because they really are also a part of the history of the White House and the history of the presidency.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to play a clip from the trailer of the film *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg, released last year, about President Abraham Lincoln and the fight to end slavery in the United States. In this clip, you first hear Abraham Lincoln, played by Daniel Day-Lewis, followed by the voices of Thaddeus Stevens, the congressman from Pennsylvania, and Mary Todd Lincoln, the first lady. Let's go to that clip.

**PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN:** [played by Daniel Day-Lewis] We're stepped out upon the world stage now, the fate of human dignity in our hands! Blood's been spilt to afford us this moment! Now! Now! Now!

**THADDEUS STEVENS:** [played by Tommy Lee Jones] Abraham Lincoln has asked us to work with him to accomplish the death of slavery.

**MARY TODD LINCOLN:** [played by Sally Field] No one's ever been loved so much by the people. Don't waste that power.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was an excerpt of *Lincoln*. Clarence Lusane, talk about Abraham Lincoln and slavery.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Lincoln was—the Lincoln administration was a turning point in terms of the history of the relationship between African Americans and the White House. It was during Lincoln's tenure that the first meeting took place between a U.S. president and leaders of the black

community. This happened in 1862, I believe. Now, this was critical because up until that point, although African Americans, particularly free African Americans in the North, had been organized and had been raising issues, policy issues, issues around slavery, they simply had no access to the White House or to policymakers. Lincoln, however, opened up some of that space.

And part of what I think moved Lincoln from being not just simply anti-slavery, but ultimately to recognizing that you had to eliminate slavery, that abolition was the only path forward, in part, came because of his discussions with black leaders, not only church leaders, but people like Frederick Douglass, but also—and this is in the film—discussions with Elizabeth Keckley. In the film, she's the woman who's often seen with Mary Lincoln. She's played by Reuben, Gloria Reuben, in the film. And the film is a little bit disingenuous in that you could think that maybe she was a servant, but in fact she was an independent businesswoman who had become basically best friends with Mary Lincoln, but also she spent a great deal of time at the White House having discussions with Abraham Lincoln about race, about slavery, about the future of the country. And again, her story is important to be told because she, again, was part of a contingent of African Americans who thought to influence the presidency and to address issues that needed to be dealt with. And so, the movie *Lincoln* doesn't quite take you there to show you that side of the people who influenced Lincoln, but it's an important part of understanding what happened in the Civil War and how Lincoln actually got to the point where he said the only way out of this situation is that slavery has to end.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Then that moment, that meeting, August 14th, 1862, Abraham Lincoln does something unprecedented: He meets with a small delegation of black leaders, clergy.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Right. And at that point, Lincoln had already decided to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. There was some debate about which date to issue it on, but he was already moving in a position where he saw the country's future as a future without slavery. And these leaders that he met with were people who mostly were tied to the black church community, but people who also had ties to abolitionists, to people who were active in the other kinds of issues around the country. So that really was kind of a turning point. And since that point, there has been a considerable amount of effort on the part of African Americans to negotiate and to meet with and to lobby not only in Congress, but the president themselves.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Talk about the buildings, these iconic structures that kids, adults go to in Washington, D.C., to honor this country—the White House, the Capitol. Who built it?

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** This is really important, because I think there may be some sense, more generally, that Washington owned slaves and Jefferson owned slaves, but I think there's a general ignorance about the role of people who were enslaved in actually building the nation's capital. In 1790, after the country was founded, the Congress passed legislation to build a capital. Washington, D.C., did not exist. And so, there was a decision that land that was ceded from Maryland and from Virginia would become the nation's capital, and it had to be built, and it would take 10 years. This is why Washington spent all of his presidency either in New York or in Pennsylvania. But to build Washington, D.C., you needed labor. And George Washington, who was more or less in charge of the project, initially wanted labor to come from Europe, but it was very, very difficult to get people to come all the way over on these really harsh trips to work in basically a jungle. So they basically relied on enslaved labor, which meant cutting down trees, moving

rocks, digging holes—you know, all of the harsh, harsh labor that had to be done literally to clear the area. But it also included skilled labor, people who were carpenters and plasterers. We know for a fact that both at the White House and—the building that became the White House and the U.S. Capitol, there were at least five highly skilled carpenters who worked for years to build those two buildings.

And again, this needs to be acknowledged, because it reflects that ongoing contradiction, what President Obama talked about with President Hollande, of this conflict between the principles of equality and democracy, and the reality of slavery. Now, in the Capitol a few years ago, there were two plaques that were put up to honor or to acknowledge the people who were enslaved that built the Capitol. One is on the House side, and one is on the Senate side in the Rotunda. And in Philadelphia, at the pavilion where the Liberty Bell exists, the new Liberty Bell Pavilion was actually built over the old house where—or the land where George Washington lived when he was president. There is also a plaque there that acknowledges the people who were enslaved to Washington during the time of his presidency. What we do not have yet, and it actually may happen, is something in the White House that will have that kind of acknowledgment.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Final comment, Clarence Lusane, about what you think we should understand on this Presidents' Day? And take it all the way—you write about Teddy Roosevelt.

**CLARENCE LUSANE:** Yeah, I think that the most important thing is to understand that there is a long and rich history of African Americans in the White House long before President Obama. And all of that history tells us a great deal, I think, about the current situation we face, where we continue to see racial disparities and racial discrimination pretty much across the board. The story you did earlier about the shootings in Florida, for example, I think, in part, reflect an unawareness of this history and the degree to which the country still has not acknowledged and reconciled this past. A year ago, I went with students to Rwanda, and we visited a great—a large number of memorials. And it became so clear to me that the degree to which the country acknowledges its past in an honest and straightforward way goes a long way towards healing and reconciliation. It doesn't necessarily end up with all the justice that needs to be happening, but it certainly is a first step, that acknowledgment and recognition of your history becomes really important.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Thanks so much for being with us, author of *The Black History of the White House*. We'll link to your [piece](#), "Missing from Presidents' Day: The People They Enslaved" at [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org). Clarence Lusane is also a professor at American University. This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. Back in a minute.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/untold\\_history\\_more\\_than\\_a\\_quarter](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/untold_history_more_than_a_quarter)

## 2014, Feb 17 Former FCC Commissioner Warns About Comcast-Time Warner Merger, "Mindless" Media Consolidation

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/former\\_fcc\\_commissioner\\_warns\\_about\\_comcast](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/former_fcc_commissioner_warns_about_comcast)

Comcast has announced plans to buy Time Warner Cable at a cost of more than \$45 billion in stock. The takeover would allow Comcast to provide cable service to a third of American households and give it a virtual monopoly in 19 of the 20 largest media markets. While Comcast has claimed the deal will be "pro-consumer," the group Free Press warns the deal would be a "disaster" for consumers. Analysts predict Comcast will launch a lobbying blitz similar to when it won approval to take over NBCUniversal in 2011. Comcast has already hired FCC Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker, who signed off on its NBC deal. We speak to another former FCC commissioner, Michael Copps. He now leads the Media and Democracy Reform Initiative at Common Cause.

**Transcript** This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We end today's show with the news that the nation's two largest cable providers plan to merge. Comcast has announced plans to buy Time Warner Cable at a cost of more than \$45 billion in stock. The takeover would allow Comcast to provide cable service to a third of American households and give it a virtual monopoly in 19 of the 20 largest media markets.

