

2015-07-17

## Friday Hard News Call

### 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.

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

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

**B Conference Call:** 1-860-970-0300

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

**C Skype:** **BBSradio2**

#### **D Archives for the 3 Programs listed above:**

- To access the **FREE BBS archives** for any of these programs:
  - Go to [BBSRadio.com/ Station 2](http://BBSRadio.com/Station2); scroll down; click on **Live Talk Radio Shows**
  - Scroll down to **Hard News on Friday with Tara and Rama**, and click on **"Library Archives"**
  - Click on those words and you will be taken to the listing of all program archives, the latest one being at the top.
  - Right hand click on "direct MP3 Link" and then you can download the program to your own computer, or click on "Listen" without downloading the archived program.

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

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

#### II TO ACCESS OTHER CALLS SUPPORTED BY 2013 Rainbow Roundtable

- A Sunday, Mondays: 9 – 10:30 EST** **Cheryl Croci's Activation Calls**  
By telephone only: 1 – 860-970-0300; PIN 9467441#
- B Tuesdays, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of each month:  
9:30 – 11:00 pm EST** **Ashtar on the Road**  
Hosts: Fran; Susan Leland channels Ashtar, Mother Sekhmet  
[www.Ashtarontheroad.com](http://www.Ashtarontheroad.com)
  - Phone Number: 1 – 559 – 726 – 1300; PIN 972400 #
  - Call is free [except for long distance charges]
  - Can also listen to the call via Skype
- C Wednesdays: 7:00 – 9:00 EST** **The Friends of The Aboriginal Moabite Nation Call**  
By telephone only: 1- 712-432-0900 PIN 666238#  
Replay # [good for 1 week] 1-712- 432-0990 PIN 666238#



## HARD NEWS

**R:** another wild day in the 'hood!

**T:** thanks to the sister who helped so much with the BBS radio, and to the other contributions too.

**Reading:** 2015-07-17 **The Constitution of the EU's Dictatorship**

**[SEE BELOW]**

**Spoke to Larry, Curly, Mr X** about current issues:

- have all to do with the Bigfoot in the Room: he's black, doncha know?  
R had an older sister and a brother who were black, not longer here – this is a larger issue than he can comment on!
- **Mr X:** they are ethnically cleansing in the US, indiscriminately

**T:** • Brought a file forward that is 2 years old; the cops in California told 3 young men to put their hands up and one of the 3 got tired, dropped his arms; they shot him with 8 bullets: he was unarmed. Footage now released – all the alibis were phoney.

**T: Girl in Texas:** was murdered, it was not suicide: killed because she was black! Slavery and its mentality is the mortal sin of the US

- **Mr X shared:** the #1 issue is that we have a man who represents the people of the Black Land of the Kemmet in the White House
- this has elicited from the racists in the country a very negative attitude to the C in C, the representative of we the people - yet racism has divided us as a people
- with the new moon & its transformative energies of change for the highest good of all concerned: we are being asked to be in service to Tita Lacoria, the Diamond one, to be servants of her peace for her sake

**Mr X:** the colour of his skin is very dark, close to black; he often gets 2<sup>nd</sup> looks as he travels world wide

- as a Jordanian, he was held by Homeland Security for suspicion of being a terrorist and removed from a United flight on his way to the Crawford Ranch as a secret Service agent in August, 2001; with the interception of KOS, he was put on the next plane to continue his flight - he sued the airline
- The point is that Mr 19.5\* is making inroads never made before in the history of the country to do with
  - #1 the mortal sin of slavery
  - #2 moving closer to ridding the earth of nuclear holocaust
- We are nano seconds from full disclosure

**Audio: Thom Hartmann** – about **eradicating poverty world wide**

- an ambitious but not impossible agenda; biggest obstacles is financing and whether the richer countries

- 2015-07- **BEST OF THE REST: Can Poverty be Banished?**
  - [Marianne Williamson, The Law of Divine Compensation](#)
  - Sam Daley Harris, [RESULTS/Center for Citizen Empowerment and Transformation/Reclaiming Our Democracy](#)
- Brings up the financial situation related to the presidential candidates and how the ones with money are undermining democracy: **Under the Influence** is a documentary about **getting money out of politics**; he plays a trailer.
  - No one asks what is good for America!

## Conference Call

- talks about cost of almonds: \$20 / lb and it is still
- on **Thom Hartmann**: about a way to replace roundup with a natural organic spray; mushrooms being used as a spray that does not harm land or people – 24,000 different kinds of insects that go after food crops – the spray turns the insects into mushrooms so they become harmless, as they are changed! Thinks it was from a **Science** magazine
  - American Association of Science are the publishers of Science magazine: July 10 edition, article about targeting copper to treat breast cancer by Ken Garber
  - about the copper chelated drug – TM tetra thyo m?? - mops up copper – she's had no sign of the cancer for 8 years; it works on everyone it's been tried on.
  - In the right amounts, copper is a necessity – it's on the emerald green ray -
- Talks about what is happening in Salt Lake City, UT

**C1:** to make sure everyone hears about the Educating Humanity website and the Dalai Llama talking about the fact of aliens and we need to respect them.

**Patty Greer:** site on Crop Circles

**T:** everything changes with this new moon, as Carl Boudreau said: he went back 400 years and has not seen the configuration we have at the moment.

**Article about Dalai Llama on aliens**

**[SEE BELOW]**

- when NESARA comes on line, BRICS goes to zero

**Caller:** • sees that all facets of life are changing to the cities of light

- has been working with people in the county and community jobs – a new project in the works to create a new facility to meet citizens needs – a public health care delivery campus, with a body, mind, spirit focus – a more holistic model of care – in Coos County, Oregon [closest town – on coast, south of Eugene, about 1 ½ hours]

**T:** thinking about what happens to the negative energy currently created by police actions, etc – when N is implemented, there is a whole new way of being

- As we focus on things, they are manifested -

**Caller 2:** any comments on latest Black Ops in Tennessee

**T:** everything that has happened in the last 30 years is Black Ops – not natural for people to be self-centred; has to do with the programming that has been instilled

- the young man from Colorado has no idea why he is sitting in the court room: his brain was wiped

**C1:** another focus is the Peace Alliance: Oprah and Deepak Chopra – Peace Alliance was started by Dennis and Elizabeth Kuchinich who are now working with the Youth Promise Act

- Check out the site: **Peacealliance**
- another group: the **shiftmovement.com** – had 7500 on the line
- **spiritualprogressives.org** – Rabbi Lerner, combining with Dalai Llama, other groups
- **humanitysteam:** has different sections and programs to connect with
- we have to move beyond boundaries and become an “earth citizen” - everyone!
  - All the groups are moving to the unity consciousness idea

**C2**[while laughing!]: says she's staying in too much! Has to get out more!!!

- appreciative of all the information she's bringing forth
- unitarian universalists and the quakers are here to help bring on the new legislation in preparation for the new divine governance
- T:** none of the black military got to take advantage of the I Program [to do with education]
- C1:** lots of the white military didn't get it either if they were not totally cooperative – brothers got put in jail – one is dead; the other one is walking dead – both older
  - One had a photographic memory – was in a prison of war camp that was later declared non-existent!
- T:** thinks it can happen fast: the agreement with Iran will catapult things as it is a larger deal than people realize
- C1:** the volunteer community is important – we have the tools to manifest the cities of light
- C3:** the exception to all accounts going to 0 was credit unions?
  - Yes!
- C3:** And the cash people have at home would not be honoured?
  - No. Everyone will be accounted for in a good way in the new dispensation of NESARA: there are a lot of people without money or a bank account: there will never be again anyone without a roof over their head, free health care, free education
- C3:** thinks they said something about \$1 for \$1 with the rainbow bills – has this changed?
  - yes, it has changed: people with the wrong ideas have used the stash idea and not used their money for good purposes.
  - Also things have moved along behind the scenes, and we have learned from Lyn how many things are developing
  - Birthday wishes to both Rama and Lyn on July 21<sup>st</sup> – R is 62 and L is 63.
- The paschats are from Nibiru; Nibiru is in the vicinity of the sun and it is affecting earth and is part of why all the frequencies are being raised so high & on all of the planets too.
- C2:** the name of the Universe?
  - it is not Nibiru, but NEBADON. Nibiru is the name of Mother's ship – a planet-sized ship.
- C2:** an observatory being built in Hawaii and the people are protesting?
- T,R:** they want to use the telescope to spy on China; Lenny Horowitz has mounted a huge campaign against this, and the people don't want it either.
- C 1:** Latest with the solar warden complex?
  - R does not read a lot about this; does recall that some of the Dracos lifeforms who are part of the secret space commands – yet more and more of the lifeforms that know they are between a rock and a hard place are having to face the fact that they have to stand down –
    - some of the Dracos lifeforms are taking themselves out rather than be captured
  - As we move the energy with groups on ideas of healing, learning centres, this literally disarms the idea of military service and so-called “free education” - replaces all this with basic income, universal health care, other safety nets.
- T:** asks why Koch Bros would be interested in such a small place on the [west] coast – has it to do with oil & gas?
- C1:** Yes, the liquid natural gas and the export to China – koch bros are trying to take over cities
- T:** Blaze the violet fire on these ones!!!

## **BBS Radio**

- The discussion on the conference call about the group work and the coming together of people is beginning to affect the oligarchs - brings up 2 articles; also a report from Al Jazeera on what was happening in Greece: fire bombs, tear gas, rubber bullets – yet people of the working class had signs saying “what we are truly afraid of is starvation”
- The reality is that only love and Divine Intervention is on the table now.

## **Mother Sekhmet / Alcyone [M/A]**

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

**T:** let all that has nothing to do with love go away now!

## **Greetings, Children of Ra!**

- We smell a skunk! Let's say the story as it goes: Daughter of Hitler having to eat her words! It is a big deal what's happening here because it affects the whole of us, the planet.
  - It is about a changeover -like changing your coat; we are moving into a new way of doing things. It is part of the universal economics of how this planet is righting itself as the 33<sup>rd</sup> member of the Confederation of Worlds.
- Right now the issues as she sees them are about we bring it back, it keeps going in circles: yes, we are black and beautiful: love it! It is the one issue - as we are all children of the Rainbow rays of the road to Asgard – all those rays of living love, living light – we heard the lady master talk about the rays last night; these are the rays of living love, living light of what we are – makes up the bit frost, the ascension path to Asgard.
- It is a way in which to conceive as we are all one of these rainbow rays – each one of us is so unique with our colour, vibration, tone; if one is missing, it is incomplete – need to have the whole of it. This is why it is so important for everyone to participate in this story.
- Earth - it is being made so already: indigo crystal children - these crystal beings who are already awakening so much - coming into play here.

