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**RIP
Paul
Krassner**

**Mental
Illness
and
Mass
Shooters**

**Christians
Turn Left**

**America
First and
Diverse**

**Invading
Area 51**



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ISSUE 73
NUMBER 1
VOLUME 24



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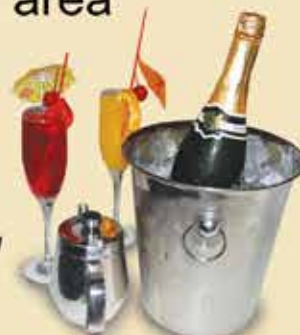
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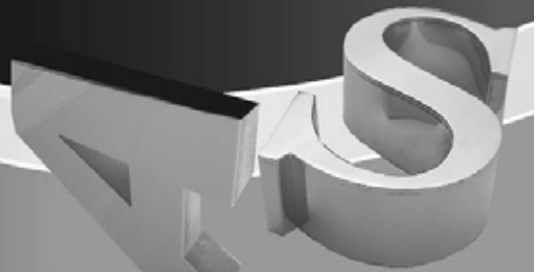
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AMASS

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"Friendly Fire: Paul Krassner (1932 - 2019)"

Cover design by Heli Swenson

In 1970, satirist Paul Krassner testified at the Chicago 7 trial (the Chicago 8, before the judge ordered defendant Bobby Seale bound and gagged) while on LSD. His friend and Yippie co-founder, Abbie Hoffman, wasn't amused. But Krassner pushed boundaries well beyond that. His "Parts Left Out of the Kennedy Book" delighted the hip and disgusted the squares (*The Realist*, May 1967). He even tripped with Groucho Marx; Groucho had been cast in Otto Preminger's film about hippies, *Skidoo*, and wanted Krassner to teach him what it was all about. By the mid-70s, his brigade of enlightened *counterculturales* was scattered, but Krassner never abandoned his pen-is-mightier-than-creeping-fascism free thinking. He wrote numerous books, and the satirical journal he launched in 1958, *The Realist*, made it to 2001. Krassner remained an iconoclast to iconoclasts—when he was dubbed "the father of the underground press" he demanded a paternity test. He was the go-to-the-edger, inspiring seekers of their freedoms to express, to poke, smoke, or rip-snort the overdogs a new one—funnily. The desire to laugh free will never die, unless we don't read him. PaulKrassner.com.

- Hank Rosenfeld

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LAUNCHING A MAGAZINE

PAUL KRASSNER

My friend Michael Simmons, who has been the editor of *National Lampoon*, recalls that *Cavalier* hired fine scribes. A few examples: Thomas Pynchon, Philip Roth, William Saroyan, Isaac Asimov, Theodore Sturgeon. Characters show up from Andy Warhol to Timothy Leary. And the photos of models weren't even soft porn, merely tits and ass.

Cavalier was launched by Fawcett Publications in 1952. Men's magazine *Cavalier* (motto: "For the American Male") was published the year before *Playboy*, to whom it has often been compared. Back in the day, *Cavalier* tried to be seen as slightly hipper, more youthful, and was considered a bit more clever than its big name rival. Almost an anti-establishment *Playboy*. A slogan stated: "Your dad bought *Playboy*; you bought *Cavalier*."

I Became a Columnist

I was invited to write a column, named "The Naked Emperor," for *Cavalier*; that was beginning to publish underground writers and artists. They paid me \$1,000 a month. My first column, in 1964, was a report on an auction of two-inch squares from the hotel bedsheets slept on by the Beatles during their first trip to America.

There were 300 screaming young girls, off on a fetishist's holiday. Obviously, there wouldn't be enough items to go around, but it was announced that the Beatles' unwashed towels and bed linens were to be cut into two-inch squares and sold for \$1 each. The price included a notarized statement of authenticity.