Consumer groups say they'll oppose the deal. Free Press said, quote, "In an already uncompetitive market with high prices that keep going up and up, a merger of the two biggest cable companies should be unthinkable. This deal would be a disaster for consumers and must be stopped," Free Press said. But Comcast CEO Brian Roberts appeared on CNBC and praised the deal as "pro-competitive" and "pro-consumer."

**BRIAN ROBERTS:** We've spent a lot of time thinking about it. It's a really special transaction for both Time Warner Cable and for Comcast—shareholders, our employees, and mostly our customers. The deal is pro-competitive. It's pro-consumer. We're going to be able to bring better products, faster Internet, more channels, on-demand, TV everywhere, and a national local platform that's really special. So, we're optimistic we can get this approved.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That's Comcast CEO Brian Roberts.

For more, we go to Washington, D.C., where we're joined by Michael Copps, member of the Federal Communications Commission from 2001 to 2011, now leads the Media and Democracy Reform Initiative at Common Cause.

Michael Copps, welcome back to *Democracy Now!* Talk about the significance of this—well, still it's a possible merger; it's not a done deal.

**MICHAEL COPPS:** Good morning, Amy. It's great to be with you again.

This is just such a far-reaching deal, it should be dead on arrival when it gets to the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission for approval. This is the whole shooting

match. It's broadband. It's broadcast. It's content. It's distribution. It's the medium and the message. It's telecom, and it's media, too. And it just would confer a degree of control over our news and information infrastructure that no company should be allowed to have. And all of this is happening in a market where consumer prices are going up and up and up, and competition is going down, down, down.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Now, Comcast just bought NBCUniversal. Explain how this works.

**MICHAEL COPPS:** Well, it works because of a combination of private-sector consolidation that we've seen for 15 or 20 years now with this long cycle of approvals by the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice blessing all of—all of these deals. So, you're right. Comcast just got through absorbing NBCUniversal last year, and now it's got enough money to go out and buy the second-largest cable company in the United States of America. You know, they might think it's good, and it is good for business, but what this amounts to really is the cable-ization of the Internet. And if we who are reposing so much confidence in the Internet to create opportunity in this country, to open the doors of opportunity to everybody, are going to allow the Internet to be cable-ized and to be controlled by a few gatekeepers, who not only do the distribution, but control the content and can block websites, we are just doing irreparable damage to the opportunity-creating potential of broadband and the Internet.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Analysts predict Comcast will launch a lobbying blitz similar to one when it won approval of the takeover of NBCUniversal in 2011. It's already hired FCC Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker, who signed off on its NBC deal.

**MICHAEL COPPS:** Right, right.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Your colleague. Meanwhile, the news website Republic Report has revealed at least two of the officials who oversee antitrust enforcement have close ties to Comcast. The head of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, William Baer, was a lawyer representing NBC in its push for the merger with Comcast. And Maureen Ohlhausen, one of four commissioners on the Federal Trade Commission, provided legal counsel for Comcast as an attorney just before joining the commission. Michael Copps?

**MICHAEL COPPS:** You don't need an analyst, and you don't need a prediction to that, that lobbying team. Wheelbarrows full of money, legions of lobbyists are at work on this. Our society right now is controlled more by money, I think, than in any era since the notorious Gilded Age back at the end of the 19th century. What we all need to realize in this country is if there's—there's never going to be democracy now until we have media democracy now, and we're not going to get media democracy now until we put the brakes on this mindless consolidation we've been going through for the last 15 or 20 years, and put the Federal Communications Commission back in the business of protecting the public interest.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Now, I mean, this is different from other mergers, because these are media organizations, so, yes, they're hiring all the very powerful lobbyists, but they've got networks. I mean, watching MSNBC—

**MICHAEL COPPS:** Well, exactly.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —the day this was announced, they were hailing this from top to bottom. Of

course, they're all going to be employed by him.

**MICHAEL COPPS:** That's right. This is content and distribution. This is the John D. Rockefeller recipe for monopoly control. You've got the whole thing, when you're controlling the programs, designing the programs and distributing them, or deciding whether they're not going to be distributed. When you have the power to block a little website or to block *Democracy Now!*, you're in control of the civic dialogue of this country. And we have already gone to dangerous places with the civic dialogue in our country, because we don't have the news and information that we used to have, we don't have the journalism we used to have. And a lot of that is because of this consolidation and because of the FCC being absent without leave from its public-interest oversight capacities. This will be a good test to see if that new FCC can really begin to represent the common good.

**AMY GOODMAN:** This is Democratic Senator Al Franken. He was with CNN's Jake Tapper on a very cold last Thursday in Washington. Inexplicably, they were standing outside. Comcast has already—Franken said Comcast has already failed to comply with conditions it agreed to in its purchase of NBCUniversal.

**SEN. AL FRANKEN:** CNN is a cable network news.

**JAKE TAPPER:** Yes, cable, cable network.

**SEN. AL FRANKEN:** It's what it is.

**JAKE TAPPER:** Yeah.

**SEN. AL FRANKEN:** OK. There's a thing called neighborhooding. You know what that is, right? That—well, it means that CNN and MSNBC and Fox News—

**JAKE TAPPER:** Put them all near each other.

**SEN. AL FRANKEN:** All near each other. Well, they were supposed to put Bloomberg in the same neighborhood, but because Bloomberg competes with CNBC, which is a financial news network, Comcast didn't comply with that. And they finally had to be ordered to do that. But they fought it, tooth and nail.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That is Democratic Senator Al Franken. Michael Copps, your response? And since we only have this last 45 seconds, also talk about the current FCC law to require sponsorship disclosure of political ads.

**MICHAEL COPPS:** Well, this is really important. You know, Congress is not going to pass any act helping us reform the role of big money in politics. But there exists right now at the Federal Communications Commission, since the 1920s, sponsorship identification laws which require not just commercial, but political sponsors to divulge who's really paying for these ads. So when you see an ad saying, "Brought to you by Citizens for Purple Mountain Majesties and Amber Waves of Grain," you don't have a clue who that is. It might be a chemical company dumping sludge into the Great Lakes. Section 317 should be employed to demand the names of the people who are really behind that ad. The FCC can do that itself. It can update these rules that have been on the books for ages. And we can begin to have some political money reform in this country. We can

shine some sunshine on who's sponsoring these ads.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Michael Cops, we want to thank you for being with us, former member of the Federal Communications Commission for more than a year. He was the seventh-longest-serving FCC commissioner in the agency's history.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/former\\_fcc\\_commissioner\\_warns\\_about\\_comcast](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/17/former_fcc_commissioner_warns_about_comcast)

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## **2014, Feb 18 Julian Assange on Being Placed on NSA "Manhunting" List & Secret Targeting of WikiLeaks Supporters**

Top-secret documents leaked by Edward Snowden have revealed new details about how the United States and Britain targeted the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks after it published leaked documents about the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. According to a new article by *The Intercept*, Britain's top spy agency, the Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, secretly monitored visitors to a WikiLeaks website by collecting their IP addresses in real time, as well as the search terms used to reach the site. One document from 2010 shows that the National Security Agency added WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange to a "manhunting" target list, together with suspected members of al-Qaeda. We speak to Assange live from the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he has sought political asylum since 2012. Also joining us is his lawyer Michael Ratner, president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

**Transcript** This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Top-secret documents leaked by Edward Snowden have revealed new details about how the United States and Britain targeted the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks after it published leaked documents about the Afghan War. According to a new [article](#) co-written by Glenn Greenwald published this morning by *The Intercept*, Britain's top spy agency, the Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, secretly monitored visitors to a WikiLeaks site by collecting their IP addresses in real time as well as the search terms used to reach the site. One document from 2010 shows that the National Security Agency added WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange to a, quote, "manhunting" target list, together with suspected members of al-Qaeda.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Another document reveals the NSA considered designating WikiLeaks as a "malicious foreign actor." According to *The Intercept*, "Such a designation would have allowed the group to be targeted with extensive electronic surveillance—without the need to exclude U.S. persons from the surveillance searches." In addition, the leaked documents reveal the United States urged its foreign allies to file criminal charges against Assange over the group's publication of the Afghanistan War Logs.