**T:** things are changing in every governance, in every sector

**M/A:** from every kingdom to the tiniest pixie all the way up

**T:** the oligarchs are in free fall; European Union is falling apart for sure: it's a tough call yet when you are already seeing the power slipping away from you will make a plea for the hearts of the people: hey, Bundestag help Greece

- Christine Lagarde is saying the people are not sober at all – the amount of debt they are in is so overwhelming, that this deal will not do it - she was saying it has to be one or the other BUT IT HAS TO BE BOTH -

**M/A:** There is one man who can solve this – St Germaine

- Debt jubilee is in the works. That criminal Mr Francis is talking of debt jubilee too

**T:** It's the only answer: heard today on the conference line that the Dalai Llama said the ET s are here and it's time for everyone to respect them!

**M/A:** It is why she brings this back to the one issue: as we can love each other in that high heart consciousness, no matter what we look like.

- With the universal translator, everyone can communicate. We go back to the Solex Mal, the original language; it is pictures, light, colour, sound - that is all there is.
- What is coming to pass in this moment: everything in constant flux. All the frequencies are moving, such a rapid rate. There is no more time to cry over the spilt oil or the spilt gas.
  - Issues at hand are humanity has said “7 billion indeed! We can make it” The one % - leave that up to us!

**T:** as you help educate women, then everything gets balanced out. As women proceed into

advanced education, they choose not to have so many children. It is the life style and the way that we are so behind in using the off-grid technology – we are part of the “have to have more” routine – rape the resources and make money off the resources – it's against life; it's barbaric.

- Going back to learn about balance and equality and the true depth of meaning and the deeper unravelling of our divine emotions and the elimination of F E AR [false evidence appearing real] – these are all about the Divine Feminine - we are in the age of Virgo – application of detail

**M/A:** we are watching the 13 families take their last nose dive off the cliff – she can say this with deep certainty.

- At the same moment, humanity's biggest test is “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace”. That is how we get through the key hole that is as wide, as large as a Black hole - because it IS a black hole!
- it is time we comprehend how magnificent we beings of living light, loving love are – in this moment, we are the key to the story. This temple of the living god merkaba vehicle – we need to get how big this is – how magnificent we are!
  - may seem abstract, alien in contact but yet as we look at the Merkaba symbol, work with it, focus on it – it will change our physicality. After all, we are living masters in this moment – we have the ability to create, as well as uncreate; we began this this story together as creators/creatrices of the most High. It has come full circle
- Yes, she keeps repeating the story: it is about the fact of one issue – “Lord make me an instrument of thy peace.” The issue is that the least among us is front and centre; as the balance of power with love is already taking hold, the gauntlet / the crystal talking stick is being handed to the goddess
  - As this transpires in this sacred moment, everything changes. This is already the destiny, the process for Gaia/ Vywamus and her people; as we return to the goddess-based sciences that come from the realms where the heart speaks more loudly than the head, it changes the conversation about compassion – divine nature, if you will.
  - In this moment, now, we hear the clarion call of humanity, the sound of one hand clapping. This is why she brings it front and centre. **There will no WW 3:** It is over, take the chips and go home and make some guacamole and some chips; let's talk about it and get it done.
  - She may have fur and we may have horns but that does not mean we can't get along - - let's have some Chileans Irish Red and talk about it: they come in peace; the order of business here is restoring this planet and her people to a state of such divinity: we are *already* remembering that state of divinity. Many, many moments are spent in that consciousness as well as other dimensions intersecting.
- Yet she must say that, as the energies and increased frequencies create such an atmosphere of ecstatic, orgasmic joy – going to be hard to pick up a gun – plain and simple: it is ending there!

**T:** the clowny lineup of republican candidates – it's not funny, but it's hysterical – wonders what the rest of the world thinks of what is going on in America!

**M/A:** It is a very sick joke of the walking dead! America has a bit of an identity crisis and it has to be brought back to the founding of this country based on the Moorish / Lemurian principles of what prophet Noble Drew Ali brought forth

- It is so simple about the people came here in star ships, to bring the wisdom as seeders across so many light years: she has not the words!
  - Yet now is where it all comes to fruition; the seeds have already sprouted – we have this nirvana, samadi, heaven on earth; **no one goin' anywhere!** We are descending into matter: as we merge into our light body, it is a matter of ascending / descending – it is happening exponentially and in simultaneous fashion.
- yes, **e-bay / Paypal going to split up formally on Friday;** has to do with a shifting of the balance of the multi- national corporations.

**T:** hopes it will be better than monopolizing themselves! [turning companies into monopolies]

**M/A:** at the same time, they will be given the death penalty: all corporations based in the false fraudulent Babylonian money making machine have to go – it is bad ju jube! Very not OK!!!

- what is going on . .

**T:** this is the year anniversary of MG17 flight going down over Ukraine & still trying to put it on Russia; it was the US Black Ops in cahoots with Kiev gov't that did it – when will it change?

**M/A: now: In this moment!** Yes, not so pretty [looking at the TV screen] – humanity has a huge way to go yet, at this time, it has already taken place.

**T:** what Barack has done by releasing non-violent criminal offenders – they are not “criminal offenders” in the first place: going to the front pages and across the intel wires around the world

- She gets the sense that by putting up such a headline, the US is being embarrassed in the eyes of the world: they incarcerate 4x more than China!

**M/A: as we retrun to the pristine reality of Creator Source, all that we are**

**T:** the drug lord El Chapo got away – has everyone confounded.

**M/A:** he's not in Mexico, the States or Turtle Island

**T:** where did he go?

**M/A:** may have found an inner entrance to an underground place – don't want to go there or you might end up like cat food [**T:** like to a worse place?] – to a Deep Underground Military Base: when you play with guns and drugs etc, you play with that kind of consciousness, - not a good place to go – you gravitate to that kind of solution.

- the truth is the reality is that we must turn back to love - it heals with the issue of why we have crime lords who are doing what they are doing.
- It's like the #1 issue: when Donald Trump can get up there with his hair and lie blatantly to the people: he may say some good things, but he is just another schill who knows about the writing on the wall – asta lavista, baby!

**T:** Hitler is still in a brig – this might even shock Merkel: does Angleca know her dad is still alive?

**M/A:** the stories that are going to be shared; the oceans of tears that have been shared  
**Remember this:**– she [Mother] comes from our future which is our past and she's seen this story completed: we get N announced and the planet gets healed just like that [finger snap]

**T:** it will happen very fast – and Mother agrees! Every time she listens to the climate change people say we have to hurry: we are at the Zero hour

**M/A:** the zero hour is about the frequencies coming to pass now; remember that we said we don't need a safety net, we're gonna do it – so here's the gauntlet!  
She passes the talking stick;

**T:** really appreciates that the Dalai Llama spoke up about respecting the ET s as they are helping us in a big way

**M/A:** Rather than looking it with fear about what may seem unknown or alien to us, think of it as a child on an adventure of a life time that is so magical that we cannot even grasp the possibilities: it is about miracles – not that they are gods and we are serfs, but that we are **ALL creator gods and goddesses** in this story, equal. It is how we co-create in unity consciousness. No slaves here, honey; we're all equal on this bus!

**T:** it's a little re-shaping of our perceptions; the existing structures are attempting so save money or about squeezing the blood out of turnips

**M/A:** she likes turnips with potatoes and onions – can make a nice stew of this and other veggies

**T:** she's describing that we are getting the idea of surrender, of letting it go – the frozen feeling, being trapped . . .

**M/A:** most of humanity has been frozen in consciousness, because all we knew was the false evidence that shared about a limited universe. As we explore our local Universe of Nebadon, even our local galaxy and solar system, we have so many miracles to share, about raising it higher and higher in infinite wisdom and joy. The issues about limitations,

about separation, death, darkness; in polarity we have to have light and dark; it is part of the nature of the physics of how things work. Enough!

- Greetings in the light of the most radiant one – kadoish, kadoish, kadoish

**R:** Has been to the Fortress of Solitude to look in the crystals; has been looking at the cities of light manifesting on this planet, and more upliftment happening in spite of the Clowny car – you need to be afraid of the muslim in the white house: Robin Williams would have such fun!

**T:** Rama talked to Jimmy Carter yesterday, saying he was very, very tired and wanted to help Ashtar from the other side. And before he goes, he will tell about his father being Joseph Kennedy

- It would be nice if he told the people about the deal related to the Iranian hostage event

**R:** a song by Billy Joel "we didn't start the fire" and another one called "2000 years"

- He just saw that everything is being lifted, like the song "You Raise me Up"

**T:** we've been working hard at changing our patterns and it's

**Audio: Democracy Now** July 17 – a big deal that Barack went to a prison today

2015-07-17 **The War on Drugs is a War on Minorities: Former El Reno Prison Inmate Freed by Obama Speaks Out** [SEE BELOW]

2015-07-17 **Outrage Grows After Mysterious Death of #BlackLivesMatter Activist Sandra Bland in Texas Jail** [SEE BELOW]

2015-07-08 **Matt Taibbi: Eric Holder Back to Wall Street-Tied Law Firm After Years of Refusing to Jail Bankers** [SEE BELOW]

2015-07-08 **The End of Encryption? NSA & FBI Seek New Backdoors Against Advice from Leading Security Experts** [SEE BELOW]

2015-07-08 **Has the World Abandoned Gaza? Region Remains in Ruins a Year After Deadly Israeli Assault** [SEE BELOW]

**Audio: Max Keiser** July 16, 2015

[\[KR784\] Keiser Report: America's Shrinking Stock Market](#)

<https://youtu.be/MgRSsH1yqRM>

We discuss when the last ear and the last eye accessible to the sound of the closing bell and the last printing of the ticker will mean the US empire ceases to be as the stock market shrinks along with political, moral and cultural space. In the second half Max interviews [Peter Kirby of Factom.org](#) about scalable data layers on the blockchain keeping data honest. They also discuss securing that data with a single hash and crowdfunding with factoids.

**Audio: the Daily Show – a short piece**

**Audio: Thom Hartmann: balance of the interview with Marianne Williamson**

**Reading: Buddha in Red Face** – after the ceremony

**Closing: Rainbird**

**Closing Music:** Rumi song - "May it be so" - this is a video

## INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NOTES

### 2015-07-17 The Constitution of the EU's Dictatorship

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Global Research, July 17, 2015

Url of this article:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-constitution-of-the-eus-dictatorship/5462917>



It's here: [http://www.esm.europa.eu/pdf/ESM Treaty consolidated 13-03-2014.pdf](http://www.esm.europa.eu/pdf/ESM_Treaty_consolidated_13-03-2014.pdf)

*That's the treaty establishing (which was originally done in 2012) the ultimate lending-fund for what the EU now officially considers to be a permanent economic crisis in Europe, of member-nations that are experiencing "severe financing problems", and that are therefore continually ripe for asset-stripping by aristocrats.*

It's called the European Stability Mechanism.