My second column was about Lenny Bruce—titled "Lenny the Lawyer," since he defended himself in trials. He was arrested for obscene performances only because there were no blasphemy laws, and he ridiculed religious leaders. I went to the bank and deposited my check, withdrawing half of it in cash, a \$500 bill. Lenny was alone in his funky hotel room on Christmas Day when I presented it to him. And, with a large safety pin, Lenny attached the \$500 bill to the outside breast pocket of his dungaree jacket.

After JFK Assassination

In another column of mine, "Jack Ruby and His Dirty Little Secret," it began, "Lenny Bruce once told me how all the night club comics used to gossip about Jack Ruby's 'tattoo of a lady's *schmutzik* (translate: pussy) in his armpit.'" If it weren't a fact, I was quite willing to settle for an apocryphal allusion which nevertheless crystallized the entire personality of that alleged murderer who wanted so very much to be liked.

I say *alleged* because upon Ruby's own death Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade said he would dismiss the murder charge against him, a promise which has since been kept, although no such posthumous grace was ever officially bestowed on Lee Harvey Oswald, considered a lone assassin who shot President Kennedy. See, they grant you retroactive innocence only in the face of innumerable witnesses who were present at the actual event through the legal miracle of inadvertent televised coverage.

Now Jack Ruby's dirty little secret has been forever sealed away in his armpit by the hymen of history.

Oh yeah, and at Lenny's funeral, that safety pin was still attached on his denim jacket.

Jules Siegel

Two years before Lenny's death, with his permission I published his obituary in my own magazine, *The Realist*. Before the issue went to press, he called his mother and a few others to let them know it would only be a hoax. The point was that he couldn't get work and his work was his life so he might as well be dead. And if people regretted that they hadn't helped him, well, now they could have a second chance because he was still alive. The obituary evoked inquiries from newspapers, wire services,

foreign publications, radio and TV.

"What's the meaning of it?" one editor asked me. "There's a lot of excitement at the city desk."

"That is the meaning of it."

A few years later, without my permission, Jules Siegel, the editor of a short-lived magazine, *Cheetah*, published a fake obituary of me. I thought it was funny. An Associated Press reporter called, and I explained that it was a hoax.

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"Of course. I would tell you if I was dead."

Siegel started writing for *Cavalier*. His first assignment was a profile of Sterling Hayden, an actor

**So, now in 2019,
fighting over
free speech
has been
happening heavily
at Berkeley
campus again.**

— Paul Krassner

best known in *Dr. Stranglove* or *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

Journalist Adam Ellsworth described Siegel's "Goodbye Surfing, Hello God" with his most famous example of rock journalism, though his most revolutionary was his article, "The Big Beat." It appeared in *Cavalier* magazine in 1965 and was one of the earliest writings he'd ever seen on the development of rock and roll, from slaves singing in chains on their way to America to Bob Dylan "going electric" at the Newport Folk Festival.

Then Jules' friend, Arthur Kretchmer, became *Cavalier's* managing editor. "When the editorial director later resigned," Kretchmer said, "there was a 24-hour hiatus before the new editorial director arrived." Siegel and Kretchmer had been discussing the possibility of publishing an issue on rock and roll, so to make it happen, Kretchmer went into the office at night and retyped the magazine's schedule to include their ideas.

When the new editorial director started, Kretchmer handed him the schedules and said, "Here's what we're working on." The new editorial director suspected nothing and the rock and roll issue went ahead. Once the laughter died down, Jules talked for a good 25 minutes about some of the ups and downs of his writing career and how hard it is to make a living as any kind of a writer, let alone a "rock journalist." And the people who created it, seriously.

Now everybody writes about rock and roll that way. Jules was one of the people who did it first. He died of a heart attack on November 17, 2012 at the age of 77. He was a brilliant author, but neither *Rolling Stone* nor the *New York Times* honored him with an obituary. Not even a fake one.

Comix

Art Spiegelman tells me about his work at *Cavalier* 50 years ago:

I was first invited into the mag to do two full-color comix pages in 1969 (when being printed in color was a Very Big Deal for me as was Getting Paid more than 25 bucks for a drawing), somehow in proximity to a big article on underground comix. It was around the time Vaughn Bode was made a regular contributor to the magazine, They were running some Crumb "Fritz the Cat" pages. All thanks to their hip, laid back and kind editor, Alan LeMond.