Joining us now from London is Wikileaks founder and editor Julian Assange, talking to us by the phone from the Ecuadorean embassy where he has political asylum since August 2012. Here in New York, we're joined by Michael Ratner, the attorney for Julian Assange, president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

When you read this, Julian — welcome back to *Democracy Now!* — what were your thoughts on

being put on this "manhunting"—their words—"manhunting" list together with al-Qaeda?

**JULIAN ASSANGE:** Good morning, Amy.

Well, my first thought was, well, finally, we have some proof that we can present to the public for what we have long suspected for a variety of reasons. And it is strange to see your name in that context with people who are suspected of serious criminal acts of terrorism. Clearly, that is a massive overstep.

We've heard a lot in the propaganda pushed on this issue by Clapper and others in the U.S. national security complex that, of course, this pervasive surveillance is justified by the need to stop U.S.—stop terrorist attacks being conducted on the United States and its allies. But we've seen example after example come out over the last few months showing the National Security Agency and its partners, GCHQ, engaged in economic espionage.

And here we have an example where the type of espionage being engaged in is spying on a publisher—WikiLeaks, the publishing organization, and a publisher—me, personally. And the other material that came out in relation to GCHQ was from 2012, and that shows that GCHQ was spying on our service and our readers, so not just the publisher as an organization, not just the publisher as a person, but also the readers of a publisher. And that's clearly, I believe, not something that the United States population agrees with, let alone other people.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Were you surprised by anything that came out in these latest documents?

**JULIAN ASSANGE:** I was surprised about how someone is added to the foreign malicious actor list. So, the National Security Agency went through a process to try and—at quite a high level, at the office of the legal director, to designate us as a foreign—foreign malicious actor, which means that our U.S. personnel can be spied on, or our U.S. supporters or associates. The, quote, "human network" that supports WikiLeaks in the United States can be targeted without going through any of the checks that the National Security Agency might normally engage in.

And if you read the detail of that writing, you can see that it's quite a lackadaisical, cavalier approach to going into that very serious step of deciding to spy on a publisher and all its U.S. personnel. And we must assume that news agencies like Reuters or the Deutsche Presse Agency that have foreign correspondents in the United States, who are American citizens or American citizens working overseas, could be similarly affected.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Julian Assange, the *Intercept* article quotes from the [document](#) you're referencing. It was from July 2011 and showed how two NSA officers considered designating WikiLeaks a, quote, "malicious foreign actor." I want to read from the exchange between the NSA agency's general counsel and an arm of its Threat Operations Center. Quote, "Can we treat a foreign server who stores, or potentially disseminates leaked or stolen US data on it's [sic] server as a 'malicious foreign actor' for the purpose of targeting with no defeats? Examples: WikiLeaks, thepiratebay.org, etc." The response was, quote, "Let us get back to you." Julian Assange, your response, and what the documents reveal about the process that the NSA or GCHQ go through to designate someone a malicious foreign actor?

**JULIAN ASSANGE:** What they mean here by "no defeats," it's sort of no protections for any form of interception of content of U.S. citizens communicating with that organization or through that

foreign server. And the particular document that this came out in was actually not a document that was formally looking at this issue in relation to us; rather, it was an extraction from that consideration that happened sometime in the past and then was put into one of their, if you like, sort of frequently asked questions internally in the National Security Agency. So we're quite lucky to have found this reference.

We were used as an example of how could you in fact target these servers, even when they were used by people in the United States. And the answer is, yes, that can be done. And we don't know what the answer was in our particular case, but given that the general example is yes, then we must assume that it was. And I think, really, now General Alexander needs to come clean and say, in fact, was that permitted in the case of WikiLeaks, and did the National Security Agency proceed in spying on our U.S. personnel or our lawyers, for example, like Michael Ratner, who's based in New York.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Julian, we have Michael here, but I did want to ask—you've been in the embassy, haven't had natural daylight, sunlight, for 608 days. How are you? And does the information that has come out of this change in any way what your thoughts are about your future?

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, I just find it helpful that—in preparing the asylum application, of course, we looked into many details like this that were quite technical, a big puzzle of many pieces, which some organization, like a foreign office or the Ecuadorean Department of Foreign Affairs, has the time to assess, but of course it's harder for the public to understand, that documents like this show very readily sort of the scale of the U.S. response to our publications and why it's, unfortunately, necessary for me to apply and receive asylum and for some of our other personnel, like Sarah Harrison, who's a British citizen, to be in legally advised exile in Germany.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And will the information about whether there is a sealed indictment, which this seems to indicate there isn't—do you have any further information about that, an indictment against you in the United States?

**AMY GOODMAN:** The district attorney of Virginia gave the last information on that issue and formally stated publicly that the investigation continues.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, Julian Assange, we want to thank you for being with us, founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks. Will this change anything you do inside the embassy, when you see how—further information about your being monitored and people even going to the website—what is it—GCHQ, the equivalent of the NSA in Britain, collecting the IP addresses in real time of people who even access the WikiLeaks site?

**JULIAN ASSANGE:** The WikiLeaks security model has always been predicated under the basis that we are dealing with very powerful organizations that do not obey the rule of law, whether those are powerful criminal organizations, whether those are corrupt governments in Africa, or whether they're spy agencies allied with the West or Russia or China. And so, it doesn't—we've always been prepared to defend against that sort of scrutiny. The U.K. government has publicly admitted that they've spent six million pounds in the last year surveilling the embassy through police forces alone. We see from these documents that we must assume that GCHQ is also monitoring the situation. That's part of—I suppose, part of the sad state of the rule of law in the

West, where these organizations behave that way. I think the days are clearly numbered that they can get away with it without being exposed. But I'll leave you to Michael Ratner now.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Thanks so much, Julian. Julian Assange, founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks. When we come back, we are joined by Michael Ratner, legal adviser to Julian Assange. We'll also be joined from London, not in exile in the Ecuadorean embassy, but in a studio in London, by Jesselyn Radack, the legal adviser to Edward Snowden who was stopped at Heathrow Airport on Sunday, asked, "Who is Edward Snowden? Where is Bradley Manning?" and other such questions. Stay with us.

[break]

**AMY GOODMAN:** This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman, with Nermeen Shaikh.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Top-secret documents leaked by Edward Snowden have revealed new details about how the United States and Britain targeted the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks after it published leaked documents about the Afghan War. According to a new [article](#) written by Glenn Greenwald and Ryan Gallagher published this morning by *The Intercept*, Britain's top spy agency, the Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, secretly monitored visitors to a WikiLeaks site by collecting their IP addresses in real time as well as the search terms used to reach the site.

**AMY GOODMAN:** One of the documents leaked by Edward Snowden details a "manhunting timeline" that shows how the U.S. tried to pressure other nations to prosecute Julian Assange. One read, quote, "The United States on 10 August urged other nations with forces in Afghanistan, including Australia, United Kingdom, and Germany, to consider filing criminal charges against Julian Assange."