It's anything but that. Here is what it actually does:

<http://corporateeurope.org/economy-finance/2014/06/european-stability-mechanism-esm-no-democracy-bailout-fund>

In other words: it establishes the European bureaucracy to serve global aristocrats, so as to help them asset-strip the European populations of corrupt member-nations. These bureaucrats get transferred back-and-forth between this bureaucracy and the big financial institutions (which also are dependent upon the same billionaires), so that these bureaucratic servants of the aristocracy can themselves gradually emerge as aristocrats, basically joining (now becoming principals, no longer merely agents of) the aristocratic financial war stripping the public.

Here are some key provisions of this "[Treaty](#)" or Europe's (or the EU's) new constitution:

*Article 34. Professional secrecy. The Members or former Members of the Board of Governors and of the Board of Directors and any other persons who work or have worked for or in connection with the ESM shall not disclose information that is subject to professional secrecy. They shall be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of the kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy.*

*Article 35. Immunities of persons. 1. In the interest of the ESM, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Governors, alternate Governors, Directors, alternate Directors, as well as the Managing Director and other staff members shall be immune from legal proceedings with respect to acts performed by them in their official capacity and shall enjoy inviolability in respect of their*

*official papers and documents. ...*

*Article 36. Exemption from taxation. 1. Within the scope of its official activities, the ESM, its assets, income, property and its operations and transactions authorised by this Treaty shall be exempt from all direct taxes. ...*

It's a "Mechanism" (basically, a government) to transfer to the aristocracy the public's assets, which are the lands and pensions and healthcare and educational systems, which, in a democracy, are supposed to serve the public, but which, in an aristocracy, serve instead the billionaires. In Europe, aristocrats are still in charge.

For example, one confidential document, dated 11 June 2013, "[Real Estate Based Asset Financing for the Hellenic Republic,](#)" has this:

"The Hellenic Republic [Greece] holds a diverse collection of assets, many of which have been scheduled for sale as part of its commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank [the three members of "The Troika"], and the Hellenic Republic. The sale of state-owned assets is a one-off opportunity to raise capital for the Hellenic Republic [to be able to repay banks, which had lent to Greece at an 18% interest rate - and thereby already enriched aristocrats heavily at the public's expense - and now retrospectively taxpayer-guaranteeing those junk bonds, which global aristocrats had bought through those banks, granting these 18%-interest-rate junk bonds a retrospective AAA+ equivalent *taxpayer-guaranteed* status, courtesy of the politicians who were supposed to have represented the public]."

Furthermore: This would help increase the privatisation proceeds beyond the amount currently foreseen in the MoU. The majority of the real estate is undeveloped land, with substantial potential - which "potential" won't be enjoyed by the Greek public via a future improved Greek national economy and increased tax-income into the Greek Government, but instead enjoyed by global aristocrats, who will be buying that "undeveloped land" now, before its value soars - so that aristocrats will be in on the rip-offs of the Greek public, both coming, and, now, going.

The document specifies that, "A large part of the Greek real estate portfolio is suitable for tourist development, and given Greece's climate and leisure and holiday potential this is the key source of potential value for investors." In other words: whatever desperate Greeks will still remain in Greece after all of the stripping of the assets of the state, will now become available, at rock-bottom subsistence wages, to serve tourists, while the billionaire owners, throughout the world, will be reaping the profits, from that land (including the beaches and new hotels), and from their slaves there (serving those tourists). This is commonly called "the free market": the more desperate and poor the public (the Greeks serving those tourists) are, the more profit the aristocracy (the owners of those resorts) will receive. After Barack Obama's [coup overthrew Ukraine's democratically elected President in February 2014](#), Ukraine's soaring debt is already being treated this way (being set up for privatization), even before Ukraine joins the EU (if it ever will). Similarly, privatization followed [the junta that Obama protected \(if he didn't even place them into power\) in Honduras in 2009](#).

There is nothing basically new about this. [Benito Mussolini introduced privatization in Italy during the 1920s](#). Admiring his success with that wealth-transfer to aristocrats, [Adolf Hitler then took it](#)

[up in Germany during the 1930s.](#)

Nowadays, this is called "libertarianism" in the United States, and "neoliberalism" in Europe. It's just standard economic theory, being put into political practice. Another term for it is "austerity" (as the public calls it), or (to employ the economists' euphemistic phrase for it) "fiscal consolidation".

What Mussolini and Hitler started, is now being put into practice increasingly around the world, but it is no longer overtly called "fascism". Mussolini and Hitler were defeated in WW II, and so the label "fascist" needed to be changed, but the aristocracy, which financed fascists' rises, has by now emerged victorious ([in the U.S. and not only in Europe](#)), using deceit (including these new labels), instead of relying upon mere bombs and guns. There are enough fools ('libertarians', or believers in "the free market", etc.), so that victory comes far cheaper via such deceits (mental coercion) than via violence (physical coercion - coercion against the body). (But, of course, [war, too, can be profitable.](#))

The entirety of the "Greek bailouts" is [bailouts of the aristocracy](#), not of the public; it's just like America's "Wall Street bailouts", which bailed out the banksters instead of the cheated MBS investors and homeowners. The "Greek bailouts" were actually loans, not "bailouts" at all; and after the loans turned sour, taxpayers were forced to buy them from the aristocrats, who were the ultimate recipients of the actual bailouts. The lenders never bailed anybody out, but instead were bailed out by the public. However, in the Greek case, the people who are [blamed are the Greek public](#), who are being stripped. After all, such blame-the-victim is the natural response for believers in "[the free market](#)". But it would be like blaming the stripped pension funds, and the underwater homeowners, for having caused the bailouts of Wall Street. Calling them "bailouts of Greece" is the reverse of what they actually are, which is an ongoing stripping of the Greek public. (Other European publics should be angry against the aristocrats they're bailing out, not against the Greek public, who never benefited from those loans, and who aren't the people that socked away some or all of those borrowed funds into Swiss or other accounts abroad.) It's like blaming a raped woman for having been raped. That's conservative, in the extreme. It's fascist.

The EU's dictatorship is by the aristocracy, against the public. It's just like the U.S. dictatorship - competing parties, both or all of which represent the aristocracy, against the public; none representing the public, against the aristocracy. Conservatives support it because they support the aristocracy. (A reader replied to this, "it isn't just the doctrinaire conservatives that support the new aristocracy; it is the majority of the public"; but the majority of the public is conservative, they're devoted to myths; so that's not contradicting my assertion, it's just restating the tragedy.)

This is why [inequality is high, and soaring](#). Democracy is disappearing.

*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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## 2015-07-16 Dalai Lama Says Not Only Should We Believe In Aliens, We Should Treat Them With Respect

<http://www.educatinghumanity.com/>



The Dalai Lama shares his interesting views on what we could do in the event of an extraterrestrial visitor coming to Earth. It's always interesting to hear somebody with a far reaching voice bring up this topic, as it is a very popular one today. I definitely resonate with what he says, that everything is interconnected, we are all one and we can see everything and everyone else as another facet of ourselves.

It's not really a spiritual belief anymore that we are all interconnected, modern science is also catching on to this fact. The interconnectedness of all things is a great example of that. Until we are ready to see everyone who lives on Earth like this, we might not be ready to do it with those that reside on worlds beyond our own. Having said that, I do believe we are moving towards contact at an exponential rate and that my generation, and the ones after, have a future 'in the stars.'

A large majority of people on Earth do not believe that we are alone in the universe and that there is in fact intelligent extraterrestrial life out there. Many also believe that extraterrestrial visitation to planet Earth has been occurring for a very long time. If one furthers their research into the subject, the evidence to support the claim that we have been visited, and are being visited on a daily bases is abundant. Evidence ranges from official documentation from various sources like UFO researchers, governments, three letter agencies and more. Beyond this we have statements made by very high level military and political personnel. Further, we also have many people on planet Earth who claim to have had direct contact with extraterrestrials themselves. For more articles on the UFO and extraterrestrial phenomenon, you can visit our "exopolitics" section under the alternative news tab on our home page.

<https://youtu.be/zKTu6VBhU2A>

"There is abundant evidence that we are being contacted, that civilizations have been visiting us for a very long time. That their appearance is bizarre from any type of traditional materialistic western point of view. That these visitors use the technologies of consciousness, they use toroids, they use co-rotating magnetic disks for their propulsion systems, that seems to be a common

denominator of the UFO phenomenon.” – Dr Brian O’leary, Former NASA Astronaut and Princeton Physics Professor ([source](#))

“Yes there have been crashed craft, and bodies recovered. We are not alone in the universe, they have been coming here for a long time” Apollo 14 Astronaut ([source # 1](#)) ([source # 2](#))

“Decades ago, visitors from other planets warned us about the direction we were heading and offered to help. Instead, some of us interpreted their visits as a threat, and decided to shoot first and ask questions after. It is ironic that the US should be fighting monstrously expensive wars, allegedly to bring democracy to those countries, when it itself can no longer claim to be called a democracy when trillions, and I mean thousands of billions of dollars have been spent on black projects which both congress and the commander in chief have been kept deliberately in the dark.”

- See more at: <http://www.educatinghumanity.com/#sthash.VFOq1tjp.dpuf>

## 2015-07-17 **The War on Drugs is a War on Minorities: Former El Reno Prison Inmate Freed by Obama Speaks Out**

<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/360/dn2015-0717.mp4?&start=523.0&end=1866.0>

<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/audio-m4a/dn2015-0717.m4a?&start=523.0&end=1866.0>

### **Guests**

**Jason Hernandez**, was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 1998 for his role in a drug conspiracy, starting when he was only 15. He was one of eight prisoners whose sentences were commuted by President Obama in 2013. His sentence was reduced to 20 years, of which he had served 15. He was imprisoned in the El Reno, Oklahoma, federal prison that Obama visited Thursday.

**Maya Schenwar**, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*.

President Obama became the first sitting president in history to visit a federal prison Thursday when he toured the El Reno Federal Correctional Institution in Oklahoma. After passing through several security gates, Obama stepped inside a 9-by-10 cell and walked through a section called Cell Block B that houses prisoners who are part of a drug rehabilitation and prevention program. He also spent about 45 minutes meeting with six nonviolent drug offenders, which he described during a press conference afterward. Obama's stop at the federal prison in El Reno comes amidst a broader, bipartisan push to end mass incarceration. On Monday, he commuted the sentences of 46 low-level drug offenders. Many of them had stories like our next guest, Jason Hernandez, who was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 1998 for his role in a drug conspiracy, starting when he was only 15. He was one of eight prisoners whose sentences were commuted by President Obama on December 19, 2013. We are also joined by Maya Schenwar, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of "Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better."

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** President Obama became the first sitting president in history to visit a federal prison Thursday when he toured the El Reno Federal Correctional Institution in Oklahoma. After passing through several security gates, Obama stepped inside a 9-by-10-foot cell and walked through a section called Cell Block B that houses prisoners who are part of a drug rehabilitation and prevention program. He also spent about 45 minutes meeting with six nonviolent drug offenders, which he described during a press conference afterward.

**PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA:** Visiting with these six individuals, and I've said this before, when they describe their youth and their childhood, these are—these are young people who made mistakes that aren't that different than the mistakes I made and the mistakes that a lot of you guys made. The difference is, they did not have the kinds of support structures, the second chances, the resources that would allow them to survive those mistakes.

And, you know, I think we have a tendency sometimes to almost take for granted or

think it's normal that so many young people end up in our criminal justice system. It's not normal. It's not what happens in other countries. What is normal is teenagers doing stupid things. What is normal is young people making mistakes. And we've got to be able to distinguish between dangerous individuals who need to be incapacitated and incarcerated versus young people who are in an environment in which they are adapting, but if given different opportunities, a different vision of life, could be thriving the way we are. That's what strikes me. There but for the grace of God. And that, I think, is something that we all have to think about.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Obama's stop at the federal prison in El Reno comes amidst a broad, bipartisan push to end mass incarceration. On Monday, he commuted the sentences of 46 low-level drug offenders.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Many of them had stories like our next guest, Jason Hernandez, who was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 1998 for his role in a drug conspiracy, starting when he was 15. He was arrested and convicted of a nonviolent drug offense. He was one of eight prisoners whose sentences were commuted by President Obama December 19, 2013. Jason [joined us on Democracy Now! the next day](#), after he learned of the commutation. I asked him how he felt after hearing the news.

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** Elated. I mean, it's a dream come true. And I'm just—I just hope that this is the beginning of more to come. I mean, I'm happy for what was given to me by the president, but it's kind of like a bittersweet moment because there's other individuals in here who I believe that are more deserving than me. And they just didn't—they didn't believe that something like this could happen. But now they believe. And I just hope that, you know, the president and other lawmakers decide to do more for the individuals in here, because—you know, my mother and father, this Christmas, when they come visit me, and my family, my son, they're going to be crying, but it's going to be tears of joy. But at the same time, I'm going to have to look at other individuals' mothers and fathers and kids crying at visitation, and their cries are going to be for sorrow. So, I just hope—I mean, I'm grateful for what the president has done, but I hope there's more to come.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Jason Hernandez had his sentence reduced to 20 years, of which he had already served 15. He was imprisoned at El Reno, Oklahoma, federal prison, the prison that President Obama visited on Thursday. He has since been released but is still technically in custody until this coming August. While he was in prison, he founded the sentencing reform group, Crack Open the Door. He now works as a welder at a nonprofit restaurant in Dallas called Cafe Momentum, where he mentors young people training there who were previously incarcerated in juvenile facilities. He joins us from his parents' home in McKinney, Texas.

And in Chicago we're joined by Maya Schenwar, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*.

We welcome you both to *Democracy Now!* Jason, let's begin with you. You were imprisoned at El Reno, and you were released by President Obama. Obama just visited El Reno yesterday, first sitting president to visit a federal prison. Your thoughts?

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** Well, my first thought when I heard it was that—and I never thought in a million years I would ever say this, but there was no place I would rather be than El Reno FCI, just to, you know, meet the president and to shake his hand and to hug him and tell him I was

just so grateful for what he's done for me and for my family and others, and ask him to keep on doing it for those inmates who truly deserve it.

And I think it's just a shame that there has never been a president, who has talked about sentencing reform or prison reform, who has never been to a prison. And for him to do that, I mean, that's what's needed. How can you make a suggestion on how to change something if you don't even know what's going inside prison? And President Obama, I mean, that's a great step that he's taken. And I'm pretty sure, while he was in that prison, in them cells, that he had to have felt what I felt in there, knowing that I was going to die. And hopefully, you know, it had a strong impact on him, and, you know, he'll do some more changes and push Congress to do the right thing.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And, Jason, you, yourself, were targeted under the mandatory minimum sentencing laws for drug offenders. Your reaction now as you're hearing more and more discussion in the Congress and among national leaders about the need to reform these, especially these mandatory minimum, but also this mass incarceration of so many—so many youth in the country?

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** Yeah, I mean, my first reaction and impression of that is it's about time. I mean, it's only took almost 30 years for Congress to realize that—and society, that the war on drugs, which you could actually call a war on minorities, is wrong, that we've been going about it the wrong way and locking people up for not only a couple of years, but 10 years, decades or the rest of their life, actually has an adverse effect on society. And like I said, hopefully, the—you know, I read an article the other day where they said the black president that everybody expected has finally arrived, and I think that's far from the truth. I mean, he's been here. His view on the criminal system has been set 10 years ago, if not 15, when he was a congressman. And—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Jason Hernandez, the U.S. has, what, 5 percent of the world's population, 25 percent of its prisoners. One in four prisoners in the world are imprisoned in the United States. One in 99 Americans are in prison, the vast majority black and Latino. How long did you serve in jail?

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** I served approximately about 16 years and eight months. And I'm doing a last year in like a home confinement.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You shared with us a photo of you and other nonviolent drug offenders with long sentences, mostly life without parole, at El Reno, before you were released. Can you talk about who is in this picture and where they are today?

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** One of them is Altonio Douglas. He's serving life without parole. He's been incarcerated since 1993 for crack cocaine. Real great guy, one of the greatest individuals that I've ever come across. He put me in the welding class in El Reno. And probably every year, he graduates about a hundred inmates from that—from El Reno and gets them ready to get a job immediately upon release.

There's also Kenny Evans in there. He's also a nonviolent crack cocaine offender serving life without parole. He's been in there since 1993. When I left, he was a GED teacher. And while the time he was a GED teacher, he had the most highest graduation rate El Reno has ever had.

And there's also a guy in there named Preacher. He's holding the—he had left. He had left. He's

not there no more. He's holding the Bible. And they called him "Preacher" because he preached his sermons on Sunday. He has a bigger congregation than the free world preachers that come in. So there's some great people in there.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And we're also joined by Maya Schenwar, editor at Truthout and the author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*. She's joining us from Chicago. Maya, welcome. Could you—your reaction to the president's visit to a federal prison?

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Well, I think, first of all, we have to acknowledge that this is unusual and commendable. And it's interesting that we're at a moment in history, a strange moment, where, fairly quickly, prison reform has become something acceptable to talk about in the mainstream, that a president visiting a prison actually earns him points. I think that the fact that he actually met with incarcerated people definitely was a positive thing. The way he talked about their shared humanity was definitely encouraging. And also, he did speak about the injustice of these long, excruciating sentences that have been prompted by mandatory minimums.

I do want to push back on a couple of things he said. One was this giant emphasis that he placed on distinguishing nonviolent and violent "offenders" behind bars. And the thing that he emphasized was kind of drawing this thick line, where some people are the people who just do stupid things, like all of us, as he said, and then there are the hardened, violent criminals. And I think drawing this line really causes us to discard huge numbers of people. Really, in state prisons, half of the people behind bars have been convicted of violent offenses. Many of those violent offenses are prompted by the same structural oppression, the same structural racism, structural economic violence, that leads to these nonviolent offenses. And I think we have to take that structural violence seriously and not discard these people. I also think it's important to think about them as individuals and think about whether we would want to be judged for the worst thing possibly we ever did. And so, I think drawing that line, that's something that's being done across the board with this mainstream rhetoric on bipartisan prison reform, and it's something that we have to challenge.

**AMY GOODMAN:** President Obama's push to end mass incarceration comes two decades after another Democratic president, Bill Clinton, signed into law the federal "three-strikes" provision that mandated harsher punishment, often a life sentence, the third time a person commits a felony, a nonviolent drug offense, say. In May, Clinton acknowledged the policy's role in overincarceration during an interview on CNN.

**BILL CLINTON:** The problem is, the way it was written and implemented, we cast too wide a net, and we have too many people in prison. And we wound up spending—putting so many people in prison that there wasn't enough money left to educate them, train them for new jobs and increase the chances, when they came out, so they could live productive lives. I strongly support what she's doing, and I think any policy that was adopted when I was president, in federal law, that contributed to it should be changed.

**AMY GOODMAN:** More than 2.2 million people are now behind bars, nearly double the number incarcerated when President Clinton took office. He, by the way, also repeated his apology before the NAACP. He spoke after President Obama did. Maya Schenwar, your response?

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Well, I think this is an encouraging development. I think that in Clinton's rhetoric and a lot of the discussion around bipartisan prison reform, which has really been spurred a lot by conservatives—the conservative group Right on Crime, the Koch brothers, Newt Gingrich—all of these people who now are very vocally speaking out for prison reform, a lot of what they are talking about is money. They're talking about how much prison costs: \$80 billion, we're wasting all this money on incarcerating people, we could be doing other things.

And I think, while it's important, obviously, that mass incarceration is being challenged, we need to step back a little bit and think about whether this is where we want to place our emphasis, because, first of all, a lot of the legislation being proposed in Congress to sort of right some of these wrongs is taking that money that would be saved by decarcerating some people who are in federal prison, and redirecting it into what they call "public safety measures," like local police forces. So, that money isn't being channeled into early childhood education or mental healthcare or real community resources that would promote lasting safety. A lot of the strategy going on is really about heightening policing in various ways and channeling that money into people who are really at the start of that prison pipeline. The police are the gateway to prison. And we know that police forces are imbued with racism and anti-blackness. They grew out of slave patrols. So I think we really have to challenge that idea of kind of easy reinvestment, and also just the emphasis on taking dollars from one pot and putting them in the other, now that it's no longer acceptable to be spending \$80 billion on prisons.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Maya, I wanted to ask you, as more people get released and the question of reintegrating former prisoners into society becomes a much bigger one, what do you make of the movement, the Ban the Box movement now that you're seeing by companies like Target and Wal-Mart, when the reality is that these companies no longer need people to fill out a box on their employment form because they have so many databases now to determine what a person's history has been to begin with?

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Right, right. I think that the Ban the Box campaigns are definitely a positive step. And I've been happy that Obama, over the past week and in recent months, has been talking about voting rights in reinstating the voting rights of formerly incarcerated people. I'd also question why people behind bars are not able to vote.

I think that when we talk about reintegration, re-entry, and we think about, well, what does it mean to be a participant in society, and thinking about the employment factors that you mentioned, thinking about how people are able to step back into this world, I think that we have to consider, well, what are we doing in the first place that is making it possible for them to enter the prison system? I think sometimes we do kind of overemphasize this idea of re-entry, and a lot of money can actually be fueled into re-entry that puts a lot of restrictions on people, that puts people in a position where they're answering to a number of folks within the state apparatus and sort of continuing that type of confinement. So I think we have to be careful about that. I think we have to make sure to cultivate opportunities for people to really get involved.