I also did some gag cartoons, short strips and occasional illustrations for *Cavalier* (one especially bad drawing for a story by Bruce Jay Friedman, I recall). My work as an apprentice underground cartoonist taking too many drugs was really, really awful. By the time I'd gotten incrementally better as a cartoonist in the first half of the 1970s I was regularly doing illustrations for soft-core fiction stories in *Cavalier's* low-rent sister mags, *Dude*, *Gent* and *Nugget* (even wrote a story or two there and got several of my San Francisco comix cronies -- Spain Rodriguez, Bill Griffith and Justin Greene) illustration gigs for those mags as well.

[Note in Wikipedia: *Maus* is a graphic novel by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, serialized from 1980



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to 1991. It depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor. The work employs postmodernist techniques and represents Jews as mice, Germans as cats, and Poles as pigs. In 1992, *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize.]

Coming and Going

I wrote some movie reviews for *Cavalier*. I recall that *Midnight Cowboy* was 50 years ago. I always went to two screenings. The first one I would go stoned with magic mushrooms. The second one I took notes. However, I got fired by *Cavalier*.

They declined to publish a particular column—my review of *MASH* as though it were a Busby Berkeley musical called *Gook Killers* of 1970—ostensibly on the grounds of bad taste, but I learned that three wholesalers had told the publisher they were pressured by the FBI and would refuse to distribute *Cavalier* if my name appeared in it.

On top of that, my name was on a list of sixty-five “radical” campus speakers, released by the House Internal Security Committee. The blacklist was published in the *New York Times*, and picked up by newspapers across the country. It might have been a coincidence, but my campus-speaking engagement-bookings stopped abruptly. It felt just like a film.

Oh, Well

It was over for me, but it had been fun—like the issue with only the one large red headline on the *Cavalier* cover: “BEAT ‘EM SENSELESS FIRST”—THE FREE SPEECH CONTROVERSY, BY PAUL KRASSNER...

At the University of California, Berkeley on September 1964, Dean Katherine Towle banned posters, easels and tables at the Bancroft-Telegraph Street entrance to the Berkeley campus “because of interference

with flow of traffic.” She also reminded student groups of “rules prohibiting the collection of funds and the use of University facilities for the planning and implementing of off-campus political and social action.”

As a result, students held a sit-in that lasted until 3 a.m. Next day, ten tables were manned again, and a campus policeman approached one of the tables (manned by the Congress of Racial Equality) where a dozen persons were seated. One was singled out and placed under arrest. But before you could say nonviolent demonstration, the police car was surrounded, its captors reaching as many as 3,000 students. During the late evening, bored fraternity men gathered and tossed lighted cigarettes and eggs on those sitting in the plaza. The demonstrators responded with silence.

Next day, 450 police assembled on campus to remove the cop car and its arrested inhabitant, but an agreement to negotiate was reached and the demonstrators dispersed. One of the folk songs to come out of the Free Speech Movement was *If I Negotiate With You* to the tune of the Beatles’ *If I Fell in Love With You*.

Over the next couple of months there was a series of sit-ins and attempted negotiations, and then, on December 2, the infamous Sproul Hall sit-in. It took twelve hours for 800 students to be arrested by some 600 instructors of a new course called Introductory Police Brutality. These were from the lab notes students took:

“We should do like they do in them foreign countries—beat ‘em senseless first, then throw them in the bus.”

There was a freshman co-ed at Berkeley who—long after she had forgotten what some professor spouted during an official lecture about Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*—would remember, with perhaps a twinge of frightened pride, learning from a fellow demonstrator that if she planned to go limp when the police arrested her, it

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would be an act of practical feminine foresight to remove the earrings from her pierced lobes in advance.


So, now in 2019, fighting over free speech has been happening heavily at Berkeley campus again. Meanwhile, Trump grabbed the pussy of the Statue of Liberty. *Cavalier*, anyone?