Joining us now is Michael Ratner. He is the president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which is the legal adviser to Julian Assange.

So, talk about this last point, Michael, first what you're most surprised by in this piece that just came out at *The Intercept*, and particularly the U.S. pushing other countries to prosecute Julian.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Well, what I was really shocked by was the extent the U.S. and U.K. have gone through to try and get and destroy WikiLeaks and Julian Assange and their network of supporters. I mean, it's astounding. And it's been going on for years. And it also, as Julian pointed out, tells us why he is in the Ecuadorean embassy and why Ecuador has given him asylum. He has every reason to heavily fear what would happen to him in this country, in the United States, if he were to be ever taken here. So I think, for me, that's a very, very critical point, justifies every reason why Ecuador gave him asylum.

And the document you're addressing, Amy, what they call the manhunt timeline, which is extraordinary because it groups him among, you know, a whole bunch of people who the U.S. considers terrorists, it also, interestingly, groups them—groups them among Palestinians, which is pretty interesting in itself. But to have Julian on that list as a manhunt timeline, and it says prosecute him wherever you can get him, is pretty extraordinary. It doesn't say you necessarily need a good reason to prosecute him; it just says, basically, prosecute him. And what it's

reminiscent, to me, is of the program that took place in this country in the '60s and the '70s, COINTELPRO, counterintelligence procedures, when the FBI said, "We have to basically destroy the black civil rights movement, the New Left and others, and prosecute them, get them however you can, get rid of them." And so, the manhunt timeline, even its name is chilling. But that's what it is. It's an effort to try and get WikiLeaks and their personnel, wherever they are in the world.

And, of course, we've seen some of that. You've had people on this show. When people cross borders who are associates with WikiLeaks, they get stopped. They get surveilled all the time. We've seen—we've seen efforts to take—to basically destroy WikiLeaks by stealing their laptops on a trip that went from Sweden to Germany. We've seen efforts across the board, in country after country. Germany, they surveil conferences when WikiLeaks people speak there, everywhere. So, actually, this program is not just an abstraction. This program has been implemented. And the manhunt timeline, I think, is incredibly significant, considering that the manhunt is an effort to locate, find and destroy—in some cases, kill—kill people.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** And, Michael Ratner, what do you think the appropriate response should be to something like that? Is there any legal action that Assange's legal team can take in response to this?

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Julian Assange, in his statement to the article, said that he felt that the U.S. ought to appoint a special prosecutor, not just to investigate what's happening to WikiLeaks and a publisher and journalist, but across the board what's happening to publishers and journalists in this entire country right now and around the world, where the U.S. is trying to basically say publishing is a crime. And that's what they're saying. That's what the Obama administration is saying. And Julian is strongly suggesting, and I support, the idea of a special prosecutor to look into this.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Is that aspect of it unprecedented, though? I mean, you drew comparisons between COINTELPRO and manhunt timeline, but the fact that publishing, people who work in journalism, are being monitored in this way by intelligence agencies here, has that occurred before?

**MICHAEL RATNER:** On this level, I don't think it's occurred, on this extreme level. You had the manhunt program. You also had what they call—what do they call it? The ANTICRISIS GIRL program. And that's the dragnet—I don't know how it got that name.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Explain, ANTICRISIS GIRL program.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** What does—what is that about? I mean, I don't know. Except what it is, is whenever I search for WikiLeaks on my computer, or when I go visit the WikiLeaks site, in real time, the GCHQ, the British intelligence agency, can take in my IP address, take in what I'm searching for in real time. Now, they gave an—they did a number of slides showing how they could do this. We don't know how extensively they've implemented that program, but that means that every one of us who have ever gone to a WikiLeaks site to look for a document could technically be surveilled and our IP address taken in.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And also the hacktivist group Anonymous and Pirate Bay. Explain.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Well, Anonymous, they actually did designate as what they call a malicious

foreign actor. And a malicious foreign actor, which is what they were deciding whether to designate WikiLeaks as or not—and we don't know what the final decision was, whether WikiLeaks was designated as a malicious foreign actor, but Anonymous apparently was. And what it means is any restrictions on government surveillance of anything—my conversations, my email—are completely lifted, whether you're an American or whatever. Any of my communications to anywhere in the world to that website, to Anonymous, going on chat rooms with Anonymous, going on tweets with Anonymous, those can be taken in and surveilled. It's an incredibly broad power. We don't know, as I said, if it was used against WikiLeaks. It was certainly discussed, and they asked to use it against WikiLeaks. We will know, I hope, soon, if and when a lawsuit is ever filed around these issues.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** And what do the documents reveal about what the U.S. officials said they were doing and what in fact they were doing? Because not only was their surveillance of U.S. citizens problematic, but also of foreign citizens.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Well, I'm sorry, I'm not following the question exactly, Nermeen.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** I mean, in other words, Michael Ratner, the U.S. officials have claimed that they only surveil foreign—foreign citizens who are, in some sense, either potentially guilty of or likely to be involved in terrorist activities. But if you're monitoring every visitor to a website, whether it's WikiLeaks or Pirate Bay or—I mean, that's obviously not the case.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** You know, this is just obfuscation and lies by our officials, which has been consistent. Obviously, if there's a WikiLeaks website overseas, what they're really saying is everybody who visits that website, American or otherwise, we can surveil. So it's complete—it's complete B.S. This is just untrue. We are all being surveilled.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Michael, we want you to stay with us as we bring in another guest from London. Nermeen?

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/julian\\_assange\\_on\\_being\\_placed\\_on](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/julian_assange_on_being_placed_on)

## 2014, Feb 18 Attorney for Edward Snowden Interrogated at U.K. Airport, Placed on "Inhibited Persons List"

Four journalists who revealed the National Security Agency's vast web of spying have been awarded the 2013 George Polk Awards in Journalism. Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras, Ewen MacAskill of *The Guardian* and Barton Gellman of *The Washington Post* were among the winners announced on Sunday. Even as the journalists who broke the stories based on Edward Snowden's leaks were awarded one of journalism's highest honors, a lawyer who represents Snowden was recently detained while going through customs at London's Heathrow Airport. Jesselyn Radack joins us today to tell her story. Radack says she was subjected to "very hostile questioning" about Snowden and her trips to Russia. Radack also learned she might be on an "inhibited persons list," a designation reportedly used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to require further vetting of certain passengers. Radack is just one of a growing number of people who are being stopped, harassed and interrogated for their work around Snowden, WikiLeaks and National Security Agency documents. Radack is the director of National Security & Human Rights at the Government Accountability Project, the nation's leading whistleblower support organization.

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**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Four journalists who revealed the National Security Agency's vast web of spying have been awarded the 2013 George Polk Awards in Journalism. Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras, Ewen MacAskill of *The Guardian* and Barton Gellman of *The Washington Post* were among the winners announced on Sunday. Even as the journalists who broke the stories based on Snowden's leaks were awarded one of journalism's highest honors, a lawyer who represents Snowden was detained while going through customs at London's Heathrow Airport. Jesselyn Radack told [Firedoglake](#) she was subjected to, quote, "very hostile questioning" about Snowden and her trips to Russia. Radack also learned she might be on an inhibited persons list, a designation reportedly used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to require further vetting of certain passengers. After the Polk Awards were announced, Glenn Greenwald tweeted, quote, "In the UK government, this is known as the George Polk Award for Excellence in Terrorism."