One thing that I think we have to be careful of as we make this transition—and hopefully, fewer and fewer people will be incarcerated—is there's a lot of talk of, "Oh, well, we'll let them out early, and we'll put them on electronic monitors. We'll let them out early, and we'll put them on house arrest"—all of these things that are still confinement, still isolation. "We'll let them out early, but

we'll send them to a locked-down drug treatment facility or a locked-down mental health facility." And so, we have to think sometimes about the ways that we are re-creating prison sometimes in our "transition" efforts.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Jason Hernandez, describe your time out of the El Reno prison that President Obama just visited yesterday, but you got out of a few years ago.

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** Well, you know, after almost two decades of incarceration, it takes—you know, it takes some adjusting—I mean, going to certain places like a store where there's a lot of people just moving around you, driving. I had to learn how to—my father had to teach me how to parallel park and drive. But, you know, other than that, trying to get a job, it was difficult at first. You know, nobody really cared that I had a felony for drugs. They were like—you know, the bosses there were like, "Well, everybody goes to prison for drugs now." And they really didn't—they kind of laughed it off, basically.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And very quickly, for people who are hearing about these clemencies that President Obama has granted, more than the last four presidents combined, if you could briefly say how you started the process? You described your friends. You said many who were more deserving, but they remain behind bars. How did you apply for clemency?

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** I filed my own petition on my own, you know, from everything that I learned from legal classes. And I prepared it like my life depended on it. And luckily for me, Michelle Alexander connected me—who wrote *The New Jim Crow*—connected me with the ACLU, with Jennifer Turner, and practically got the ball rolling. I mean, without the ACLU and Michelle, Turner, I probably wouldn't be here right now, and the inmates being released right now would probably still be in prison. So, you know, there's a lot of people to give credit to.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We want to—

**JASON HERNANDEZ:** But, you know, it's kind of—oh, go ahead.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I just want to say, we want to thank you for joining us. We will be checking back with you over time. Jason Hernandez was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 1998 for his role in a drug conspiracy starting when he was 15. He's one of eight prisoners whose sentences were commuted by President Obama in 2013. He was imprisoned at the El Reno, Oklahoma, federal prison that Obama visited on Thursday.

We would like Maya Schenwar to stay with us. We want to ask you about the case of Sandra Bland when we come back. We're going to look at the case of police brutality in two cases, coming up. This is *Democracy Now!* We'll be back in a minute.

2015-07-17 **Outrage Grows After Mysterious Death of #BlackLivesMatter Activist Sandra Bland in Texas Jail**

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**Guests**

**Maya Schenwar**, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*.

Last Friday, an African-American woman was returning home from a job interview in Waller County, Texas, when she was stopped by police. Apparently, she had improperly signaled a lane change. Two days later, the woman, Sandy Bland, was found dead in a jail cell. A video taken by a bystander during the arrest shows Bland shouting that the officer had slammed her head into the ground. According to police, Sandra Bland was taken into custody and charged with "assault of a public servant." On Monday, police say Bland was "found in her cell not breathing from what appears to be self-inflicted asphyxiation." The announcement was made by Waller County Sheriff Glenn Smith. Meanwhile, reports have emerged that Smith was fired from his previous post as chief of police of Hempstead, Texas, amidst accusations of racism. Bland's friends and family contest Smith's account, saying the thought of her committing suicide by hanging is "unfathomable." Social media is now ablaze with people demanding answers about Sandra Bland's death. The hashtag #SandraBland is now trending on Twitter, edging out the Emmys as a topic of discussion. We speak to Maya Schenwar, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of "Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better."

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Last Friday, an African-American woman was returning home from a job interview in Waller County, Texas, when she was stopped by police. Apparently, she had improperly signaled a lane change. Two days later, the woman, Sandy Bland, was found dead in a jail cell. A video taken by a bystander during the arrest shows Bland shouting that the officer had slammed her head into the ground.

**SANDRA BLAND:** You just slammed my head into the ground! Do you not even care about that? I can't even hear! You slammed me into the ground and everything! Everything!

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** According to police, Sandra Bland was taken into custody and charged with "assault of a public servant." The next morning, police say she was "found in her cell not breathing from what appears to be self-inflicted asphyxiation." The announcement was made by Waller County Sheriff Glenn Smith. Meanwhile, reports have emerged that Smith was fired from his previous post as chief of police of Hempstead, Texas, amidst accusations of racism. Bland's friends and family contest Smith's account, saying the thought of her committing suicide by hanging is "unfathomable." This is Cheryl Nanton and LaVaughn Mosley, Bland's friends, followed by her sister, Sharon Cooper.

**CHERYL NANTON:** I do suspect there was foul play, and I believe that we all are 100 percent in belief that she did not do harm to herself.

**LAVAUGHN MOSLEY:** We're very suspicious. And we're a very tight community, and we're very upset that this is happening, and it seems like there's nothing really being done about it.

**SHARON COOPER:** Each one of us feels like we lost a part of ourself. And it's hard. It's going to be hard for a very long time.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Sandra Bland was 28 years old. She was an outspoken member of the Black Lives Matter movement. She produced a series of videos called "Sandy Speaks" in which she discussed social justice and racism on her Facebook page.

**SANDRA BLAND:** I want the white folks to really understand out there, black people are truly—we're doing as much as we can. Not all of us, but some of us are really doing as much as we can. And we can't help but get [bleep] off when we see situations where it's clear the black life didn't matter. For those of you questioning why was he running away, well, [bleep], because in the news that we've seen as of late, you could stand there, surrender to the cops and still be killed.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Social media is now ablaze with people demanding answers about Sandy Bland's death. The hashtag #SandraBland is now trending on Twitter, edging out the Emmys as a topic of discussion.

We're still with Maya Schenwar, editor-in-chief of Truthout, author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*. Her family, Sandy's family—Sandy herself is from Chicago, from Naperville. Maya, that's where we're speaking to you. Her family has gone to Texas today to retrieve her body. Can you comment on what we know at this point? We have this video, apparently, that's just been released of her saying, "Why are you slamming my head into the ground?" She's then taken to the local jail. That was a Monday. And then she is found dead in her cell.

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Right. She spent three days in the jail, injured. Clearly, police had severely injured her. We don't know the very specifics of that, but we know she was slammed to the ground—the video shows she was severely injured—and then left in this jail cell. And I think that definitely highlights something about our county jail system, that people who are still innocent—they haven't been proven guilty of anything—are left, you know, until they can post bail, which was actually going to happen on Monday. Sandra's friends were about to post her bail.

And I think the fact that we see this situation where this young black woman is pulled over for a small traffic violation, she's thrown to the ground by police, she is severely beaten and slammed into the ground—the police, actually, actually admonished the person who is filming this horrific scene—and she's taken to jail. And I think this demonstrates—you know, earlier, we were talking about prison reform as if it's cut off from policing. But again, policing is the gateway to prison. And policing cannot be separated from anti-blackness. And I think this is just such a tragic and horrifying example of how that practice plays out in reality.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And, Maya, people often focus on the federal prison system, but the number of inmates in federal prison is dwarfed—

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Right.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** —by those who are in county and state—in state facilities.

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Mm-hmm.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Could you—and what about the oversight in those facilities?

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Yeah. So, there are about 215,000 people in federal prison at this time, and there are around 2.3 million people incarcerated in the country as a whole. And so, a lot of those are in state prisons. Again, state prison, a lot of people convicted of violent offenses, those aren't people that Obama is addressing when he talks about this large-scale prison reform. And then we have 750,000 people in county jails. And most of those people are incarcerated pretrial. They haven't been convicted of anything. Most of those people who are in there pretrial are there because they can't pay their bail. They're there because they're poor. And we have to remember this is also a racial justice issue, that people are given higher bails generally when they're black.

And so, we have this many-pronged system, and addressing federal prison alone isn't going to cut it. So even though there is kind of more of a focus being zeroed in on federal prison, particularly since the president is speaking out to a certain extent, we can't forget that Obama can't do everything. And actually, the community level, the activism happening at the community level, is really what's going to make those giant shifts.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You know, as you talked about, she was clearly severely injured. Even as she said that, "Why are you slamming my head against the ground?" she also said, "I can't hear. I can't hear."

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** Right.

**AMY GOODMAN:** She's brought into the prison. The county sheriff there, the Waller County sheriff, Glenn Smith, who made the first public comments about Bland's in-custody death, had been fired from a past job for his actions involving alleged humiliation and mistreatment of young African-American males. In Hempstead, the place where he was the sheriff before, the City Council placed him on probation for six months and ordered him to take anger management classes. He was later fired. Maya, we have 15 seconds.

**MAYA SCHENWAR:** So, first of all, I would say, obviously, it's horrifying that this person is still in his job. Secondly, I would say that it's not always about an individual racist. This is an inherently racist system. And we have to be careful—even though this sheriff obviously shouldn't have kept his job, we have to be careful not to term someone a bad apple and ignore the inherent anti-blackness in the system as a whole.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Maya Schenwar, I want to thank you for being with us, editor-in-chief of Truthout and author of *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*. She was joining us from Chicago.

2015-07-08 **Matt Taibbi: Eric Holder Back to Wall Street-Tied Law Firm After Years of Refusing to Jail Bankers**

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## Guests

**Matt Taibbi**, award-winning journalist with *Rolling Stone* magazine. His most recent book, *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*, is now out in paperback.

In the latest sign of the revolving door between Wall Street and Washington, recently retired U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is returning home — to the corporate law firm Covington & Burling, where he worked for eight years before becoming head of the Justice Department. During his time at Covington, Holder's clients included UBS and the fruit giant Chiquita. The law firm's client list has included many of the big banks Holder failed to criminally prosecute as attorney general for their role in the financial crisis, including Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo and Citigroup. We speak with Matt Taibbi, award-winning journalist with *Rolling Stone* magazine. "I think this is probably the single biggest example of the revolving door that we've ever had," Taibbi says.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** We turn now to the latest sign of the revolving door between Wall Street and Washington. Recently retired U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is returning home—to the corporate law firm Covington & Burling, where he worked for eight years before becoming head of the Justice Department. During his time at Covington, Holder's clients included UBS and the fruit giant Chiquita. The law firm's client list has included many of the big banks that the Justice Department under Holder's leadership failed to criminally prosecute for their role in the financial crisis, including Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo and Citigroup.

**AMY GOODMAN:** In a new interview with *The National Law Journal*, Eric Holder said his, quote, "appropriately aggressive," unquote, challenges to financial and corporate fraud could mean certain institutions "might not want to work with me," he said, "and ... that's fine," unquote. However, in 2013, Holder testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and suggested some banks are too big to jail.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER:** I am concerned that the size of some of these institutions becomes so large that it does become difficult for us to prosecute them when we are hit with indications that if you do prosecute, if you do bring a criminal charge, it will have a negative impact on the national economy, perhaps even the world economy. And I think that is a function of the fact that some of these institutions have become too large. Again, I'm not talking about HSBC; this is just a more general comment. I think it has an inhibiting influence—impact on our ability to bring resolutions that I think would be more appropriate.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, for more, we're joined by Matt Taibbi, award-winning journalist with *Rolling Stone* magazine, who writes about Eric Holder's time at Covington & Burling and much more in his book, *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*, which is now out

in paperback.