This is the last piece Paul Krassner wrote. We extend our condolences to his family and many friends.



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★★★★★ 5/21/2018

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OCT 3, THURSDAY 8:00 PM HIRAM LAREW & RICK LUPERT

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OCT 4, FRIDAY 7:00 PM THE OTHER VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

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OCT 5, SATURDAY 3:00 PM THE OTHER VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Special admission. Check the website for more information.

OCT 6, SUNDAY 2:00 PM WHAT LUCK! NEW POETRY

With Jack Grapes, Bill Harding, Rick Lupert, Suzanne O'Connell, Penny Perry and Wendy Rainey. Regular admission. **

OCT 6, SUNDAY 5:00 PM FIRST SUNDAY OPEN READING

Our popular monthly open reading. Features this month, TBA. Hosted by Steve Goldman. Sign ups begin at 4:45 PM. Five-minute limit. ◆

OCT 6, SUNDAY 5:00 PM DUENDE NIGHTS

Open mic and featured Latin-American poets hosted by Antonieta Villamil. FREE but donations appreciated.

OCT 10, THURSDAY 8:00 PM ON VALENCIA STREET: Poems and Ephemera by Jack Micheline

ON VALENCIA STREET is a posthumous collection of previously unpublished writings, and ephemera, by Jack Micheline. Edited by Tate Swindell, from Micheline's personal archives, with an introduction by Eric Mingus. Eric, Tate, S.A. Griffin and Richard Modiano will read from the new book & tell stories of Micheline's impact on their lives. Regular admission. **

OCT 11, FRIDAY 8:00 PM SUSAN SONDE NEW WORK

Susan Sonde reads new poetry. Regular admission. Members FREE

OCT 12, SATURDAY 4:00 PM LUMMOX PRESS

LummoX Press and LummoX # 8 announces it's first group reading featuring: Lynn Bronstein, Don Campbell (and Calokie), Jackie Chou, Kit Courter, Sharyl Collin, Alicia Viguer-Espert, Martina Gallegos, Friday Gretchen, Charles Harmon, Gil Hagen Hill, Marie Lecrivain, Mike Meloan, Linda Neal, Kevin Ridgeway, Lisa Segal, Nancy Shiffrin, Vachine and Kelsey Bryan-Zwick. Your host: RD Armstrong. Regular admission. **

OCT 12, SATURDAY 8:00 PM REVISIONIST HISTORIES & FEMINIST POETICS

Join poet and author Hagar Peeters (Malva, DoppelHouse 2018) in conversation with UCLA professor of Latin American Literature Verónica Cortínez to explore Pablo Neruda's political legacy in light of his silence about his own mute daughter, Malva. Peeters' magical-realist novel revisits Neruda and his friends' poetry to shed light on Malva's birth and life, and imagines the voice she was denied. Regular admission. **

OCT 13, SUNDAY 2:00 PM SOAP BOX POETS

This is your home. Bring your words. The mic is yours. Sign ups begin at 1:45 PM. There is a five minute limit. Hosted by Jessica Wilson Cardenas. In the Mike Kelley Gallery. ◆

OCT 13, SUNDAY 7:00 PM VOICE IN THE WELL CARRY ON

Public Works Improvisational Theatre presents an evening of lively variety arts programming - celebrating talented writers, storytellers, poets, musicians and comics. Every month, we explore topical themes for your pleasure and enjoyment! Hosted by Eric Vollmer. Regular Admission. **

OCT 17, THURSDAY RACHEK ZUCKER & SARAH VAP

Join poets Rachel Zucker and Sarah Vap

for an evening of readings and discussion to celebrate the publication of Zucker's SoundMachine (Wave Books, 2019). Regular admission. **

OCT 19, SATURDAY 8:00 PM GEDDA ILVES

GEDDA ILVES will read from her new book: "As Butterfly to a River", New and Selected Poems, with participation of MARIANO ZARO, GLORIA VANDO, HELENE CARDONA, BRENDAN CONSTANTINE, hosting. Live music. ◆