Jesselyn Radack is just one of a growing number of people who are being stopped, harassed and interrogated for their work around Edward Snowden, WikiLeaks and National Security Agency documents. In this clip, we hear from journalist Laura Poitras, computer security researcher Jacob Appelbaum, and then journalist Glenn Greenwald's partner David Miranda, who have all been stopped and interrogated in airports.

**LAURA POITRAS:** I've actually lost count of how many times I've been detained at the border, but it's, I think, around 40 times. And on this particular trip, lately they've been actually sending someone from the Department of Homeland Security to question me in the departing city, so I was questioned in London about what I was doing. I told them I was a journalist and that, you know, my work is protected, and I wasn't going to discuss it.

**JACOB APPELBAUM:** I was targeted by the U.S. government and essentially, until the last four times that I've flown, I was detained basically every time. Sometimes men

would meet me at the jetway, similarly, with guns.

**DAVID MIRANDA:** [translated] I stayed in a room with three different agents that were entering and exiting. They spoke to me, asking me questions about my whole life. They took my computer, my video game, cellphone, everything.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That was journalist Glenn Greenwald's partner David Miranda; before him, computer security researcher Jacob Appelbaum and journalist Laura Poitras. You can go to our website to see our interview with [Jacob Appelbaum](#) and [Laura Poitras](#) at [democracynow.org](#). But all of them have been interrogated at airports, as has most recently Jesselyn Radack, the attorney representing Edward Snowden, joining us from London. She is a former ethics adviser to the U.S. Department of Justice under George W. Bush, currently director of National Security & Human Rights at the Government Accountability Project, the nation's leading whistleblower organization.

Jesselyn, welcome back to *Democracy Now!* Describe what happened at Heathrow on Sunday.

**JESSELYN RADACK:** I was trying to enter through customs, which at Heathrow is called the Border Force, and I was directed to a very specific station rather than the regular line. And after the first question, which is, "Why are you here?" which is a normal question, things just got more bizarre as we went along. I said that I was here to see friends. They wanted me to be more specific. I said, "In the Sam Adams Association," the group that awarded Edward Snowden the award last year—I didn't add that part. And then they asked for the names of the people in the group. And so I gave names of people who are publicly known to be members. And then they asked where we were meeting, and I said at the Ecuadorean embassy. And they asked, "With Julian Assange?" And I said, "Yes." But then, at that point, I was asked why I had been to Russia twice in the past three months. And I said, "Because I have a client there." And they asked, "Who?" And I said, "Edward Snowden." And then, this was the most bizarre thing: They said, "Who is Edward Snowden?" And I just said matter-of-factly, "He is a whistleblower and an asylee." They next asked, "Who is Bradley Manning?" And I said, "A whistleblower. And then they asked, "Where is Bradley Manning?" And I said, "In jail." And he said, "So, he's a criminal." And I said that he's a political prisoner. And then they said, "But you represent Snowden." And I said, "Yes, I'm a human rights attorney, and I'm one of his legal advisers."

But I found that entire line of questioning very jarring and very unnerving. I didn't know what kind of answer I was supposed to give. I mean, obviously, it's like asking, "Who is President Obama?" They're asking about some of the most famous people on the planet. Obviously, I have an attorney-client relationship to protect. I'm not going to get into meetings that I've had with clients. And only some of my clients are public, Edward Snowden being one of them, so that's why I could answer that question. But I walked away from the interview just shaking. During the interview, I was fine. I maintained my composure. But I walked away just shaking and just upset. I just cried. It was very intimidating and very, very, again, unnerving to be asked that line of questions as an attorney. And I don't think journalists or attorneys should be harassed or intimidated at the border, and it's very disturbing to me that this has occurred in the U.S. and the U.K., and I've heard that this happened to someone recently in Germany, though I don't know the details of that. But certainly, as an attorney, having gone to 14 different countries in the past year, I have never endured a line of questioning like that. You get the usual, "Hi. Why are you here? Who are you seeing? Where are you staying?" But not, "Who do you—who is Edward Snowden?"

Where is Edward Snowden? Where is Bradley Manning? Do you represent Bradley Manning?" which I wouldn't even be allowed to answer, obviously, because that would be attorney-client privileged information. I, in fact, do not represent him, but it would have put me in a really difficult situation of actually making a false statement if I did represent him and had to answer a question like that.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** Jesselyn, could you talk about the significance of the inhibited persons list? How did you first learn about it, and are you in fact on it?

**JESSELYN RADACK:** As hard—as a graduate or an alumna of the no-fly list, you're never officially told, "You are on this list." It's implied, and you hear it. This apparently is some list maintained in Great Britain, but originating from the Department of Homeland Security. And I wish I could tell you more about it, but that's just what I was able to learn from speaking with other people who have had difficulty getting out of the U.K. My difficulty was getting in. I'm hoping I don't have any difficulty getting out. But an inhibited persons list, to me, is another kind of watch list, just like how ridiculous it was that I spent a number of years on the no-fly list, when I obviously posed no direct threat. To Snowden, I'm an attorney doing my job, and being a human rights lawyer does not pose any kind of immigration violation or safety threat to entering the United Kingdom, so I'm not sure why I was subjected to that interrogation other than to try to intimidate me from doing my job.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/attorney\\_for\\_edward\\_snowden\\_interrogated\\_at](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/attorney_for_edward_snowden_interrogated_at)

## 2014, Feb 18 Spying on Lawyers: Snowden Documents Show NSA Ally Targeted U.S. Law Firm

A new report based on leaks by Edward Snowden reveals the National Security Agency played a role in the monitoring of a U.S. law firm that represented the Indonesian government during trade disputes with the United States. According to *The New York Times*, the NSA's Australian counterpart told the agency it was spying on trade talks between the United States and Indonesia, including potentially privileged communications between Indonesian officials and the U.S. law firm, Mayer Brown. The document notes the Australian agency "has been able to continue to cover the talks, providing highly useful intelligence for interested U.S. customers." The report by James Risen and Laura Poitras bolsters claims by Snowden and others that the NSA and its allies conduct spying for economic gain. We speak to Jesselyn Radack, legal adviser to Snowden. She is director of National Security & Human Rights at the Government Accountability Project. We are also joined by Michael Ratner, president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

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**AMY GOODMAN:** A new [report](#) based on leaks by Edward Snowden reveals the NSA played a role in the monitoring of a U.S. law firm that represented the Indonesian government during trade disputes with the United States. According to *The New York Times*, the NSA's Australian counterpart told the NSA it was spying on trade talks between the United States and Indonesia, including potentially privileged communications between Indonesian officials and the U.S. law firm Mayer Brown. The document notes the Australian agency has been able to continue to cover the talks, providing highly useful intelligence for interested U.S. customers. The report, front page *New York Times* by James Risen and Laura Poitras, bolsters claims by Snowden and others that the NSA and its allies conduct spying for economic gain. I wanted to bring Michael Ratner back into the conversation, along with Jesselyn Radack. You're both attorneys. So this is spying on a U.S. law firm. Talk about the NSA and lawyers, which goes to everyone's legal rights.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** I mean, I think there's two big points here. One, you brought out, which is that this is economic spying. And Edward Snowden has said that what will be revealed as we go through these documents are more and more economic spying, and that, essentially, this whole claim that this is about stopping terrorism is just bogus, really. I mean, that's really what's going on. And so I think that's a crucial point here. This was to get an advantage in various trade talks over shrimps, etc.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So it's just—for the CIA, for the NSA, it's a new role after the Cold War. It's to be a spying arm for U.S. corporations?

