

Hard News:

R; hearing all kinds of stories -

- The Macy's day parade had a group of "suits" - a parody on Wall Street in the gay parade
- Really time that Wall Street is brought to its knees and meeting Main Street
- Ultimately the bankster - gangsters will have to confront the tired, ancient story of Empire -

KOS & Crazy Steve:

- has known Crazy Steve since Taos & before: an intergalactic trader, traveller, wizard, fool
 - got foreclosed on in the 80s and lost his house; was busted for having 3 plants, had 3 months in Taos County jail
 - At Canadian Federal level & in provinces, medical use is legal Time for US to change!

T: there is a word "polity" : this word means "we the people" ; people say they hate politics, but what they really hate is the lack of integrity in our representation; even that is wrong: they are also US, as we are ONE with them

T: people did get off their butts this time & vote, but nevertheless there is distaste for engagement in the process of politics - we need to change this

- Scott Walker will be called before Congress for spending his campaign funds for other purposes
- Karl Rove was in contempt of Congress, nothing happened as they were more powerful

Randi Rhodes: story about fallout as BM Mittens found out Rove could not steal the election for him

- He cancelled all the credit cards when his volunteers were trying to get a plane, get a taxi go home, etc - left them high and dry!
- **RR** said it: As Karl and the rest were exposed for what they did, Romney was in the bus catatonic and Todd Romney had to drive it; Ann was crying and distraught at the results and a woman reporter got on the bus; Ann literally tried to scratch the reporter's eyes out; Ann had to be restrained, and she got out of the buss, Ann screamed out of the bus: "I am going to kill you".
- Send them more love.

T: it is the power of what we did: we got out the vote; people persisted

- the ORCA machine was worked on by Anonymous; Thom Hartmann reported on this as did Webster Tarpley, Sam Sachs, Nation of Change, The Nation Magazine, Information Clearing House
- **people are now aware that their vote does count!**

R: The ones they know in Santa Fe: Crazy Steve is a character who understands the implication of the current reality shift; R had a chat with CS - he has an "urban cave" - he knows the ins and outs of all the tunnels of the northern New Mexico system - can follow the system to 6 levels below Los Alamos - there is a port hole with bars on it: can see Ets along side scientists

- There is another guy at Lowes who has gone with CS in the tunnels - showed Rama something like the golden compass which shows future events of what is going on
- there was talk of an M Class solar flare that would knock out the grid system & something else
 - yet the grid did not go down; we are still here

KOS shared what is going on: we are at the fiscal cliff; in January, those over \$250,000 will pay more tax

- CS showed R a 4th century coin from Rome: offered it to R to take it and go use it in town - it worth over \$4M!!
- CS does what he has to do to get by - he is like Gandalf wandering through our present reality;
- he is lonely; R hung out with CS today; they were listening to the repeat of RR on the computer - Rama only sees him when the time is right

- The biggest story: let's take the cap off medicare, medicaid - it is solvent for ever - no ideas about cuts - the idea of austerity is not going to make it

- the cease fire is holding, but tenuously: at the border, Israel already killed many Palestinians - just shot people dead -

KOS said Mr Hamas needs to take Israel before the UN on international war crimes going back to the 60s

T: Though these things are difficult, it is not that Obama does not have control of the talking stick but about the volatility of our people when 20 states want to succede from the states - no matter what, it has to be US, it's our turn!

- All things are backing us from every kingdom we have ever thought of
- When we hear the story about Palestine, we are still not hearing the real story about the Illuminati working through Hillary - **take it with a grain of salt when you hear what he says about Obama;** Obama will guide things - when he said no country should not tolerate being bombed, that's true - yet there is **an undercurrent that is not being dealt with** -

R: This occupation has been going on since 1947 -

- **strange coincidence:** the Roswell Incident; Israel becomes a "state"

Audio: what do Obama's choices for cabinet say foreign policy in his 2nd term?

Hillary Clinton leaving - Susan Rice being named;

John Kerry - for Sec of Defense

Head of CIA is gone - Petraeus

Guest: Vijay Prashad - George and Martha Kellner Chair in South Asian History and Professor of International Studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

- speaks of the problem of the Obama presidency who said they would change from "my way or the highway" that was the Bush position
- the age of American primacy is over; the age of multi-diplomacy is here

Audio: story of Isreal firing on Palestine - media points out the militants brought this on themselves and the idea of "balance" - if pictures are shown of Palestinian death, have to show Israel suffering

- To discuss MSNBC's handling of the war in Israel: several people, including Vijay Prashad **Arab Spring; Libyan Winter** - Prashad's book

woman: more of a move to even-handedness - brings up the Israeli assassinating a Palestinian who had been negotiating with them - it was in NYTimes, on TV and other main line sources

the official Israeli position was not challenged: the State Dep't spokesperson was being treated toughly: why don't the Palestinians have the right of self-defence like the Israelis do - the response was only that the Israelis have the right to self-defence!

Man: the slight shift that is evident: result of Arab Spring

Caller: when Dec 21 comes around - will there something between here and now we can be joyful for?

T: we can be joyful now; she can see the beginnings of the deep understanding we are moving into -

everything single thing she listens too, she can hear what people are saying: who is this Hillary and why does she think she can do the same-old, same old?

- T thought Hillary looked like a dead beat; looking at her face when she was getting ready to speak - her intuition is that H knows her time is limited: that she was fed up with showing up with Netanyahu

R: the 12/12/12 opening of the 12/12/ 12 stargate - enrita Melchizadek has a video coming out

Caller: of Hillary: has seen various clips of her: is she still the handler for Bill and Barack?

T: not the whole time prior to the election - it was before the election that this change happened

Caller: it was more than obvious after the election that she is really not there; she walks behind him and it was almost as if he was unaware of her: that he was free to be himself - ignoring her!
That's worth celebrating!

T: sure he has said some things

Caller: What's the scoop about Susan Rice, Ambassador to the UN?

T: she is completely compromised by Hillary; she is not her own person

- KOS said she got bought

Caller: in the beginning, seemed to be on board

T: as time went along, things got less clear with the energy - can't hang around with Hillary 24/7 and not be affected by it

R talked with Tom the RTCat about Holder, Clinton, Geithner all kinds of people - yet you can run, but you can't hide. The changes for those on the suggested list are unlikely -

- let the discussion come out until all becomes clearer

T: putting Bill Clinton out there again - could be the only one who could get a One State Solution

- when Rama asked, was told "no comment"

Caller: that would be a shocker for the Repubs

T: people around the world know he's no slouch - yet will still have to be held accountable

- Brings up story of Jennifer Granholm who pardoned 200 people; one person came on her show -
- was very moving: it freed the lady up to have a second chance!

Reading: Economic Treason: an Act concerning the Breach of Public Trust [SEE BELOW]

- She thinks Bill Clinton could be engaged via the idea of "Perhaps the penalty of death is not sufficient deterrent. For some, forced remediation and reimbursement for their crime for the rest of their life would be a far more brutal punishment, but fitting."

- ie, spend the rest of his life making up for what he has done in the past

Caller: this is the real Bill - done with the clones?