It's great to have you back, Matt.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Good morning.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So you were tweeting up a storm yesterday as this news came of the former attorney general, Eric Holder, going back to Covington & Burling. Talk about the significance of this.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Yeah, I mean, I think this is probably the single biggest example of the revolving door that we've ever had. And we've had some whoppers in our past. I think previously the worst one was probably Louisiana Congressman Billy Tauzin leaving Congress and taking a \$2-million-a-year job with PhRMA, right after he helped pass the prescription drug benefit bill. But what Holder just did just blows Tauzin away. I mean, he spent six years essentially guiding all of these Wall Street firms, which many of them are clients of this company that he's now working for—he guided them all back to profitability. He allowed bankers to escape prosecution. And now he's going right back to that firm, where he's going to enjoy a very lucrative partnership, whether he ever works again, you know, for the rest of his life.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Well, Holder also sort of became a point person for these, quote, "extrajudicial settlements."

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Could you explain what those are and how they worked?

**MATT TAIBBI:** Yeah, Holder, in general, pioneered a number of different ways that essentially a lot of these too-big-to-fail companies were allowed to buy their way out of trouble. And one of the most notorious, I think, was that he concluded a number of the biggest settlement deals with banks like JPMorgan Chase in ways that were not reviewed by a judge. Because we did have some instances during this time period where pesky judges—I think one of the most infamous, in the eyes of Wall Street, was Jed Rakoff, who threw out a settlement with Citigroup because he thought it wasn't harsh enough—well, to fix that problem, Holder just started striking deals and not submitting them for judicial review. So he did a \$13 billion settlement with JPMorgan Chase where no judge signed off on the deal. The whole thing was done in secret. He essentially institutionalized the back room. This was just a deal where a bunch of bankers got together with a bunch of Justice Department officials, money changed hands, and that was it. The whole—all of their criminal problems went away. This is a very different way of doing business than what we've ever seen before, and it's very dangerous, I think.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And he also took the term "collateral damage" into the financial world out of the military world, didn't he, as well?

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right, yeah. He actually predated the collateral damage idea back when he was a lawyer in the Clinton Justice Department. He wrote a memo that—you know, it's now known as the Holder Memo, where he outlined a policy that is called "collateral consequences," and basically all this says is that if you're a prosecutor and you're worried about prosecuting a company that employs a lot of people and you're concerned that innocent people might suffer as the result of a prosecution, you may pursue noncriminal remedies when you go after this company.

The problem was that when—by the time he became attorney general, the economic landscape was dotted all over with these enormous, too-big-to-fail companies, and there was a real threat that if you prosecuted these firms, that it might cause serious damage to the overall economy. Obviously we saw what happened with Lehman Brothers, for instance. So this became sort of the unofficial policy of the United States. We started taking companies that had done very bad things—you know, HSBC is probably the biggest example, laundering money for drug dealers—and instead of throwing people in jail and extracting huge individual penalties from the guilty parties, we just got the banks to pony up a big fine that shareholders paid, and they got to stay in business.

**AMY GOODMAN:** As you were tweeting your criticism yesterday, a lot of Obama supporters were also on social media pushing the line that Holder did not send anyone to jail because there were no laws broken.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right, yeah, and this is—this comes, I think, directly from something that Barack Obama himself said on *60 Minutes* once. He said some of the worst behavior on Wall Street was not illegal, some of the least ethical behavior was not illegal. But he crafted that phrase very carefully. He didn't say all of it was not illegal. He said some of the worst behavior, and that's true. But some of it was very illegal.

And again, just to go back to some of the worst cases, HSBC admitted to laundering \$880 million for a pair of Central and South American drug cartels, including the Sinaloa drug cartel, which is infamous all over the world for these torture videos. So, we have HSBC, Europe's largest bank, is washing hundreds of millions of dollars for people who chop people's heads off with chainsaws. That's a crime. I mean, there's no—that's the worst crime that a bank can possibly commit. And anybody who thinks that Holder didn't send people to jail because they didn't commit crimes is not really paying attention to what went on during this time.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Also at Covington & Burling, Eric Holder will be reunited with Lanny Breuer. Explain who he was and the significance of them together.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Well, Lanny Breuer worked at Covington & Burling along with Eric Holder. He went to Holder to become his deputy for the early part of his tenure as attorney general. He was the head of the Criminal Division. Lanny, from the sources that I spoke to while I was researching all this material, was terrified of going to court when he didn't have an absolute, guaranteed, sure victory. And so, what happened very early in their tenure together was that they did take one case to trial. They went to trial against a pair of guys from Bear Stearns who were accused of defrauding their clients. And they lost. It ended in an acquittal, even though they had very solid documentary evidence. From that point forward, they didn't take anybody to court. And all of these cases involving all of these banks, they went the settlement route instead, presumably because they were afraid of going into a courtroom. They were worried that juries didn't understand this material. They were worried that it was too complicated. And so, rather than risk losing and getting a bad headline, they let off all of these people who had done very, very bad things, and so we have this legacy of cash instead of punishment.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Can you talk also about how the Justice Department and other regulatory groups have changed the composition of the staffing, the high-level staffing, of these agencies during this period when Holder has been there?

**MATT TAIBBI:** Yeah. This is something that I heard over and over again over the years, which is that a certain kind of person who used to work in the regulatory agencies, you know, who was a kind of a career civil servant, particularly the law enforcement types, the people who grew up through the ranks, you know, just trying to get the criminal at all costs—they're primarily motivated by trying to extract justice from wrongdoers—that kind of person is gradually disappearing from the ranks of the regulatory bodies, and they are being replaced, increasingly, particularly at the higher levels, by people from the corporate defense community. And Holder was very profoundly a symbol of that kind of person.

And the difference was, when you have people who come from the corporate defense world, like Holder, like Lanny Breuer, they tend to approach these settlements not to get a pound of flesh out of the wrongdoers, but instead they want to emerge with a settlement that leaves everybody happy when they walk out of the room. But that's really not a good approach to fighting crime. That's not the kind of attitude you want in your top crime fighter in the country. And as a result, that's how we got so many of these settlements, which, again, were concluded in secret, in the back room. And people like Jamie Dimon were walking out of these settlements, saying, "Well, this wasn't so bad." And their share price would go up the day after these settlements were concluded. That's really not what we want from the top cop in the country.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And this goes to the central theme of your book, Matt Taibbi, *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*. I mean, Attorney General Eric Holder was hailed as a great civil rights hero. After Ferguson, he actually went to Ferguson. I was in the Selma church on the 50th anniversary of the Selma march just a few months ago, when he gave a powerful speech about young black men—his own son, Eric Holder III, in the front row—being killed, and kept repeating that. It reminds me of Reverend Barber in North Carolina, head of the NAACP, who, after Dylann Roof was arrested, the alleged shooter in the Charleston church, said, "The perpetrator has been arrested, but the killer is still at large." And he was talking, overall, about the system, beyond the Confederate flag, what it represents—for example, mass incarceration—and how these things have to change.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So talk about what this means—on the one hand, a civil rights crusader, but when it comes to issues of who gets put in prison and who remains free, where Eric Holder has stood.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Yeah, I mean, to be fair, Eric Holder, you know, has talked a lot about reform of prison sentencing, and according to their statistics, incarceration has actually declined under the Obama administration for the first time in I don't know how many years—forever. But still we have these enormous problems, like the story that you reported on in the beginning of this show. You have people who are in jail for not just for months, but years at a time, awaiting trial because they can't afford bail. We have millions of people behind bars for crimes that are far less serious than what HSBC, for instance, was doing. And there's this enormous dichotomy.

I think, you know, this is the—the chief problem with what Holder did is that there are all of these people who are in jail for crimes because it's easy to put away people who don't have enough money to defend themselves, who can't pay enormous fines. Those are the people who end up going behind bars for crimes like money laundering or drug dealing or whatever it is. But we have

this rationale for companies like HSBC or JPMorgan Chase or Credit Suisse or BNP Paribas, that are caught with doing tax evasion or money laundering or fraud or whatever it is, that somehow this class of defendants, we can allow them to pay their way out of trouble, while this other group of people has to go behind bars. And we just can't have that. I mean, that system is totally inappropriate. And as much as Holder wants to hold himself out as a civil rights leader, and has done some good things, this dichotomy is really his legacy, and that's an enormous problem.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And the issue of him returning to Covington & Burling, could you talk about that particular law firm, its role in the Washington scene? And also, what are the limitations on appointed officials, in terms of once they leave office what they can or can't do, or did the Obama administration institute particular restrictions on their appointees?

**MATT TAIBBI:** They did. There is a two-year cooling-off period, they call it, where, you know, someone who leaves the Justice Department has to wait for two years before they can interact with the Justice Department again. This means that even though Eric Holder has gone back to work, he has to sit for 19 months during this cooling-off period and do I don't know what. I'm sure he's going to be compensated very handsomely during that time.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** But he can advise the lawyers that do the direct interaction.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Exactly, yeah. They'll figure out some way to do it so that it's, you know, superficially legal. But there is this cooling-off period. Covington & Burling, what its significance is, it's one of the biggest white-collar defense firms in America. It is notable because it has such a lengthy list of too-big-to-fail banks among its clientele. It also, very interestingly, played a very important role in helping to create the subprime mortgage crisis, because it represented a company called MERS, which was the electronic mortgage registry system, which helped create a lot of the confusion and chaos in the paperwork area of the mortgage system. All these people who were trying to find out who owns their home and can't find the note, a lot of that is chalked up to the work that MERS did to eliminate paper mortgages. So they had an enormous role in helping create this subprime mortgage market. And then, of course, Eric Holder goes, and he's the regulator for all that activity, you know, as the attorney general. It was a little weird, to say the least.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you talk about Keir Gumbs?

**MATT TAIBBI:** Keir Gumbs? I'm sorry.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Keir Gumbs—

**MATT TAIBBI:** Oh, who has just become the—

**AMY GOODMAN:** —the man that Senator Warren has been protesting, would be put—

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right, who's going to be—who's going to be on the SEC now, yeah. I mean, this is a—they're putting him—he's going to be an SEC commissioner, presumably. Covington & Burling is becoming essentially a kind of shadow Justice Department now. We have six alums from the Justice Department who have just returned to Covington & Burling, and now Covington & Burling is sending another person to occupy a very high-ranking seat in the SEC. You know, it's problematic, clearly, when you have so many people from the same firm who are all going to be talking to each other. It's kind of this secondary club. And what happens when all these people

have this congenial relationship, they end up making deals that are much more favorable to their clients than they would be otherwise.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Well, they can all regulate all of the Goldman Sachs alums that are in other agencies in the federal government.