**MICHAEL RATNER:** That's what it appears to be, that they actually—not only for themselves in trade negotiations, but also may well feed this material to private corporations, U.S. corporations in particular. So I think that's one thing.

The second thing, we've all been concerned for a very long time about spying on attorneys and our clients. And we do know that, for example, if I talk to my client, Julian Assange, that because he at least—we don't have any—there's no public indictment of him. We don't know if he's actually been indicted; we suspect he is. But according to NSA spying rules, they can actually take in

attorney-client conversations with our clients overseas, as long as those clients haven't been indicted. That's just wide open. That's ridiculous. I mean, as an attorney, I have a right of legal confidentiality with my clients, indicted or not. So we know they're already—already doing that.

In this case, of course, they were taking in a law firm suspected to be this law firm, Mayer Brown, which, interestingly enough, actually helped us with the Guantánamo cases, and they're taking in what they're negotiating or what advice they're giving to the Indonesian government. So it does seem to me at this point that certainly the lawyers' conversations with Julian Assange and all of our clients—Jesselyn's, as well, with her clients—are probably—are more likely that—almost for sure just swept in there, no minimization, just every—all of our legal advice to our clients are taken in by the NSA. It's outrageous. I mean, the question I would have: What happened to Julian Assange's right to counsel? What happened to it? It's basically been destroyed by the NSA.

**NERMEEN SHAIKH:** And, Michael Ratner, why would they conduct this kind of surveillance now of lawyer-client correspondence? Only because they can?

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Well, I think they want to know everything about what—for example, in the case of Julian Assange or other whistleblowers out there, other publishers, what they're planning to do, what legal moves they might make. Like, for example, on these recent stories that have come out today, the Glenn Greenwald stories, are we planning to bring a lawsuit? What are we planning to do? If they can get—what's going to be our—what's going to be our legal take on it? If they can get advance notice of that, they can begin to counter it in their own publicity and how they deal with it legally, etc. You know, there's a reason why you have the attorney-client privilege, and that's so your client can share with you confidentially both what their situation is, as well as what your legal tactics are. Essentially, the government now, it's wide open what the legal tactics are.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in an [interview](#) published on Monday that the intelligence community should have told the American public about secret phone data collection when that program first began years ago. He told *The Daily Beast*, quote, "I probably shouldn't say this, but I will. Had we been transparent about this from the outset right after 9/11—which is the genesis of the 215 program—and said both to the American people and to their elected representatives, we need to cover this gap, we need to make sure this never happens to us again, so here is what we are going to set up, here is how it's going to work, and why we have to do it, and here are the safeguards... We wouldn't have had the problem we had." Let me get your response to that, Michael Ratner, and then I'd like to hear from Jesselyn Radack and ask you, Jesselyn, as an attorney representing Edward Snowden, if you have any confidential way to communicate with him.

**MICHAEL RATNER:** I don't see how he could say there wouldn't have been a dramatic negative response to broad-scale government spying on all our phone calls. I mean, what happened is, it came out, it came out without the government saying it, and there was a huge response. I mean, it changed the perceptions in this country about the one that the NSA is doing. I don't think it would have made any difference had they put that forward in a different way. In fact, the one case where they finally admitted it, with the warrantless wiretapping, there was a huge outcry about that. So I think this is—this is fictitious. They shouldn't be doing it. They shouldn't be surveilling Americans' phone calls. They should get probable cause. And that's the only way, in my view, that

you can actually do surveillance.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Jesselyn Radack?

**JESSELYN RADACK:** I found what Clapper said completely disingenuous. We know that he perjured himself before Congress, under oath, on camera, with no consequence. And this again strikes me as one of the least untruthful of his statements, so I take that with a grain of salt. He thinks it should be known, because they got caught, and that is the only reason he continues to make these opportunistic statements.

In terms of monitoring, I assume I am being monitored. I am encrypted to the hilt. I'm not going to say what encryption techniques I use, but it's a really unfortunate way to do business as a lawyer to have to pretty much arrange meetings in person with your client and to have to be so encrypted and get into a very encrypted environment anytime you want to communicate. And in terms of spying on attorney-client relationships, you have to remember, NSA is collecting bulk metadata. They don't have some carve-out for attorneys and clients. They don't have a carve-out for doctor-patient communications. They don't have a carve-out for communications between accountants and their clients. They have access to any of that information, should they choose not only to collect it, but to go ahead and look at it. And there have been other instances, not only economic, but spying on political enemies like the Muslim charity al-Haramain. And that case was not allowed to proceed because of, I believe, state secrets privilege in that particular one, where the government accidentally sent them the transcripts of recorded attorney-client conversations.

So, the fact that this has occurred and has occurred a number of times and is now being documented, really it's incumbent upon attorneys to use encryption. I have a disclaimer that my organization, the Government Accountability Project, you know, came up with, a disclaimer on every email that this communication may be monitored and collected without consent, in secret, by the NSA. I mean, I think everybody should have that kind of statement after their email, because I think it would raise public awareness about how insidious and widespread this problem is.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Jesselyn Radack, we have—

**JESSELYN RADACK:** But if you're an attorney in—

**AMY GOODMAN:** We have to wrap up, but I did want to ask—

**JESSELYN RADACK:** Sure.

**AMY GOODMAN:** If you hadn't answered those questions at the airport, do you think you would have been barred from entry or arrested, like David Miranda was, detained?

**JESSELYN RADACK:** I certainly feared that, yes. And I feared that if I gave the wrong answers or was flip with them in any kind of way, that, yeah, if I gave them any kind of grief whatsoever, yes, that was actually my fear.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Today is a big anniversary, Michael Ratner. What is it?

**MICHAEL RATNER:** Well, today is the fourth anniversary, the actual day today, of the release by WikiLeaks of Reykjavik 13, which was the first Cablegate document released, which is the one that was showing there was pressure on Iceland to try and concede to IMF, etc., demands when they

were going through their difficult economic period. It's the first one of the Cablegate documents. So it's that anniversary. And just to give us some lightness, it's my daughter Ana's birthday today. So that's a way to get that in, but...

**AMY GOODMAN:** Happy birthday, Ana. Well, thank you, Michael Ratner, for being with us, president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which is the legal adviser to Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. And thank you, Jesselyn Radack, for joining us, former ethics adviser to the Department of Justice under George W. Bush, currently director of National Security & Human Rights at the Government Accountability Project. This is *Democracy Now!* When we come back, we're going to Houston to speak with *The New York Times* reporter Steven Greenhouse about a big labor defeat in Tennessee, the UAW defeat in a Volkswagen plant. Stay with us.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/spying\\_on\\_lawyers\\_snowden\\_documents\\_show](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/18/spying_on_lawyers_snowden_documents_show)

## 2014, Feb 21 Silencing the Scientist: Tyrone Hayes on Being Targeted by Herbicide Firm Syngenta

We speak with scientist Tyrone Hayes of the University of California, Berkeley, who discovered a widely used herbicide may have harmful effects on the endocrine system. But when he tried to publish the results, the chemical's manufacturer launched a campaign to discredit his work. Hayes was first hired in 1997 by a company, which later became agribusiness giant Syngenta, to study their product, atrazine, a pesticide that is applied to more than half the corn crops in the United States, and widely used on golf courses and Christmas tree farms. When Hayes found results Syngenta did not expect — that atrazine causes sexual abnormalities in frogs, and could cause the same problems for humans — it refused to allow him to publish his findings. A new article in *The New Yorker* magazine uses court documents from a class action lawsuit against Syngenta to show how it sought to smear Hayes' reputation and prevent the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from banning the profitable chemical, which is already banned by the European Union.