T: Yes - in 1999 when they made clones of them, he was not killed: they programmed 21 clones and put them out for the time period it was made for - and each clone had to handle the handler [Hillary]

- Glad to have people to do this kind of work!

Caller: how long has he been clone-free?

T: 2008 was the real Bill on the stage; during the campaign it was a clone

- it was a clone of Hillary, as the real Hillary was in a jail cell since 2007

- T saw an article recently: there were about 40 of her running around - they used look-alikes of her

- Where is the public? Where is the attitudinal healing? How do you account for 307 million people running around and only a small number running them? She was totally awake when she was 13: she was conscious that it was on heaven of a story - much more than what people in charge were talking about. She was hanging out with a few nuns who were totally awake - a nun took her to Selma, Alabama - Tara is totally amazed about how dreams and walking through life.

- Barack giving his acceptance speech: talked of jobs being important - those who have been listening know where those jobs are going to be!

- Some will have to go: 10,000 bankers are already gone; others are disappearing!

- Speaks of astrology and the various kinds of it: mayan, Egyptian, Vedic

- there is a science of Vedic Egyptology

- We of the Goodly Company come together with each other at certain times

- some of us are working in the 6th - 9th strands of DNA

- What is it going to look like? not a great explosion,
Every minute now a year is going by - more than 20 days
- We are going to have to walk this one through and use our awareness of balance
- Lau Tzo - Lord Lantu - 800 years of peace - the Secret Art of War; The Book of the West
he is on the Pink Ray -

Rainbird: asks about the people in Indianapolis

T: 2 people died, dozens injured

R: It is now a homicide investigation on Stephanie Miller show;

- today on Here and Now with Robin Young on local access radio: did a story about a large craft going up and down over Denver - it covered city blocks! The story went viral
- the lady who reported was a Fox News affiliate - she called all kinds of ABC agencies:
- Started to talk to local folks - who told her this is a craft that is not from earth!

T: have completely blown their wad!

- Goes back to the reading: October 1, 1979 is when the story began, and the writer of the article recognizes this fact by saying that the terms and conditions shall be retroactive to 1980 - the beginning of the fiscal year of 1980 for the USA.

CONDITIONS: THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE LAWS AS RELATED TO CRIMES OF ECONOMIC TREASON SHALL BE RETROACTIVE UNTIL THE YEAR 1980; SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY; AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY KIND OF STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS.

- Some discussion about why MSNBC did two 9/11 shows back to back Friday afternoon
- The item about the one assassinated by the Israelis was on Free Speech TV, which means it will soon be on MSNBC
 - There are now more spiritual messages / discussions on Free Speech TV and MSNBC than ever before.
- part of the discussion about the slowly changing nature of certain TV programs

for Saturday's reading: Pequot War - www.colonialwarsct.org/1637.htm

Music: Brother Can You Spare a Dime? Dr John and Odetta

Audio: finishing what was started from Al Jazeera before the Conference call

Audio: Amy Goodman - life, politics and music of Woody Guthrie, The Dust Bowl Troubadour

July 14, 1912, born in Oklahoma - time to start listening to what he had to say

Died in 1967

[SEE BELOW]

- entire mid-west was torn up and a dust bowl resulted
- it is happening again: if we didn't know about the new technologies [it would be terrifying]
- slaughtered all the buffalo on top of this - the buffalo patties kept the soil rich

Caller: the director of Sesame Street has just died

- Also the one who is Elmo resigned over a supposed sexual incident

R: does not think this is a coincidence - this is about the idea of getting revenge -

- take down PBS because it is a doorway to telling the truth!

Caller: Mitt had a lot to do with the Big Bird thing - will send the link

Audios: from www.billmoyers.com

Naomi Klein on Capitalism and Climate Change

November 15, 2012

[transcript on website]

<http://billmoyers.com/segment/naomi-klein-on-capitalism-and-climate-change/>

Naomi Klein, author of the international bestseller *The Shock Doctrine*, says the tragic destruction of Hurricane Sandy can also be the catalyst for the transformation of politics and our economy. She's been in New York visiting the devastated areas — including those where "Occupy Sandy" volunteers are unfolding new models of relief — as part of her reporting for a new book and film on climate change and the future, and joins Bill to discuss hurricanes, climate change, and democracy.

"Let's rebuild by actually getting at the root causes. Let's respond by aiming for an economy that responds to the crisis both [through] inequality and climate change," Klein tells Bill. "You know, dream big."

Trevor Potter on Big Money's Election Effect

November 16, 2012

<http://billmoyers.com/segment/trevor-potter-on-big-moneys-election-effect/>

[transcript on website]

Former **Federal Election Commission Chairman Trevor Potter** — the lawyer who advised Stephen Colbert on setting up a super PAC — dissects the spending on the most expensive election in American history. Many voices are claiming "money didn't matter, Citizens United wasn't a factor," but Potter disagrees.

"Super PACs just upped the ante," he tells Bill. "If you're a senator and you have just been elected, or heaven forbid you're up in two years, you're thinking I don't have time to worry about deficit reduction and the fiscal cliff. I have to raise tens of thousands of dollars every day to have enough money to compete with these new super PACs... And that means I need to be nice to a lot of billionaires who often want something from me in order to find the funding for my campaign."

Reading: The Mayan Factor - Jose Arquelles

Closing: Rainbird

2010, Sept 7 **Economic Treason - Original Work of 1990**

<http://willbradyjournal2.blogspot.ca/2010/09/original-work-economic-treason.html>

ABOUT THIS ESSAY: I wrote this in 1990, shortly after being laid off from a company known as [Colonial Realty Co](#), which defrauded their shareholders of hundreds of millions of dollars. [Arthur Andersen](#) was their accounting firm, and when the [ENRON financial scandal](#) hit, it appeared to be the testing grounds for their accounting shenanigans. No way to tell.

But the focus of the essay was less about frauds against private shareholders, and more about the frauds perpetrated [and perpetuated] against the citizenry as a whole.

The myths of Capitalism, as practiced and propagandized in the United States, include that *anybody* can become rich ~ even super-rich. The reality is quite different. Another part of the myth is that resources managed by capitalists rightfully belong to individuals running the corporations that they hide behind.

In truth, those running corporations are only managers of natural resources [*be they mineral ores, farm crops, real estate, labor - even the written word, music and ...ideas*] and are not the actual owners. It is humankind that own these resources. The international managerial caste continues to successfully scams - or oppresses - the rest of us so their personal plunders go [largely] unquestioned. Eventually, this standard shall change. Humanity can ill afford to indulge this caste its excesses any more.

And that is where another premise, the rule of law, comes into place. This essay, and its format, was modeled after the way legislative proposals are brought before governing bodies, upon which they might be enacted. Mind you, I suffer no illusion that our current band of thieves in Congress would even consider such a law, much less enact it. For they, too, are culpable for the end effects of economic destabilization such as we witness today, not only in the USA, but around the world.