**MATT TAIBBI:** Right, yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah, right.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I mean, the significance of Gumbs, yes, coming from Covington & Burling, but also representing American Petroleum, he and colleagues at the firm writing a guide advising corporations on how to avoid disclosing their political spending to shareholders, Senator Warren wanting the SEC to require companies to disclose that kind of spending. And the question is: Will President Obama respond to Senator Warren's pressure?

**MATT TAIBBI:** Probably not, I'm guessing. You know, I mean, but this—it says a lot that this is the kind of person that they're going to be bringing in to the SEC. And I think, you know, again, people want a different kind of person occupying these regulatory positions. They don't want a corporate defense attorney who's just spent however many years telling companies how to avoid punishment, how to avoid taxes, how to avoid all these problems. You know, I personally would much prefer to have a career investigator, career law enforcement official in that job.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, we want to thank you, Matt Taibbi, award-winning journalist with *Rolling Stone* magazine. His most recent book, *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*, now out in paperback.

This is *Democracy Now!* When we come back, we head across the pond to London, to security guru Bruce Schneier. Stay with us.

2015-07-08 **The End of Encryption? NSA & FBI Seek New Backdoors Against Advice from Leading Security Experts**

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## Guests

**Bruce Schneier**, security technologist and author of *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*. He's also a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and a board member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

FBI Director James Comey is set to testify against encryption before the Senate Intelligence Committee today, as the United States and Britain push for "exceptional access" to encrypted communications. Encryption refers to the scrambling of communications so they cannot be read without the correct key or password. The FBI and GCHQ have said they need access to encrypted communications to track criminals and terrorists. Fourteen of the world's pre-eminent cryptographers, computer scientists and security specialists have issued a paper arguing there is no way to allow the government such access without endangering all confidential data, as well as the broader communications infrastructure. We speak with one of the authors of the paper, leading security technologist Bruce Schneier.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** We turn now to look at a major new push by the U.S. and Britain to allow law enforcement agencies to unlock encrypted digital messages. Encryption refers to the scrambling of data sent, for example, via your phone or applications like Facebook so it cannot be read without the correct key or password. The FBI and GCHQ have said they need "exceptional access" to encrypted communications in order to track criminals and stop them from acting. More recently, they've said new encryption technologies will prevent them from monitoring the communications of terrorists.

**AMY GOODMAN:** But in a [paper](#) released on Tuesday, 13 of the world's pre-eminent cryptographers, computer scientists and security specialists argued there is no way to allow the government such access without endangering all confidential data, as well as the broader communications infrastructure.

Today, FBI Director James Comey is set to testify against encryption before the Senate Intelligence Committee. In a blog post on Monday, Comey wrote, quote, "The current ISIL threat ... involves ISIL operators in Syria recruiting and tasking dozens of troubled Americans to kill people, a process that increasingly takes part through mobile messaging apps that are end-to-end encrypted, communications that may not be intercepted, despite judicial orders under the Fourth Amendment." That's Comey speaking about encryption. Let's go to him speaking about it last October.

**JAMES COMEY:** We're seeing more and more where we believe significant evidence is on that phone or on that laptop, and we can't crack the password. If this becomes the

norm, I suggest to you that homicide cases could be stalled, suspects walk free, child exploitation not discovered and prosecuted. Justice may be denied because of a locked phone or an encrypted device.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Meanwhile, a new [report](#) about wiretapping in 2014 that was published last week found that law enforcement personnel at the state and federal level were only hindered by encryption on four wiretaps all year.

**AMY GOODMAN:** For more, we go to London, where we're joined by Bruce Schneier, a security technologist and author of the book, *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*. He is one of the co-authors of the [paper](#) that was released yesterday by encryption experts called "Keys Under Doormats: Mandating Insecurity by Requiring Government Access to All Data and Communications." He's also a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and a board member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Bruce, welcome back to *Democracy Now!* A major paper that you all, the security technologist gurus of the world, have just released. Talk about the significance of what the U.S. and Britain are demanding right now and why you consider it such a threat.

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** It's extraordinary that governments—that free governments are demanding that security be weakened because the government might want to have access. This is the kind of thing that we see out of Russia and China and Syria. But to see it out of Western countries, I think, is extraordinary. What we wanted to do in the paper is say, as technologists, trying to do this will be incredibly damaging. There's a policy debate going on right now. You talked about Comey talking before the Senate. We want to come together as technologists to try to inform that debate, and that's why we wrote the report.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And why do you say it will be incredibly damaging?

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** Because what Comey wants is encryption that he can break with a court order. But as a technologist, I can't design a computer that operates differently when a certain piece of paper is nearby. If I make a system that can be broken, it can be broken by anybody, not just the FBI. So his requirement for access gives criminals access, gives the Chinese government access. We need encryption for security, for many more reasons than he wants to break it. Trying to break it just makes it weak. We all have less security because of that.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to go back to FBI Director James Comey speaking in October, when he warned against smartphone data encryption.

**JAMES COMEY:** Encryption is nothing new, but the challenge to law enforcement and national security officials is markedly worse with recent default encryption settings and encrypted devices and networks, all in the name of increased security and privacy. For example, with Apple's new operating system, the information stored on many iPhones and other Apple devices will be encrypted by default. Shortly after Apple's announcement, Google announced plans to follow suit with its Android operating system. This means that the companies themselves will not be able to unlock phones, laptops and tablets to reveal photos or documents or email or stored texts or recordings in those instruments.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That's FBI Director James Comey. Bruce Schneier, your response?

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** So, he said that, and problem is, whenever we hear these arguments, we don't get any examples. You mentioned the recent report that said encryption only foiled wiretaps in four cases. Comey has not been able to give good examples of iPhones being encrypted. He gave some examples; they were pretty much instantly refuted. So we get a lot of scare stories, but we don't get actual credible evidence that this is hindering law enforcement.

It turns out we give a lot of data that is not encrypted and can't be encrypted—Facebook, email, lots of conversations, location data on our cellphone. This is actually the golden age of surveillance. And a lot of this stuff can be used against us. Remember, Apple's—the photos from Apple's servers that were stolen and leaked, and these were compromising photos of celebrities. And this is how our data is being stored. The fact that some stuff is being put on phones, some communications are secure, that's not a hindrance to him. He says it is, but it's scare stories.

And we heard these scare stories before. In the mid-'90s, we had this exact same debate. And most of the group of us that wrote the report we released yesterday released a report in the mid-'90s saying the same things. Here we are 20 years later, and there hasn't been a problem. So I don't see a problem, and I'm afraid the solution is damaging.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And, Bruce, there seems to be more attention to the issue of the potential isolated group of terrorists being able to take advantage of the Internet, and not all of the companies that, on a daily basis, are being breached in one way or another. Consumers are going crazy with their private information being grabbed by all kinds of other folks that are able to penetrate systems, so that the emphasis, it seems to me, should be on more encryption, more protection for consumers on the Internet, and not the government being able to access everything.

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** I mean, that's exactly right. We're concerned about criminals. We're concerned about Chinese nationals, other countries. We're concerned about the security of our data, and encryption is a valuable tool. To deliberately weaken that at the behest of the FBI or the U.K. government, I think, is a really crazy trade-off. It doesn't make us safer; it makes us more at risk.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And you're speaking to us from the U.K. What is David Cameron proposing for the United Kingdom?

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** Cameron is proposing something even more extreme. He's made statements saying that secure encryption should be illegal. Now, that, I think, would be incredibly damaging. It's also unworkable. I mean, if he wants to make that so, he has to seize my computer, my laptop, when I enter the country. He's not going to do that. That will destroy tourism. But the noise here is even more extreme, that it should be a crime to use secure encryption. I think it really should be the opposite, that not using it, you should be liable for damages.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you talk, Bruce Schneier, about the backdoors that exist, and especially for a completely lay audience around the world, what we should be concerned about right now, now and also what Britain and the U.S. are considering, what Comey will be testifying about today?

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** It's an interesting question, because while encryption is a very powerful tool and very strong, computer security is very weak. We, as scientists, don't know how to build secure computers. So I can protect the encryption of your phone, but I can't stop someone from

hacking into it. And if you look at what the NSA does, what the Chinese government does, what criminals do, they hack into devices. And that's something that we're still very much at risk at. The big breaches you're seeing are not breaches of encryption. They're hacking. We know the FBI does hacking.

And a lot of us on the group believe that lawful hacking is the solution to Comey's problem. Don't break encryption for everybody, but hack into the computers of just the suspects you want to eavesdrop on. That's more powerful. That's something we can't really prevent. And that gives you, the FBI, the U.K. government, the access you need. And that is both a problem and a solution. We do need to get better at it. I mean, all the breaches you're seeing show how bad it is, whether it's Office of Personnel Management; whether it's a cyberweapons arms manufacturer in Italy, Hacking Team, last week; whether it's Target or Home Depot or any bank. You know, these are all breaches of computer security from these flaws.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Well, I wanted to ask you about one of those, another story in the news. Leaked documents appear to show an Italy-based private spyware company known as the Hacking Team was selling its products to U.S. law enforcement agencies and repressive governments around the world. The Hacking Team sells software which lets users seize remote control of another person's computer. Its customers include the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Army, as well as foreign governments including Ethiopia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The documents were published to the company's own Twitter feed following an apparent breach.

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** So this is an amazing story. Hacking Team is a company—it's a cyberweapons arms manufacturer—that sells both to the U.S. government and to repressive regimes all over the world. Hacking Team has been responsible for people dying. I have no doubt about that. And what happened is, some hacker decided to publish all of their documents. We learned some extraordinary things, like the company has secret access into the products it sold to all these countries and didn't tell them. The company has problems. I mean, it's one thing to have dissatisfied customers. Hacking Team has dissatisfied customers with hit squads. This is going to be bad. This is a company that I believe has behaved immorally. So I'm really kind of happy to see them on the ropes here.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I wanted to ask you about Edward Snowden. The person we were just talking about in the last segment, the former attorney general, Eric Holder, interestingly, after Eric Holder stepped down, he just recently said that he thinks the possibility exists for the Justice Department to cut a deal with NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, allowing him to return to United States. I wanted to get your response to that and also how Edward Snowden's revelations, now in political asylum in Russia, have informed your work, Bruce.

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** You know, the data that Snowden revealed via the reporters has been nothing short of amazing. We've learned a lot about how the NSA works, the justifications behind what they do, the things they do. And by extension, we've learned what other countries do, as well. Right? The NSA is not made of magic. These are the same things Russia and China and Israel and France and other countries do. So we're learning a lot about nation-state surveillance. And that teaches us how to make things more secure. At the same time, we've had this great political debate in the United States about what are the limits of U.S. surveillance. There's been

less of a debate in the U.K., but there has been some, as well. So Snowden has done two things, from my perspective: He's shown citizens what the government is doing in their name, and he's shown technologists what the capabilities of attack are, so we can build better defensive capabilities.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Do you think he should be allowed to come back into the United States? And do you think he should be able to live as a free man?