### Transcript

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**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Now we turn to the story of a University of California scientist who discovered that a popular herbicide may have harmful effects on the endocrine system. Tyrone Hayes was first hired in 1997 by a company that later became agribusiness giant Syngenta. They asked him to study their product, atrazine, a pesticide that is applied to more than half the corn crops in the United States and widely used on golf courses and Christmas tree farms. But after Hayes found results that the manufacturer did not expect, that atrazine causes sexual abnormalities in frogs and could cause the same problems for humans, Syngenta refused to allow him to publish his work. This was the the start of an epic feud between the scientist and the corporation.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Now a new [article](#) in *The New Yorker* magazine uses court documents from a class action lawsuit against Syngenta to show how it sought to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from banning the profitable chemical, which is already banned by the European Union. To start with, the company's public relations team drafted a list of four goals. Reporter Rachel Aviv writes, quote, "The first was [quote] 'discredit Hayes.' In a spiral-bound notebook, Syngenta's communications manager, Sherry Ford, who referred to Hayes by his initials, wrote that the company could 'prevent citing of TH data by revealing him as noncredible.' He was a frequent topic of conversation at company meetings. Syngenta looked for ways to 'exploit Hayes' faults/problems.' 'If TH involved in scandal, enviros will drop him,' Ford wrote."

Well, for more, we're joined by TH himself. That's right, Tyrone Hayes is with us, professor of integrative biology at the University of California, Berkeley, joining us from the campus TV station right now in Berkeley.

Welcome to *Democracy Now!* Can you tell us what happened to you, how you were originally tied to Syngenta, the research you did, and what prevented you from originally publishing it?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, here at Berkeley, I was a new assistant professor. I was already studying the effects of hormones and the effects of chemicals that interfere with hormones on amphibian

development. And I was approached by the manufacturer and asked to study the effects of atrazine, the herbicide, on frogs. And after I discovered that it interfered with male development and caused males to turn into females, to develop eggs, the company tried to prevent me from publishing and from discussing that work with other scientists outside of their panel.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** What was the process within the company? As you raised your findings, what was their immediate reaction to what you had come across?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, initially they seemed sort of supportive. You know, we designed more studies. We designed more analysis. And they encouraged me to do more analysis. But as the further analysis just supported the original finding, they became less interested in moving forward very quickly, and eventually they moved to asking me to manipulate data or to misrepresent data, and ultimately they told me I could not publish or could not talk about the data outside of their closed panel.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And, Professor Hayes, talk about exactly what you found. What were the abnormalities you found in frogs, the gender-bending nature of this drug atrazine?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, initially, we found that the larynx, or the voice box, in exposed males didn't grow properly. And this was an indication that the male hormone testosterone was not being produced at appropriate levels. And eventually we found that not only were these males demasculinized, or chemically castrated, but they also were starting to develop ovaries or starting to develop eggs. And eventually we discovered that these males didn't breed properly, that some of the males actually completely turned into females. So we had genetic males that were laying eggs and reproducing as females. And now we're starting to show that some of these males actually show, I guess what we'd call homosexual behavior. They actually prefer to mate with other males.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And so, where did you go with your research?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, eventually, what happened was the EPA insisted that—the Environmental Protection Agency insisted that the manufacturer release me from the confidentiality contract. And we published our findings in pretty high-ranking journals, such as *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. We published some work in *Nature*. We published work in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, which is a journal sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And when did you begin to get a sense that the company was organizing a campaign against you? What were the signs that you saw post the period when you published your findings?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Before we published the findings and before the EPA became involved, the company tried to purchase the data. They tried to give me a new contract so that they would then control the data and the experiments. They actually tried to get me to come and visit the company to get control of those data. And when I refused, I invited them to the university, I offered to share data, but they wanted to purchase the data. And then they actually—as mentioned in the *New Yorker* article, they actually hired scientists to try to refute the data or to pick apart the data, and eventually they hired scientists to do experiments that they claim refuted our data.

And then that escalated to the company actually—Tim Pastoor, in particular, and others from the company—coming to presentations that—or lectures that I was giving, to make handouts or to stand up and refute the data, and eventually even led to things like threats of violence. Tim Pastoor, for example, before I would give a talk, would literally threaten, whisper in my ear that he could have me lynched, or he would—quote, said he would "send some of his good ol' boys to show me what it's like to be gay," or at one point he threatened my wife and my daughter with sexual violence. He would whisper things like, "Your wife's at home alone right now. How do you know I haven't sent somebody there to take care of her? Isn't your daughter there?" So, eventually, it really slipped into some, you know, pretty scary tactics.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, what did you do? I mean, you're actually—I mean, this is very serious. You could bring criminal charges if you're being threatened and stalked in this way.

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, initially, I went to my vice chancellor here at the university. I went to my dean. I went to legal counsel here at the university. And I was told by legal counsel that—well, I was told, first of all, by the vice chancellor for research at the time that, "Well, you published the work. It's over. So I don't understand what the problem is." And I tried to impress upon her, Beth Burnside, at the time that—you know, that it wasn't over, that I was really being pursued by the manufacturer. And eventually, when I spoke with the lawyer here at the University, I was told that, "Well, I represent the university, and I protect the university from liability. You're kind of on your own." And I remember I looked at him, and I said, "But the very university, from the Latin *universitas*, is a collection of scholars, of teachers and students, so who is this entity, the university, that you represent that doesn't include me?" But clearly there's some entity that doesn't really include us, the professors and students, and doesn't really protect our academic freedom, I think, the way that it should.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** I wanted to ask you about one of your critics, Elizabeth Whelan, president of the American Council on Science and Health. When *The New York Times* ran a critical story about the herbicide as part of its toxic water series in 2009, she referred to its reporting as, quote, "all the news that's fit to scare." This is a clip of Whelan from an interview on MSNBC.

**ELIZABETH WHELAN:** I very much disagree with the *New York Times* story, which is really raising concerns about a totally bogus risk. Atrazine has been used for more than 50 years. It's very, very tightly regulated. Even the Environmental Protection Agency, which is not known for soft-pedaling about environmental chemicals, even they say it's safe.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Well, it turns out that Syngenta has been a long-term financial supporter of Whelan's organization, the American Council on Science and Health, paying them at least \$100,000. Your comments on her remarks?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, again, they're paid remarks. And one of the most disheartening things in this whole process is that many of my critics—you know, it's one to be academic, if you come and say, "Well, we interpreted the data this way, and we want to argue about this point," but these people really didn't even have an opinion. These opinions were written by the manufacturer, and they were paid to put their names on them, to endorse the opinions of the manufacturer. So, you know, that's one of the most disheartening things, that they were really just personalities for sale. And many of the things that she's saying there is just not true. There are—any independent study,

from any scientist that's not funded by Syngenta, has found similar problems with atrazine, not just my work on frogs. But I've just published a paper with 22 scientists from around the world, from 12 different countries, who have shown that atrazine causes sexual problems in mammals, that atrazine causes sexual problems in birds, amphibians, fish. So it's not just my work in amphibians.