Having said all this, here is the text as shown in the illustrated essay:

TITLE: AN ACT CONCERNING THE BREACH OF PUBLIC TRUST BY MANAGERS OF MONEY AND RESOURCES WHO HAVE TAKEN, USED AND SPENT SO AS TO PERSONALLY PROFIT FROM THE RESOURCES OF SHARE-OWNERS AND CITIZENS

TEXT: The premise is simple. When certain individuals conduct themselves in a such a way as to jeopardize the economic and social well-being of the community and have done so while personally benefiting simultaneously to the detriment of those who entrusted them with proper management of certain resources, they have then "*...endangered the life of the polity...*" and, as a result, may have committed Economic Treason.

- Include that they be held accountable for their actions, and that they be required to pay society for the effects of those actions accordingly.
- When decision-makers, representatives of the polity, if you will, engage to assist those who violate the sacred trust, they too, must be held accountable. But here we must also address what the legal

definitions of involvement may be.

- There are precedents in history, however unsavory, for the punishment of such crimes were to be meted out against the transgressors.
- We don't have to follow these methods if they don't seem fit. Perhaps the penalty of death is not sufficient deterrent. For some, forced remediation and reimbursement for their crime for the rest of their life would be a far more brutal punishment, but fitting.
- Even, possibly, letting the perpetrators apparently go free, but be barred from any professional titles, licenses or certifications or authority; maintaining a very public address without interventions or protections. Let forces take their course. They shall have to deal with their enemies unprotected.

CONDITIONS: THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE LAWS AS RELATED TO CRIMES OF ECONOMIC TREASON SHALL BE RETROACTIVE UNTIL THE YEAR 1980; SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY; AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY KIND OF STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS.

2012, July 4 Wed

Woody Guthrie at 100~ Pete Seeger, Billy Bragg, Will Kaufman Honor the "Dust Bowl Troubadour"

http://www.democracynow.org/2012/7/4/woody_guthrie_at_100_pete_seeger#transcript

Commemorations are being held across the country this year to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of one of the country's greatest songwriters, Woody Guthrie. Born on July 14, 1912, in Okemah, Oklahoma, Guthrie wrote hundreds of folk songs, including "This Land Is Your Land," "Pastures of Plenty," "Pretty Boy Floyd," "Do Re Mi" and "The Ranger's Command." While Guthrie is best remembered as a musician, he also had a deeply political side. At the height of McCarthyism, Guthrie spoke out for labor and civil rights and against fascism. In this one-hour special, you will hear interviews and music from folk singer Pete Seeger, the British musician Billy Bragg, and the historian Will Kaufman, author of the new book, "Woody Guthrie, American Radical."

"Woody's original songs, the songs that he wrote back in the 1930s ... with these images of people losing their houses to the banks, of gamblers on the stock markets making millions, when ordinary working people can't afford to make ends meet, and of people dying for want of proper free healthcare, you know, this song could have been written anytime in the last five years, really, in the United States of America," says Bragg, who has long been inspired by Guthrie.

Guthrie's most famous song, "This Land Is Your Land," was written in 1940 in response to Kate Smith's "God Bless America." "Woody saw [God Bless America] as a strident, jingoistic, complacent, tub-thumping anthem to American greatness," Kaufman says. "And now, he had just come from the Dust Bowl. He'd just come from the barbed-wire gates of California's Eden there. He'd seen the Hoovervilles. He'd seen the bread lines. He'd seen labor activists getting their heads busted. And so, he's thinking, what — God bless — what America, you know, is Kate Smith singing of?" In 2009, Pete Seeger and Bruce Springsteen performed "This Land Is Your Land" for the inauguration of President Obama. [includes rush transcript]

Guests:

[Will Kaufman](#), professor of American literature and culture at the University of Central Lancashire, England. He is author of *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*.

[Pete Seeger](#), legendary folk singer and activist.

[Billy Bragg](#), British musician and activist. With Wilco, he has released two albums of Woody Guthrie music.

Related

- [On Woody Guthrie's Centennial, Celebrating the Life, Politics & Music of the "Dust Bowl Troubadour"](#) Jul 12, 2012 | *Story*
- [Tune in Thurs: Woody Guthrie's Daughter & Granddaughter Join Steve Earle to Mark 100th Birthday](#) Jul 11, 2012 | *Web Exclusive*
- [Black History Special: Jazz Legend Randy Weston on His Life and Celebration of "African Rhythms"](#) Feb 20, 2012 | *Story*
- ["All There Is": Love Stories from the StoryCorps Oral History Project with Founder Dave Isay](#) Feb 14, 2012 | *Story*
- ["A Moment in the Sun": An Extended Interview with Independent Filmmaker, Author John Sayles](#) Nov 24, 2011 | *Story*

Links

- [Woody Guthrie Archives](#)
- [Woody Guthrie Official Site](#)
- [Will Kaufman's Website, Author of "Woody Guthrie: American Radical"](#)
- ["Roots of Woody Guthrie: Celebrating Woody at 100" \(Down Home Radio Show\)](#)
- [Woody at 100: The Woody Guthrie Centennial Collection \(Smithsonian Folkways\)](#)
- [Alan Lomax Archive](#)

Editor's Picks

- [Legendary Folk Singer & Activist Pete Seeger Turns 90, Thousands Turn Out for All-Star Tribute Featuring Bruce Springsteen, Joan Baez, Bernice Johnson Reagon and Dozens More](#) **May 04, 2009** | *Story*
- [We Shall Overcome: An Hour with Legendary Folk Singer & Activist Pete Seeger](#) **Jul 04, 2007** | *Story*
- [Billy Bragg: British Rocker on Norway Attacks, Activism & His Song on Murdoch, "Never Buy The Sun"](#) **Aug 01, 2011** | *Story*

Transcript

AMY GOODMAN: Commemorations are being held across the country this year to mark the hundredth anniversary of the birth of one of the country's greatest songwriters, Woody Guthrie. Born on July 14, 1912, in Okemah, Oklahoma, Guthrie wrote hundreds of folk songs, including "This Land Is Your Land," "Pastures of Plenty," "Pretty Boy Floyd," "Do Re Mi" and this song, "The Ranger's Command."

NARRATOR: Two fragments of film survive of Guthrie performing. One of them, lost in the archives for 40 years has only just come to light.

WOODY GUTHRIE: [singing] *But the rustlers broke on us in the dead hours of night;
She 'rose from her blanket, a battle to fight.
She 'rose from her blanket with a gun in each hand,
Said: Come all of you cowboys, fight for your land.*

AMY GOODMAN: A rare 1945 video recording of Woody Guthrie. Known as the Dust Bowl Troubadour, Guthrie became a major influence on countless musicians, including Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Pete Seeger and Phil Ochs. While Woody Guthrie is best remembered as a musician, he also had a deeply political side. At the height of McCarthyism, Guthrie spoke out for labor and civil rights and against fascism. He died in 1967 after a long battle with Huntington's disease. But his music lives on.

Over the next hour, we'll hear from folk singer Pete Seeger, the British musician Billy Bragg and the historian Will Kaufman. But first, Woody Guthrie, in his own words, being interviewed by the musicologist Alan Lomax

ALAN LOMAX: What did your family do? What kind of people were they, and where did they come from?