OCT 20, SUNDAY 5:00 PM SALIENT SUNDAY OPEN READING

Sign ups at 4:30. Hosted by Radomir Luza & Patricia Murphy. ◆

OCT 20, SUNDAY 8:00 PM KEROUAC THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY

Jack Kerouac died on October 21, 1969. Gerald Nicosia explores the fate of Kerouac's literary legacy. Nicosia is the author of Memory Babe, regarded as the best Kerouac biography. With S.A. Griffin in conversation. Regular admission. **

OCT 20, SUNDAY 4:00 PM LAUREL BLOSSOM & PATRICK DONNELLY

Longevity, Laurel Blossom's sixth book, which Per Contra called "one of the important book-length poems of the 21st century," is a book-length narrative prose poem, a story about sisterhood told, in fragments and in the heightened language of poetry. Patrick Donnelly reads from his fourth book of poems, which Ilya Kaminsky called "a book of revelations of what it means to be human, to be hurt, to be awed, to be stunned by our world." Regular admission. **

OCT 25, FRIDAY 8:00 PM GREAT WEATHER FOR MEDIA

Birds Fall Silent in the Mechanical Sea is an exhilarating collection of contemporary poetry and fiction from established and emerging writers across the United States and beyond. The anthology also contains an interview with musician/artist Walter

Steding. Regular Admission. **

OCT 26, SATURDAY 4:00 PM KEVEN BELLOWES

Keven Bellows is the author of two books of poetry-- "Taking Your Own True Name" and "The Blue Darter" about Jim Bellows, the legendary newspaper editor who was her husband of 36 years. She has also edited several books. the latest is "The Hungry Heart" by Joanna Poppink. She is a poet, an editor and a writing coach. Regular admission. **

OCT 27, SUNDAY 2:00 PM THE NEBRASKA GIRLS OPEN READING

Sign-ups at 1:30 PM. Hosted by Wyatt Underwood. ◆

OCT 27, SUNDAY 4:00 PM UNIDENTIFIABLE ASIANS

Unidentifiable Asians" features readings, book signings, and a Q&A from authors who have recently published new work reinventing immigrant American narratives. Regular Admission. **

OCT 27, SUNDAY 7:00 PM 7 DUDELY CINEMA

Pig Blood Vampire (67 minutes, 2019) Nick Josephs' (in person) absurd allegory on America evoking "the French New Wave meets Troma," and Jean Cocteau's Blood of the Poet. And GHOSTLY RIA LIVE CINEMA (Recondite Illusionary Apparitions) Live music (with Nick Josephs & BSP) merges with experimental films, poetry and Alita Arose's Dark Goddess Shadow Dancers to celebrate the Phantasmagoria of Halloween Goblins. ◆

OCT 31, THURSDAY 8:00 PM WEAR SOME FLOWERS IN YOUR HAIR

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NOVEMBER

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NOV 1, FRIDAY 8:00 PM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY FESTIVAL

NOV 2, SATURDAY 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY FESTIVAL

NOV 3, SUNDAY 5:00 PM FIRST SUNDAY OPEN READING ◆

NOV 3, SUNDAY 5:00 PM DUENDE NIGHTS OPEN READING ◆

NOV 3, SUNDAY 8:00 PM THE WATTS PROPHETS **

NOV 8, FRIDAY 8:00 PM WILL ALEXANDER, AMY CANTANZANO & ADAM DICKSON **

NOV 10, SUNDAY BEYOND BAROQUE ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

NOV 15, FRIDAY 8:00 PM MASON'S NOISE PARLOUR **

NOV 16, SATURDAY 8:00 PM DAVID ZASLOFF IN CONCERT **

NOV 17, SUNDAY 5:00 PM SALIENT SUNDAY OPEN READING

NOV 21, FRIDAY 8:00 PM WHAT BOOKS PRESS

NOV 23, SATURDAY 4:00 PM GIANT CLAW **

NOV 24, SUNDAY 2:00 PM THE NEBRASKA GIRLS OPEN READING ◆

DECEMBER

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DEC 5, THURSDAY 8:00 PM TRIBUTE TO LOU REED**