**BRUCE SCHNEIER:** I mean, I certainly think he should. But this is—that's very much a political decision. I'm a technologist. I think it's still very—the emotions are very raw in the intelligence community. He did betray them. And I don't know how many years have to pass before it doesn't sting anymore, how many people have to retire. I think it would be great if he could return as a free man, but I don't know.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Bruce, we want to thank you very much for being with us. Bruce Schneier, security technologist, author of *Data and Goliath: The Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*, one of a group of 14 of the world's pre-eminent cryptographers and computer scientists who have presented a [paper](#) challenging what the U.S. government and the British government want to do about encryption. We'll continue to follow this story, of course.

This is *Democracy Now!* When we come back, though, we're going to Gaza City. It is the first anniversary of the Israeli assault on Gaza. Stay with us.

[http://www.democracynow.org/2015/7/8/the\\_end\\_of\\_encryption\\_nsa\\_fbi](http://www.democracynow.org/2015/7/8/the_end_of_encryption_nsa_fbi)

2015-07-08 **Has the World Abandoned Gaza? Region Remains in Ruins a Year After Deadly Israeli Assault**

<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/ipod/dn2015-0708.mp4?&start=2786.0>

<http://publish.dvllabs.com/democracynow/audio-m4a/dn2015-0708.m4a?&start=2786.0>

### Guests

**Mohammed Omer**, award-winning Palestinian journalist reporting in Gaza City. His book, *Shell-Shocked: On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault*, has just been published.

As Gaza marks one year since the launch of Israel's devastating 50-day assault, it remains in a state of crisis. The assault killed 2,200 Palestinians, including 550 children. On the Israeli side, 73 people were killed, all but six of them soldiers. A year later, none of the 12,000 homes destroyed in Gaza have been rebuilt, in part due to the ongoing Israeli blockade. The World Bank is warning the Gaza economy is on the verge of collapse. Overall unemployment now stands at 43 percent — the highest in the world. We speak with Palestinian journalist Mohammed Omer, author of "Shell-Shocked: On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault."

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** We turn now to Gaza, which remains in a state of crisis one year after the launch of Israel's 50-day war. It was the third in Gaza in six years. Twenty-two hundred Palestinians, including 550 children, died. On the Israeli side, 73 people were killed, all but six of them soldiers. The attack destroyed 12,000 homes in Gaza. Another 100,000 were damaged. None of the destroyed homes have been rebuilt so far, due in part to the ongoing Israeli blockade. Channel 4 News in Britain has just posted drone footage showing how much of Gaza is still in ruins. A recent United Nations report found, quote, "serious violations of international humanitarian law" which "may amount to war crimes" by both Israeli forces and Palestinian militants during the assault.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The World Bank is warning the Gaza economy is on the verge of collapse. Overall unemployment now stands at 43 percent—the highest in the world. Sixty-eight percent of Gazans aged between 20 and 24 are unemployed. Two-thirds of Gaza's 1.8 million residents are now recipients of U.N. aid in one form or another. To mark the anniversary of the war, UNICEF has just released video featuring a 12-year-old girl named Malak who survived last year's attack.

**MALAK:** [translated] The doors are gone. The windows are gone. The walls—it's as if we're living on the street. It's been a year since the war, and there's still not enough water, not enough electricity. We'll stay here because we have nowhere to go. I have nightmares every night. It wasn't like that before the war. I want to become an engineer, so I can rebuild people's homes, our house, our neighbor's house, so I can help people, and they can be safe.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We go now to Gaza City, where we're joined by Palestinian journalist Mohammed Omer. He is author of a new book, *Shell-Shocked: On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault*. He is past winner of the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism.

It's great to have you with us, Mohammed. Talk about this first anniversary of the assaults. Where does Gaza stand today, where you're standing?

**MOHAMMED OMER:** Thank you, Amy.

Well, in Gaza, today we mark the first anniversary of the war last summer, the 51-day war, which resulted in the killing of 2,250 Palestinians. The majority of them are civilians. Gaza is still living the same situation as right after the war and during the war. The only thing that we don't have, Israeli F-16s overhead flying, and we don't have the Israeli drones flying overhead. But we still have a lot of damages that are caused as a result of the war, and nothing have been fixed. Not one single home have been built after the war. Gaza is still struggling to survive. People are still struggling to get back to—to pick their lives from the beginning. Shejaiya, where I was just yesterday talking to people, they are still living in ruins. Some people are still living in prefabricated houses, and nothing has changed on the ground, really. The wound is still here.

The international community support to the people of Gaza is close to nonexistent, unfortunately. The people of Gaza are hoping that there will be some moves by the Palestinian Authority to take Israel into the International Criminal Court in The Hague. We don't know if this is going to be happening anytime soon.

But the spirit of the Gazans is quite strong today, I would say, despite the fact that they are now mourning those that they have lost, and they are remembering the days of the war and the agony the days that they have lived during the month of Ramadan just last year, when Israel bombed the Gaza Strip for 51 days.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And, Mohammed, what about—why has there been no rebuilding taking place? What have been the obstacles to that?

**MOHAMMED OMER:** The United Nations have installed a U.N. reconstruction of Gaza mechanism. This mechanism has not been working really properly. The only thing we get is a few bags of cement for people who need to build their homes. But only the people who had partial homes that have been destroyed, they could fix these damages, and that's not enough. For example, if someone had lost a living room, and then he wants to fix that, he is given only a few bags of cement and a few tanks of gravel and not so much of steel, which Israel does not allow into the Gaza Strip. That's difficult. There are so many shortages of supplies, construction materials, that Israel is not allowing into the Gaza Strip, therefore this is slowing the process of the Gaza reconstruction.

That's not only that, also aid distribution to the people. There are shortages of aid all the past year. And people are still living in very dire conditions, particularly in parts of the east of Gaza City and east of Rafah and east of Khan Younis and east of the northern part of the Gaza Strip, where people are still living on either ruins of demolished homes or refabricated homes. As I said, the international community has failed to deliver aid. It has failed to convince the state of Israel to allow construction materials into the Gaza Strip.

There has been, of course, some materials that got into the Gaza Strip. The only thing that people who have no means to build their homes, they end up selling their cement in the black market, because they want to survive, because they find that it's more important that they get some food on the table and not necessarily to have a shelter over their heads.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Mohammed Omer, if the camera crew there could give you a hand mic? The wind is hitting your microphone sometimes, so it's sort of—it's making it a little hard to hear what

you're saying. But I wanted to ask about you—where you're living right now. Your reports from Gaza last year were chilling. Are you continuing to live in Gaza?

**MOHAMMED OMER:** Yes, I am continuing to live in Gaza, and Gaza is my home. Gaza is where I'm living. Gaza is where I will stay. I don't have anywhere else that I want to go, even though I am lucky enough that I have got the Dutch nationality. I could be traveling outside and living outside, but I choose to be here and to tell the story of my people, to tell the story of the people in Gaza and to document what's happened, because the spirit of the Gazan people needs people who are able to tell the story in a very honest way. I don't rely on international journalists to come only there in the Gaza Strip seasonal, when there is blood and when there is destruction. But there is also a lot of steadfastness and beautiful things in Gaza that we need to focus on. The spirit of the Gazans is something which I am very proud of and I want to continue as a Palestinian journalist to report on and to reflect on. This is something which I find extremely important, especially after seeing the life of people in Gaza and how much they have suffered. Still, they are living under a very good circumstances despite all the obstacles, because they simply have the good spirits to continue their life and not to give up to the depression around them.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** I wanted to ask you about the U.N.'s refugee aid agency in Gaza. The director, Robert Turner, is leaving, and sometime this month. Last week, in an interview about his tenure in Gaza, he said housing reconstruction in the area could begin soon.

**ROBERT TURNER:** Finally, last week, the minister of public works and housing announced that technical issues related to total reconstruction had been resolved, that there now would be what's called the residential stream for the Gaza reconstruction mechanism, which would allow for the reconstruction of homes. We immediately, the next day, submitted the first batch of names of refugee families that had been identified, had their building permits ready and their building designs ready. Those were approved yesterday. And we're signing undertakings, and we're trying to put money in their pockets next week.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** That was Robert Turner, who's leaving as director of the U.N.'s refugee aid agency in Gaza. Your response?

**MOHAMMED OMER:** Well, I don't know what we really are expecting from the international community. I have a great respect for Mr. Robert Turner, who has done a great job running the UNRWA operations in the Gaza Strip. Gaza is still living under the most difficult circumstances. As I said, you know, the international community is not really able to convince Israel. I mean, one year, we have received a lot of promises that people will be receiving construction materials into the Gaza Strip, but so far people are fed up. It's been one year and only promises that we are receiving. So, why did this promise come only now, after a year? It's only after a year after the destruction of Gaza and the war and the damages that are caused.

People have survived a very dreadful winter in the different parts of the Gaza Strip, simply because they don't have the proper housing. Have we seen what happened in Shejaiya refugee camp and areas where they—that sustained several rockets and missiles? Did we see how much the children suffered the cold weather and winter? Why the international community allowed the people to survive that long? And now we are saying that Israel is going to be improving this.

People on the ground, they don't trust that Israel is going to improve the situation at all. I don't

see this is going to be changing, unless there is more international pressure on Israel to allow construction materials into the Gaza Strip. The U.N. mechanism is unfortunately failing to deliver what is needed to the Palestinians in Gaza, because the U.N. is simply not able to convince the state of Israel of the importance of rebuilding the Gaza. When Palestinians having no homes and there is no hope, what do you expect? I mean, there is no hope, really.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Mohammed Omer, we only have a minute to go, and I wanted to ask you about the Islamic State issuing a warning to Hamas that they're going to take over Gaza. How real is this?

**MOHAMMED OMER:** This is not real. It's not going to happen, because I believe and many people believe that Hamas is much stronger on the ground than the Islamic State, those people who have issued this. I have talked to Hamas officials, and they informed me that those people have a psycho distress, and they are people who do not know what they are talking about. They are just a bunch of people who are not necessarily able to translate what they have said on the ground. I believe Hamas is much stronger on the ground, that the Islamic State cannot turn Gaza into al-Yarmouk, as the Islamic State said. That's one.

And I believe also that the environment in Gaza does not allow an Islamic State-like groups to spread in the Gaza Strip. People don't want this type of mentality in the Gaza Strip. We have seen that across the Gaza Strip. People who are supporting the Islamic State, they have received resistance from people and from the Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip. So this is something which I doubt is going to be happening anytime soon.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Mohammed Omer, we have to leave it there.

**MOHAMMED OMER:** The Gazans are still continuing—

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to thank you very much for being with us, award-winning Palestinian journalist, reporting in Gaza City. His book, *Shell-Shocked: On the Ground Under Israel's Gaza Assault*, has just been published. He tweets at the handle [@Mogaza](https://twitter.com/Mogaza).