WOODY GUTHRIE: Well, they come in there from Texas in the early day. My dad got to Oklahoma right after statehood. He was the first clerk of the county court in Okemah, Oklahoma, after statehood, as he is known as one of them old, hard-hitting, fist-fighting Democrats, you know, that run for office down there, and they used to miscount the votes all the time. So every time that my dad went to town, it was common the first question that I ask him when he come riding in on a horse that evening, I'd say, "Well, how many fights did you have today?" And then he'd take me up on his knee, and he'd proceed to tell me who he is fighting and why and all about it. "Put her there, boy. We'll show these fascists what a couple hillbillies can do."

ALAN LOMAX: Where did you live? On a farm?

WOODY GUTHRIE: Well, no, I was born there in that little town. My dad built a six-room house. Cost him about \$7,000 or \$8,000. And the day after he got the house built, it burned down.

ALAN LOMAX: What kind of a place was Okemah? How big was it, when you remember it, when you were a kid?

WOODY GUTHRIE: Well, in them days, it was a little town, about 1,500, and then 2,000. A few years later, it got up to about 5,000. They struck some pretty rich oil pools all around there—Grayson City and Slick City and Cromwell and Seminole and Bowlegs and Sand Springs and Springhill. And all up and down the whole country there, they got oil. Got some pretty nice old fields 'round Okemah there.

ALAN LOMAX: Did any of the oil come in your family?

WOODY GUTHRIE: No, no, we got the grease.

AMY GOODMAN: Woody Guthrie being interviewed by Alan Lomax.

We turn now to Will Kaufman, author of the new book, *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*. Kaufman is a professor of American literature and culture at the University of Central Lancashire, England. He's also a musician who's performed hundreds of musical presentations on Woody Guthrie. I interviewed Will Kaufman recently and asked him to talk about Woody Guthrie's childhood.

WILL KAUFMAN: Well, he was born in Okemah, Oklahoma, as you said, in 1912. He was born to a middle-class, fairly right-wing family. His father, Charlie Guthrie, was a small-town politician, a real estate agent and Klan supporter, supporter of the Ku Klux Klan.

AMY GOODMAN: Some said he was a Klansman.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah, there's no documentary evidence to firmly establish that Charlie Guthrie was a member of the Klan, but there's no doubt that he supported them. There's some anecdotal evidence that he sometimes rode out with them on their adventures and may have participated in a lynching. That affected Woody years later. But there's no indication that Woody was particularly all that political when he was growing up in Okemah. And then after a number of family tragedies, like the burning down of their house, the death of his older sister in a house fire, the near-fatal burning of his father in a third fire, and the incarceration of his mother in the Oklahoma state mental asylum—she wasn't crazy; she had the misunderstood and undiagnosed Huntington's disease—where after all these tragedies, Woody went to join his father in another boom-to-bust oil town in the Texas Panhandle, a place called Pampa, Texas. He dropped out of high school after two years, became a sign painter, married, had his first two children, and then sat there and watched as the Dust Bowl hit the center of the United States, and, you know, tens of thousands of square miles of destroyed farmland just wiped out. Woody was there. And he began to write about the dust.

WOODY GUTHRIE: [singing] *Back in Nineteen Twenty-Seven,
I had a little farm and I called that heaven.
Well, the prices up and the rain come down,
And I hauled my crops all into town —
I got the money, bought clothes and groceries,
Fed the kids, and raised a family.*

*Rain quit and the wind got high,
And the black ol' dust storm filled the sky.
And I swapped my farm for a Ford machine,
And I poured it full of this gas-i-line —
And I started, rockin' an' a-rollin',
Over the mountains, out towards the old Peach Bowl.*

WILL KAUFMAN: Some of those Dust Bowl ballads come out of, really, his late teens and early twenties, you know. Then he joined about half-a-million other migrants heading westwards towards California, where they had heard there was lots of work out there—and, of course, they were wrong. And it's there in California when Woody gets—he sort of hooks up with the right people, I suppose, and gets involved in the Popular Front out there in California, and this is the beginning of—really, of his politicization. As you said, began writing columns for the *People's World* out there and—in Los Angeles, and got a show on a progressive radio station, KFVD, out in Los Angeles, and begins to circulate around the migrant camps, where the Okies, as they were pejoratively called, were living in old dwellings of tar, paper and tin and old packing crates and the bodies of abandoned cars, under railroad bridges, by the side of rivers and what have you, and getting their heads broken when they dared to organize into unions. And Woody began to witness that and began to write about it. And so, he began to see music as a political weapon then.

AMY GOODMAN: Will Kaufman, talk about 1937, the turning point for Woody Guthrie as he takes on racial issues in this country.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah, he—he arrived in California, I think, with the influence of having grown up in a state dominated by the Klan and growing up in a family that supported the Klan. He wasn't all that racially enlightened when he went out to California. There's evidence in the Archives that he would, you know, write these mock poems about Africans—African Americans are bathing on the beach in Santa Monica with the—you know, giving off the Ethiopian smell and with jungle rhythms pounding in their veins. And he'd happily sing songs using the N-word and words like "coons" and stuff like that, which were part of that white mountain tradition. And so, he's on this radio station sometime in 1937, and he announces that he's going to play a song from Uncle Dave Macon on the Grand Ole Opry, and Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers, as well, recorded it, a lovely song called "Run, Nigger, Run." And he announces it, and he plays it.

And he gets a letter from a member of his listening audience the next day. And I know that letter by heart. I've seen it. He says, "You were getting along pretty well on your program tonight, until you announced your nigger blues. I'm a Negro, a young Negro in college. And I certainly resented your remark. No person or person of any intelligence uses that word over the radio today." And that letter really hit Woody like a slap in the face. He was mortified. He apologized profusely on the air the next day. He made a big point of dramatically tearing out the song sheet from his notebook and tearing it to shreds and promising he would never use that word again. And as he later said, "I apologize to the Negro people for the frothings that I let slip out of the corners of my mouth." So this is the beginning of his conversion, I suppose, to eventually becoming one of the most ardent champions and activists for racial equality.

AMY GOODMAN: You mentioned the lynching that occurred a year before he was born that his father—

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah.

AMY GOODMAN: —may well have been involved with.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah.

AMY GOODMAN: Talk about how it came back.

WILL KAUFMAN: Well, there was—about a year before Woody's birth, there was a policeman in Okemah named George Loney, who went to the house of a fellow named Nelson, going to arrest him. I think the charge was sheep stealing or something minor like that. And I don't think Nelson was there. But certainly his wife Laura and his 12-year-old son Lawrence and a little baby, they were there. And this policeman was apparently very violent, very threatening. And young Lawrence thought that his mother was in danger, and he grabbed a rifle, shot this policeman in the leg. Policeman bled to death on their front lawn.

Lynch mob—well, first of all, Laura and Lawrence and the baby are brought to the jail near Okemah. And then, about a week later, a lynch mob breaks into the jail, drags them to the Canadian River railroad bridge just outside of Okemah. Laura was lynched. Lawrence, 15-year-old—13- to 15-year-old boy, was lynched, after being sexually humiliated in public. And the baby is left crying by the side of the road. And the citizens of Okemah were so pleased with their handiwork that soon they were selling postcards to commemorate it. And Woody saw that postcard, and he actually wrote a song about that. If you want to hear it, I can do it. He never recorded it. It's called "Don't Kill My Baby and My Son."