And also, with regards to the EPA, one of the scientific advisory panel members on the EPA that was supposed to review atrazine turns out is paid and works for Syngenta. So the whole process was tainted. And, in fact, the EPA ignored the scientific advisory panel's opinion and actually decided to keep atrazine on the market and not to do any more studies, when that clearly wasn't the recommendation of the scientific advisory panel.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** I wanted to go back just a second to your remarks about your university, because obviously there are many questions about major universities around the country being, in some way or other, supported financially by the pharmaceutical or the drug industry. But you are at a prestigious university, one of the top universities in the country, at Berkeley. Do you have some concerns about how your university responded to your—in your time of need, and the attack on your academic integrity?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, they're not just my concerns. There are many at the university who fear that the university is just becoming a corporation. You know, we're a public university that used to get a lot more support from the state. In my lifetime, tuition was free for students. Tuition has been rising. And it's really an effort to monetize things, and that includes scientific researchers. There's a lot of pressure on us not just to be scholars and to teach and to do research, but also to bring in funds that will support the university. So there's some sentiment from the university that if you are raising a concern potentially that might cause the university to lose support or to lose funders, then you won't necessarily get the support on the campus that you need. And we've seen this over and over again. A colleague of mine, Ignacio Chapela, for example, was in a fairly huge battle over the same company, Novartis, and its influences over scientific research at the university.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you talk about the significance of Syngenta? First of all, is it a significant presence at the university, at UC Berkeley? But also, the significance of Syngenta as a pesticide company and all that it makes, how powerful is it?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, when they were—when I was originally consulting for the manufacturer, they were Novartis at the time. And Novartis had a big influence on the campus. There was a major deal on the campus. I understand a fifth of the biological sciences' support was coming from Novartis. And at the time, they both made pesticides, and they made pharmaceuticals.

One of my big concerns is that, as of the year 2000—prior to the year 2000, Novartis not only made atrazine, which is used on corn, of course, which is an herbicide, but it also induces an enzyme called aromatase. It causes you to make too much estrogen. And it's now been shown that this herbicide, atrazine, and this mechanism, is potentially involved in development of breast cancer, for example. Up until 2000, the company also made a chemical called letrozole, which did exactly the opposite: It blocked aromatase, it blocked this enzyme, it blocked estrogen production. And this chemical, letrozole, is the number one treatment for breast cancer. So this company was simultaneously in 2000 making a chemical that induced estrogen and promoted

breast cancer, and making a chemical that blocked estrogen production and was being used to treat breast cancer. So there's a clear conflict of interest there, a clear problem.

The other problems are that something like 90 percent of the seeds that we use to produce our food right now are owned by the big six pesticide companies. So, again, there's a conflict of interest where the companies have an interest in, I guess, getting us addicted to the pesticides, to grow the seeds that they also own. And Syngenta, of course, is one of those big six, one of the big pesticide or agribusiness companies.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And a *New Yorker* that delves into your story also says that you came to find out that the company was also reading your emails. Could you talk about that?

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, I originally—I had some suspicion that they had hacked into my email. And originally found out—there was a professor at Minnesota, and I was going there to give a big lecture, and this professor in the School of Public Health, Deb Dubenofsky, said that she happened to be standing in line at the airport, flying back to Minnesota, and just by coincidence she was standing behind somebody who was having a conversation on his cellphone and who identified himself as an employee of Syngenta, and he made the statement, "We have access to his email. We know where he is at all times." So it wasn't just paranoia on my part. I had direct evidence that they had access to my email. And at the time, I maintained a second and a third email that I could keep private, and I actually used that information, that they had access to my email, to send them information, and sometimes false information—for example, booking plane tickets through that email, because then I could sent them to the wrong place, so they wouldn't necessarily be there to follow me when I was going to speak in other places.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I mean, Professor Hayes, this is stunning stuff that came out in this class action suit. The suit wasn't brought by you, but the documents that came out that referenced you, Tyrone Hayes, TH, and trying to discredit you, trying to discredit your family, talk—that was a lawsuit that involved atrazine contaminating water supplies.

**TYRONE HAYES:** Yes.

**AMY GOODMAN:** But what was your reaction when you saw this? You suspected this. You felt you were being followed. You felt you were—they were trying to discredit you. But now you had the documents.

**TYRONE HAYES:** Well, you know, it's funny. You know, the way the article reads, that I suspected—I mean, I knew. I knew Tim Pastoor. I knew Sherry Ford. I knew many of the individuals who would follow me around. I knew who they were. I knew they had access to my email. You know, so, for me, I knew that these things were happening. This guy would directly come up and make lewd comments to me and threatening comments to me. But it was the kind of thing where, you know, it sounded like something out of a movie. I couldn't go and tell my colleagues, like, "They're following me around, and, you know, they're hacking into my email"—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Did you record?

**TYRONE HAYES:** —because I would look crazy.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Did you put on a tape recorder?

**TYRONE HAYES:** You know, what I found—here's how I'll answer that question. What I found out, that it was much more powerful for me to suggest and have them think that I recorded everything than for them to actually know what I recorded. And that actually became sort of my protection. So, when this guy came up and threatened me and threatened my wife, to then go back and go, "Oh, my god, did he record that or not?" So, it was much more powerful for me to have them think that. But you can see in their handwritten notes that they were very concerned that I was recording conversations. There's notes that they wanted to trap me, to entice me to sue, and these kinds of things.

And my reaction now, to see it all in *The New Yorker* and for—you know, all this open for the world to see, is—there are two reactions. One is, I can't believe they wrote these kinds of things down, right? That you're plotting to, you know, investigate me and investigate my school and investigate my hometown and all these kinds of things, and you wrote it down. But my other response is, this is quite analogous to, you know, when you hear these stories of somebody who's been in jail for murder for 10 years, and then the DNA evidence gets them out, you know, and you ask them, "Are you happy?" Well, of course I'm happy, but I've also been in jail for 10 years. You know what I mean? So, of course I'm happy now that these documents have all been revealed, but it's also been a very difficult time for me for the last—and for my family, you know, for the last 10 or 15 years, for my students, as well, for the last 10 or 15 years, to be pursued this way and to be under a microscope this way and to feel threatened this way for so long.

**AMY GOODMAN:** As we wrap up, what's happening with atrazine today? Where does it stand?

**TYRONE HAYES:** It's still on the market. We're still studying it. A number of studies are still coming out from around the world. One recent study has shown that male babies that are exposed in utero to atrazine, their genitals don't develop properly. Their penis doesn't develop properly, or they get microphallus. There are studies showing that sperm count goes down when you're exposed to atrazine. And this is not just laboratory animals or animals in the wild; this is also humans. We use the same hormones that animals do for our reproduction. And it's a big threat to environmental health and public health.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to thank you very much for being with us, Tyrone Hayes, a professor of integrative biology at the University of California, Berkeley, who's devoted the past 15 years to studying atrazine, a widely used herbicide made by Syngenta. We'll link to the [article](#) in *The New Yorker* magazine that reveals how the company tried to discredit Professor Hayes after his research showed atrazine causes sexual abnormalities in frogs and could cause the same problems for humans. The article is called "A Valuable Reputation: After Tyrone Hayes Said That a Chemical was Harmful, Its Maker Pursued Him." This is *Democracy Now!* We'll be back in a minute.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/21/silencing\\_the\\_scientist\\_tyrone\\_hayes\\_on](http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/21/silencing_the_scientist_tyrone_hayes_on)