[singing] *As I walked down that old dark town
In the town where I was born,
I heard the saddest lonesome moan
That I ever heard before.*

*My hair it trembled at the roots
Cold chills run down my spine,
As I drew near that jail house
I heard this deathly cry:*

*Don't kill my baby and my son,
Don't kill my baby and my son.
You can stretch my neck from that old river bridge,
But don't kill my baby and my son.*

AMY GOODMAN: Will Kaufman, author of *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*. How do you know that melody and that song if Woody Guthrie never recorded it?

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah, I've seen the words. Woody really didn't—he didn't write any music. He only wrote lyrics, effectively. I mean, he may—I think he wrote one mandolin tune called "Woody's Rag" or something like that. But effectively, what he would do is, for the most part, he would write lyrics down, and sometimes he would actually say, you know, "to be sung to the tune of 'Streets of Laredo'" or something, and he would have a folk song in his head or even a song that, like, a friend of his like Leadbelly wrote. He didn't really care. You know, he'd steal—he'd steal music, you know, right and left, and admit it. So, for that one in particular, for instance, you could tell—if you know the American traditional, you know, folk repertoire, you could tell sometimes what kind of—what song he had as a pattern in his head. And I could tell by reading the lyrics that

he had the old tune "Wild Bill Jones" in his head, so I just put it to "Wild Bill Jones."

AMY GOODMAN: In 1940, Woody Guthrie moves to New York.

WILL KAUFMAN: Right.

AMY GOODMAN: Why?

WILL KAUFMAN: He moves to New York because he has been involved in the labor struggles in the Californian fields, in Kern County, in particular, Madera County—Kern County mostly. And, well, there were quite a few defeats in the Californian fields at that point, and he befriended Will Geer, who people may know. Later on, he was the actor who played Grandpa Walton in *The Waltons*. Well, he was a very good friend of Woody Guthrie and John Steinbeck, political activist, communist activist. And Geer was going to New York to star in *Tobacco Road*, a Broadway version of *Tobacco Road*, and suggested to Woody, "Look, you know, why don't you come out? Why don't you come out to New York? There's a lot going on there." And so Woody deposited his long-suffering family in Texas, back in Pampa, and hitchhiked to New York in 1940. And that really was the only—I suppose the only permanent home that he had for the rest of his life would have been New York City.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about what being in New York meant for him. Who did he meet? What was he singing?

WILL KAUFMAN: Well, he was singing some interesting songs, first of all—writing some interesting songs, because as he was hitchhiking north and east out of Texas in that bitter cold new year of 1940, all he's hearing on the radio is Kate Smith singing Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." And that's—that was the big hit of the year. And Woody hated that song.

KATE SMITH: [singing] *God bless America*
Land that I love.
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with a light from above.

WILL KAUFMAN: Now, I mean, there's two ways you can look at that song. You can look at "God Bless America," written by Irving Berlin, all right—it's the fearful prayer, almost, of a European Jewish immigrant to the United States who's nervously watching the rise of fascism in Europe and praying that it won't happen over here. He actually wrote it back in 1917 and put it away. But, you know, looking at Hitler across the sea, he's maybe thinking it's time for that song to be resurrected. So that's a charitable way of looking at it. It's not bombastic, it's not patriotic; it's fearful, and it's hopeful.

That's not the way Woody saw it. Woody saw it as a strident, jingoistic, complacent, tub-thumping anthem to American greatness. And now, he had just come from the Dust Bowl. He'd just come from the barbed-wire gates of California's Eden there. He'd seen the Hoovervilles. He'd seen the bread lines. He'd seen labor activists getting their head busted. And so, he's thinking, what—God bless—what America, you know, is Kate Smith singing of? So he sits down and writes a song in response to Irving Berlin, and he calls it "God Blessed America for Me." And later on, he decides to come back to that song and change the title, change the verses, change the refrain, and it becomes "This Land Was Made for You and Me." And then he puts it away. So, that's one of the songs he's writing in 1940.

WOODY GUTHRIE: [singing] *I roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
And all around me a voice was sounding:
This land was made for you and me.*

*There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me
Sign was painted, said "Private Property"
But on the back side it didn't say nothing
This land was made for you and me.*

AMY GOODMAN: Let's talk about "This Land Is Your Land" —

WILL KAUFMAN: OK.

AMY GOODMAN: —and what it became, in fact, for President Obama's inauguration.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah. I think probably the biggest audience, single audience, ever to hear that song was the inaugural concert for Barack Obama, where Bruce Springsteen and Pete Seeger sang the restored version. Because, you see, "This Land Is Your Land" has an interesting history. It starts off as "God Blessed America for Me." And it contains a couple of killer anti-capitalist verses that I don't remember singing in school, you know? And three of those verses were the ones that—I mean, one verse, Woody recorded one verse, I believe, in an unreleased version, about excoriating private property. But there's other verses in there. And, you know, that's what Pete—Pete said, you know, "I'll sing this song, as long as I can sing the whole thing," and as I recorded it earlier, so you can hear the progression of that song from the angry and bitter satire that it originally was to the unofficial national anthem that it became.

AMY GOODMAN: Did Springsteen and Seeger sing the whole song?

WILL KAUFMAN: They did. They did. They sang the whole thing, and they sang it right into the face of American power, right into—they had to sing it to the president of the United States. "There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me. Sign was painted saying 'Private Property.' But on the other side, it didn't say nothing. That side was made for you and me." You know? Big audience for that one.

PETE SEEGER AND BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *This land is your land, this land is
my land
From California to the New York island;
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.*

*I roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
And all around me a voice was sounding:
This land was made for you and me.*

*This land is your land, this land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.*

*In the squares of the city, by the shadow of a steeple;
By the relief office, I saw my people.
As they stood there hungry, I stood there wistless,
This land was made for you and me.*

*There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me
A great big sign there said "Private Property"
But on the back side it didn't say nothing
That sign was made for you and me.*

AMY GOODMAN: Pete Seeger and Bruce Springsteen singing "This Land Is Your Land" in 2009, a day before President Obama was inaugurated. This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, *The War and Peace Report*, with a Woody Guthrie special. I'm Amy Goodman. Woody Guthrie was born a hundred years ago, on July 14, 1912. We're continuing our conversation with Will Kaufman, author of *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*. I asked him to talk more about Guthrie's move east in 1940.

WILL KAUFMAN: He gets to New York. Will Geer is putting on a—organizing a concert, a benefit concert for the John Steinbeck Agricultural Committee.

AMY GOODMAN: Which is what?

WILL KAUFMAN: The Steinbeck Committee to Aid Agricultural [Organization] migrants, it was a benefit—fundraising organization that was just raising money for the migrants, for the Dust Bowl migrants, out in California. Steinbeck didn't have anything to do with it except lending his name, his name to it.

AMY GOODMAN: Of course, he wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*.

WILL KAUFMAN: And he wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*, of course, yeah, and became a friend of Woody Guthrie's there in California. So Woody said, "Yeah, of course I'll sign up to that." And so, Will Geer has—for this New York concert, he has a roster of some of the top up-and-coming political folk singers there, also Alan Lomax, who's probably one of the most important figures there. He's the archivist of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress and also a musicologist, folk song collector, like his certainly more conservative father John Lomax was. And so, Alan Lomax also had gathered around him a number of important folk singers: young Pete Seeger, Harvard dropout, Lee Hays from the Commonwealth College, "Leadbelly" Huddie Ledbetter, Josh White, other black musicians from the Piedmont. And so, that is the concert in which—when Woody Guthrie first meets Pete Seeger. Lomax later said, "Go back to that night when Woody first met Pete, and you can date the renaissance of American folk music to that night." You know.

AMY GOODMAN: Will Kaufman is author of *American Radical*. During an [interview](#) on *Democracy Now!*, the legendary folk singer Pete Seeger talked about Alan Lomax and Woody Guthrie.

PETE SEEGER: Well, Alan got me started, and many others. He's the man who told Woody Guthrie, he says, "Woody Guthrie, your mission in life is to write songs. Don't let anything distract you. You're like the people who wrote the ballads of Robin Hood and the ballad of Jesse James. You keep writing ballads as long as you can." And Woody took it to heart. He wasn't a good husband. He was always running off, but he wrote songs, as you know.

AMY GOODMAN: Do you remember when you first met Woody Guthrie?

PETE SEEGER: Oh, yeah, I'll never forget it. It was a benefit concert for California agricultural workers on Broadway at midnight. Burl Ives was there, the Golden Gate Quartet, Josh White, Leadbelly, Margo Mayo Square Dance Group, with my wife dancing in it. I sang one song very amateurishly and retired in confusion to a smattering of polite applause.

But Woody took over and for 20 minutes entranced everybody, not just with singing, but storytelling. "I come from Oklahoma, you know? It's a rich state. You want some oil? Go down in the ground. Get you some hole. Get you more oil. If you want lead, we got lead in Oklahoma. Go down a hole and get you some lead. If you want coal, we got coal in Oklahoma. Go down a hole, get you some coal. If you want food, clothes or groceries, just go in the hole and stay there." Then he'd sing a song.

AMY GOODMAN: In 1940, Woody Guthrie appeared on a New York radio program featuring the folk singer Leadbelly.

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Good afternoon. Your municipal station presents another in the series, "Folks Songs of America," featuring that great Negro folk singer of Louisiana, Huddie Ledbetter, better known to you as Leadbelly. And Leadbelly has as his guest today the dustiest Dust Bowler of them all, Woody Guthrie of Oklahoma.

WOODY GUTHRIE: Well, I think now we're going to sing you one. Here's a song here that has to do with a book and a motion picture that come out here a while back by the name of *The Grapes of Wrath*, wrote down by a man, John Steinbeck, who threw the pack on his back and went right out amongst the people to see just what is going on in the United States. And it just so happened that he hit a jackpot, because he knew what—where he was going and knew what he was writing about. So, I didn't read the book, but then I seen the picture three times. And I come home, and I sat down. I wrote up a little piece about it. The name of this is "The Ballad of Tom Joad."

[singing] *Tom Joad got out of that old McAlester Pen
There he got his parole
After four long years on a man killing charge
Tom Joad come a walking down the road, poor boy
Tom Joad come a walking down the road*

*It was there he found him a truck driving man
There he got him a ride
Said: "I just got a-loose from the old penitentiary
Charge called Homicide, poor boy, it was a charge called Homicide.*

AMY GOODMAN: Woody Guthrie performing on the radio in 1940. That same year, he formed the Almanac Singers with Pete Seeger and others. I asked Will Kaufman, author of *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*, to talk about the significance of the group.

WILL KAUFMAN: The Almanac Singers were really spearheaded by Pete Seeger and Millard Lampell and Lee Hays, and it had various personnel in this band. They were a—really wanted to form, I guess, what would have been the first self-consciously proletarian, progressive music group in America, group of singers. The idea was using song as a means of championing the union movement and the anti-intervention movement, until of course the war starts, and then they do their flip-flop and go from being anti-interventionists into war champions. They didn't last very long. They're dissolved, they're broken up by about 1942. But they wrote quite a few songs which were sort of the prototype for many of the political folk groups that followed, including the Weavers, which in a sense grows out of the Almanac Singers, as some of the same people who were in that

group become the Weavers, as well.

AMY GOODMAN: Paul Robeson—when did Woody Guthrie meet Paul Robeson, the famous singer, actor, dogged by the U.S. government, by the FBI? They took back his passport.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah. He would have—I guess it would have been around in the late '40s, when he actually met Robeson, because both of them were on the board of People's Songs, which was an organization started by Pete Seeger as a means, again, of energizing the union movement through song. And he admired Paul Robeson very much. I don't believe he ever sang with them. I saw one letter in which he mentions having met him. But he certainly supported him. And he was there, of course, during these—the Peekskill Riots of 1949.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, talk about the Peekskill Riots. Exactly what happened?

WILL KAUFMAN: OK, 1949, August, late August, early September of 1949, the Civil Rights Congress, through People's Songs, got Paul Robeson to agree to sing a benefit concert at the golfing grounds up in—or the Lakeland picnic area up in Peekskill, Westchester County. And before Robeson even got to the grounds, he never—in fact, he never even made it to the grounds, because for the whole previous week, the *Peekskill Evening Star* and other local newspapers and the Ku Klux Klan and other right-wing organizations were firing up the populists to prevent Robeson and to prevent his followers from coming to Peekskill. Robeson—you know, it was all this Robeson, you know, Jew-loving commie kind of stuff like that, because Robeson had declared—his crime was declaring, in the midst of the Cold War, that no African American would voluntarily go to war with the Soviet Union. He'd been to the Soviet Union. He said he was treated with more respect there than he was ever treated in the United States. And for that heresy, he was met with a burning cross on the hills above Peekskill, which, you know, kind of proved his point. And so, he never made it to the grounds there, but the concertgoers did. They were on the grounds there, and they were met by masked gangs of men and women and teenagers hurling rocks and abuse and beating them up with, you know, fence posts and baseball bats, and destroying the grounds and what have you.

And so, Robeson is not able to sing at Peekskill that week. But he makes a declaration. He says, "I don't get scared when fascism comes near, like it has at Peekskill." And he says, "I'm going to come back in a week, and I'm going to sing this concert." And in the intervening week, they amass between 20,000 and 30,000 supporters to protect Robeson and to protect the concertgoers. And they make it into the grounds. He sings the concert. He's buzzed by police helicopters, FBI helicopters, who try to destroy the sound. But he sings the concert. And then, there's no violence on the grounds, but the concertgoers, as they're leaving, they are directed deliberately into an ambush road by the Westchester County police. And all along the road there, there are gangs of teenagers and mostly young people with rocks and boulders piled high at periodic staging posts along the road all the way towards the Bronx, on bridges overhead. And they are destroying the cars. They're throwing boulders through the windows. Glass is shattering. Hundreds of people are getting injured. Pete Seeger was there. He recalled what it was like to have his car surrounded by mobs, rocked back and forth. He's got, even now, embedded into his chimney breast in his home up in Beacon, New York, a huge boulder which had crashed through the windscreen and almost killed his young son Danny. And this is collusion between the Westchester County police and the Ku Klux Klan and the gangs and the newspapers and what have you.

And Woody Guthrie was there. He was—I was—really been surprised that none of the major biographies about Woody have made a point of actually placing him physically at Peekskill, because he was so astounded by what he saw. He was on a bus with Lee Hays, and he said, you

know, "I've seen some bad stuff, but this is about the worst I have ever seen." And Lee Hays remembered that, that, you know, Woody was leading these frightened people in the bus. He was leading them in singing songs, like I'm—you know, "Takes a worried man to sing a worried song, I'm worried now but I won't be worried long." And he's got really good attitude to him. You know, he's making quite brave jokes, like, you know, "Anybody got a rock? There's a window what needs to be opened back here." You know, things like that. And at one point, Hays remembered that Woody pinned up a shirt against the window to stop the glass from breaking inwards, and he said, "Wouldn't you know it? Woody pinned up a red shirt." You know.

And Woody was so astounded by what he saw, in the space of a month he wrote like 20, 25 songs about Peekskill, that he never recorded. He put them into a—he put them into a makeshift little collection of songs called "Peekskill Songs." He never recorded any of them, but Billy Bragg, you know, the English radical folk singer—about 20 years ago, Nora Guthrie, Woody's daughter, who presided over the Archives, began inviting contemporary musicians in to put some of her dad's lyrics to music. And one of these that Billy Bragg put to music didn't end up on the double album that came out of there, *Mermaid Avenue*, it was called, that he did with Wilco, but they did record it. It didn't end up in the final track, but it's one of Woody's great odes to Paul Robeson and what happened at Peekskill.

[singing] *Paul Robeson he's the man
Who faced down the Ku Klux Klan
Over Peekskill's golfing ground
His words came sounding
And all around him there
To jump and clap and cheer
I sent the best I had
My thirty thousand.*

*The Klansman leader said
Old Paul would lose his head
When thirty-five thousand vets
Broke up his concert.
But less than four thousand came
To side in with the Klan
And around Paul's lonesome oak
My thirty thousand.*

*A beersoaked brassy band
Went snortling around the grounds
Four hundred noble souls
Westchester's manhood
And you know they looked exactly like
Fleas on a tiger's back
Or lost fish in the waters of
My thirty thousand.*

*When Paul had sung and gone
Mothers and babies going home
Cops came with guns and clubs
And they clubbed and beat 'em
Well I would hate to be a cop*

*Caught with a bloody stick,
'Cause you can't bash the brains
Of thirty thousand.*

*Each eye you tried to gouge,
Each skull you tried to crack
Has got a thousand thousand friends
All along this green grass
If you furnish the skull someday
I'll pass out the clubs and guns
To the billion hands that love
My thirty thousand.*

*Each wrinkle on your face
I will know it at a glance
You cannot run and hide
Nor duck nor dodge them
And your carcass and your deeds
Will fertilize the seeds
Of the ones who stood to guard
My thirty thousand.*

AMY GOODMAN: Will Kaufman, American radical, Woody Guthrie. *Woody Guthrie, American Radical* is his book. Howard Fast said about Peekskill, "That's the sound of Fascism. Not in Germany, but here in America. Remember it!" Talk more about the red-baiting at that time and how Guthrie responded to that.

WILL KAUFMAN: Well, it was going on—the red-baiting really started with the—even before, I suppose, the election of Truman in the late '40s. First what Woody watches, to his astonishment, is the purging of the union movement. I mean, the communist movement, the Communist Party and affiliated organizations had worked to build the American—many of the American unions and the CIO and what have you. And then they join in the purge, right after the war, of much of the left wing and much of the militancy of the labor movement. So that's the first thing that Woody watches to his utter disillusionment. He calls himself—he says, you know, "My radical soul is so lonesome at this point." He feels increasingly marginalized politically.

And then, of course, with the Cold War and the Truman doctrine about containing communism in Greece, Woody writes songs against Truman, writes songs expressing his astonishment that Britain and the United States could support the Greek monarchy against the workers rising there, and just sees not only the labor movement and the union movement becoming increasingly—the fangs brought out of it, drawn out of it, but then elsewhere in the wider culture, where basically McCarthyism takes hold. He sees Hanns Eisler being deported and writes a song about that, expressing his fears about what life in a McCarthy-dominated America might be like.

But then something happens. His Huntington's disease kicks in seriously about 1952, and so he is increasingly immobilized, increasingly—his behavior is increasingly more erratic, and he finds that he has difficulty writing. He can't speak as well. He can't—he gets increasing bodily—a lack of coordination. And he sort of drops out—after 1952, 1953, he's pretty—he's sort of becoming less and less of a public figure at that point. But he is watching from the sidelines what is going on.

Pete Seeger gets called to the McCarthy committee. Well, McCarthy is gone, but the committee is certainly still there, 1955. And unlike Burl Ives, who named names to the committee, and unlike Josh White, who called himself a communist dupe or a dupe of the communists, and they—Woody excoriated them in letters. I mean, some real bitchy stuff coming out of Woody Guthrie about his former friends there. Pete Seeger decides to take the First Amendment, not the Fifth. He takes the First Amendment: "You have no right to ask me these questions, you sitting up there on that—you know, in your inquisitorial dais there." And so, he gets slapped with a contempt of Congress citation, and he's convicted. And he's looking at 10 years in jail. And it's not until 1961 that his conviction is overturned on a technicality—got nothing to do with a moral standing. In fact, ironically, the judge who overturned it was Julius Hoffman, who sent the Rosenbergs to the chair. But—

AMY GOODMAN: Not so far away from where he was, at Sing Sing.

WILL KAUFMAN: Not so far, that's right.

AMY GOODMAN: In Ossining, New York.

WILL KAUFMAN: That's right, yeah, yeah. So, Woody is certainly aware of the McCarthy committee. He knew that he was on a number of lists, because he was mentioned a few times in HUAC testimony. He was named a few times. And he'd say, you know, "Thank God I'm on these lists. I mean, there'd be something wrong if I wasn't on McCarthy's lists, you know?" Things like that.

AMY GOODMAN: You mentioned that Pete Seeger went before HUAC—

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah.

AMY GOODMAN: —the House Un-American Activities Committee. Guthrie was never called before it, but he did write an impassioned defense of Pete Seeger.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah. It's one of the most heartbreaking things to read that I came across in the Archives. It's a letter that he wrote to Pete Seeger. And Woody's—one of the symptoms of Huntington's disease is that it has an incredible impact upon one's sense of language—sentence construction, spelling, wordplay, whatever. His biographer Joe Klein calls it "linguistic anarchy." And so, he wrote a very moving letter to Pete Seeger, basically saying, "Look, Pete, I hear you're not going to have—you may not have to go to jail now, and that's great. But I've never heard you say one evil or hateful or dangerous thing, and these people on this un-American committee are the most un-Americanistic people I've ever heard of." And stuff like that. So—

AMY GOODMAN: Would you like to read the letter?

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah, when—he's talking about Harold Leventhal, his manager, Harold Leventhal, or Hal, and Fred Hellerman of the Weavers, who came to visit Woody in hospital. And Woody wrote to Seeger. He says, "Hal and Freddy told me when they visited me here a few little weeks ago how you mite not have to go to jail for another two or more years for refusing to testify before my unnamerican committee theyre all a big bunch of the very unnamericanistic people I ever did hear of. ... To me you are just another goody martyr Pete over on my side of gods eternal love since I never did ever even hear you speakout actout nor so much as even breathe out one little breathe of hateyful hatreds of no earthy sort my crazy committee to me are always my very worst sorts of haters always anyways."

AMY GOODMAN: That was the letter that Woody Guthrie wrote—

WILL KAUFMAN: That Woody wrote to Pete Seeger.

AMY GOODMAN: —in defense of Pete Seeger.

WILL KAUFMAN: Yeah.

AMY GOODMAN: Before HUAC, the House Un-American Activities Committee. What did Woody Guthrie himself feel were his most important achievements?

WILL KAUFMAN: He would say, as he did say, just telling the stories of people who he encountered and putting their stories to music. He often said, "Yeah, I haven't written an original word in my life. Everything I write down is something I heard from you out there, and I'm just telling you something you already know." So he would say that he was—used music as a means of telling stories that otherwise would not get told, from people who would not be heard otherwise. And as far as he was concerned, that was his life's mission.

AMY GOODMAN: Will Kaufman, author of *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*.

This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman. As we continue our Woody Guthrie special, we turn to the British rocker and activist, Billy Bragg. In 1998 and 2000, Bragg participated in two well-known albums paying tribute to Woody Guthrie. On *Mermaid Avenue* Volumes 1 and 2, Billy Bragg composed music for lyrics written by Woody Guthrie and performed many of the songs alongside the album's other main contributor, the band Wilco. I asked Billy Bragg to talk about how the project came about.

BILLY BRAGG: About 20 years ago, it was now, I did a show here in New York City in Central Park with Pete Seeger to celebrate Woody's—what would have been Woody's 80th birthday in 1992. And I met his daughter Nora, and she told me that in the Woody Guthrie archive they had lyrics of songs that Woody had written during his lifetime, which although Woody had written lyrics and music, he had actually kept the tunes in his head. He couldn't write music notation. Now, I can't do that. I don't write music notation, so I understood where he was coming from. And she invited me to come and look at some of these lyrics, with a view to write some new tunes, to give them life, really.

And I was a bit skeptical about this. I think I might have said to her something like, "Surely this is Bob Dylan's job, not mine." But she felt that she needed someone both from a different generation and also from perhaps, you know, another culture, to be able to step back a little bit from Woody, rather than someone who grew up singing "This Land Is Your Land." And she saw a link, and there is a link, with myself and Woody. You know, Joe Strummer of The Clash, one of my heroes, was a

huge Woody Guthrie fan. In fact, he used to call himself Woody before he called himself Joe Strummer. You know, obviously Dylan, another huge influence on me, was hugely influenced by Woody. And then you get back to the little guy himself. You know, he's the father of the political song tradition, as far as, you know, in our culture is concerned. So—

AMY GOODMAN: Talk a little about him, for people, young people especially.

BILLY BRAGG: Well—yeah, well, Woody Guthrie was born in 1912 in Okemah, Oklahoma, and during the last Great American Depression, he was writing incredible songs about the internal migrations in the United States of America, people who had to leave the Dust Bowl, the areas of the Texas Panhandle, of Oklahoma, of Arizona, and move to the fruit orchards in California. It was a huge mass migration, similar to the kind of migration—it's kind of a east-to-west migration. Now the migration is kind of like south to north that's going on. But that great migration is still going on. And Woody wrote these incredible songs and eventually ended up coming to New York City in 1940, lived out in Coney Island.

And although he himself never really had, during his lifetime, had a career in which he—you know, anything like mine—you know, he never did gigs, he never went on tour, he never sold T-shirts, he barely made records—the people around him, people like Pete Seeger and the Weavers, were singing his songs and popularizing his songs. And this was particularly during the 1960s in the folk revival. And people like Bob Dylan, you know, had heard legend of this guy Woody Guthrie. It was almost like perhaps he might not exist. He might just be, you know, like Johnny Appleseed. People did think, in the '60s, did he exist? But he did exist, and he was actually—he was infirm. He was suffering from a terrible degenerative disease called Huntington's disease, and he was in the Brooklyn Hospital here in New York. Dylan saw him before he died. He died in 1967.

But his legacy was to write the—I suppose, what you might call the founding songs of political pop, you know. And I would argue that he was the first alternative musician. He wrote his most famous song, "This Land Is Your Land," as an alternative to the number one hit single in jukeboxes in 1940, when he was hitchhiking to New York. Every time he went and stopped in a bar, someone would put this song on the jukebox. And it was Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." And he hated it. It was like, how can you say that about—you know, it was still the Depression. In the 1940s, the Depression hadn't ended in the United States of America. It was only the Second World War that we ended the Depression. And he sat down, and he wrote this song called "God Blessed America for You and Me," and which later became "This Land Was Made for You and Me." So, Woody was the—he was the first punk rocker, and the last Elizabethan balladeer. He was many, many things, Woody.

AMY GOODMAN: So talk about some of the lyrics that you found.

BILLY BRAGG: We—the album that we made, *Mermaid Avenue*, myself and Wilco in the late '90s, we actually recorded a lot more material that has never been released. And next year, we're hoping to release that whole full third—a whole third album, another 16-, 17-track stuff. But Woody's original songs, the songs that he wrote back in the 1930s—you know, I mean, the one that I'm going to play for you now, which is one of his classic songs, with these images of people losing their houses to the banks, of gamblers on the stock markets making millions, when ordinary working people can't afford to make ends meet, and of people dying for want of proper free healthcare, you know, this song could have been written anytime in the last five years, really, in the United States of America. Actually, this song is over 70 years old. It's called "I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore."

*[singing] I ain't got no home, I'm just a-roamin' 'round,
Just a wanderin' worker, I go from town to town.
And the police make it hard for me no matter where I go
And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.
No, I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

*My brothers and my sisters are stranded on this road,
A long and dusty road that a million feet have trod;
Now the rich man took my home and drove me from my door
And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.
No, I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

*I was farmin' on the shares, and always I was poor;
My crops I laid into the banker's store.
And my wife took down and died all on the cabin floor,
And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.
No, I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

*I mined in your mines and I gathered in your corn
I been working, mister, since the day that I was born
Now I worry all the time like I never did before
And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.
No, I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

*Now as I look around, it's mighty plain to see
This world is such a strange and a funny place to be;
Where the gamblin' man is rich while the workin' man is poor,
And I ain't got no home in this world anymore.
No, I ain't got no home in this world anymore.*

AMY GOODMAN: The British singer and activist, Billy Bragg, covering Woody Guthrie's song, "I Ain't Got No Home in this World Anymore." Woody Guthrie was born a hundred years ago, on July 14, 1912.