DEC 6, FRIDAY 8:00 PM J. RYAN STRADEL **

DEC 7, SATURDAY 2:00 PM HOLLY PRADO MEMORIAL

DEC 7, SATURDAY 8:00 PM SPRAWWL ! **

DEC 8, SUNDAY 2:00 PM SOAP BOX POETS OPEN READING ◆

DEC 8, SUNDAY 7:30 PM HOLIDAY FROLICS **

DEC 12, THURSDAY 8:00 PM NESTOR DIAZ DE VILLEGAS, ENRICO MARIO SANTI & JORGE BRIOSO **

DEC 13, FRIDAY 8:00 PM LEE ROSSI & ALEXANDRA UMLAS **

DEC 14, SATURDAY CAROL ELLIS PUBLICATION READING **

DEC 15, SUNDAY 5:00 PM SALIENT SUNDAY OPEN READING ◆



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LOS JUDÍOS SEFARDÍES REGRESAN

I

It is hard to imagine, standing at the top of La Rambla,
in the multicolored swirl of over dressed tourists, Mexican hats and Antonio Gaudí paraphernalia,
that I'm walking with my aunt and uncle, my cousins, recently returned from living in Mexican exile
to observe Yom Kippur this October 10, 1978
and that it was here in Barcelona on 19 July 1936 that
the opening shots were fired in what was to become the Spanish Civil War

II

October 5, 1938 Yom Kippur is celebrated in Barcelona
January 29, 1939 Barcelona falls to the fascists
May 1, 1940 the "Jewish Archive" is established
And the abbreviation "AJ" appears in the records of Jewish citizens
"Se le supone la peligrosidad propia de la raza judía (sefardita)"
The word "Jew" would be written in red ink on permits issued to Spanish Jews
And Spain's synagogues are shuttered

III

Sephardic Jews, who, since their ancestors were expelled from Spain in 1492
Spread through the centuries in a wide diaspora –
to the Ottoman Empire and the south of Italy;
to Spain's colonies in Central and South America;
and to outposts in what are now New Mexico, Texas and Mexico
while some continued to live an underground existence in their Spanish motherland
The first Republican government of 1871 permitted the free practice of religion
The Sepharadim opened their synagogues
And the 1934 Republican government allowed an immigration reform
which opened the door to descendants of Sephardic Jews

After four decades of centralizing, Catholicizing Francoism
The new democratic government once again allowed freedom of religion
And the synagogues reopened

IV

I walk with my relatives to this synagogue
One of 5 medieval synagogues still remaining
Against my will tears flow when I put on my keepah as I step through the entrance door--

V

The core values of Yom Kippur--
repentance of my own sins against humanity and forgiveness of those who have sinned against me –
resonate really deeply for me in this synagogue
I have a lot of repentance and forgiveness to do, and I'll be mindful of that
Some rabbis describe Yom Kippur as the day you look out from the top of the mountain
you've been climbing all year, can see your life from that perspective,
and have the chance to make changes and become a better, more human person--
I'll aim for that
Love to you all.

- Richard Modiano
Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center

PAUL KRASSNER: TOO HIP FOR THE GLOOM

HANK ROSENFELD

Good grief, good grief. - Wavy Gravy

On July 21, the night Paul Krassner died ["Long Live the Lord & Atheist of Political Satire!"] a few friends gathered in a Venice backyard to joke & smoke & fuck around as obscenely as possible. In good grief. In mourning celebration of a revolutionary life joyfully lived.

Krassner's cause was freedom: The wisdom to happily express yours, by as many means you find. Always feeding our heads with radical thoughts, his brainwaves put him at least thirty seconds ahead of everyone else. Try it; see what can happen! [*Express Yourself!* Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, 1970]

Toni Morrison once said that laughter is a way of "taking the reins in your own hands." And Krassner really took us on one outrageous fun ride. "Not only are things accelerating," he said. "The rate of acceleration is also accelerating." Can we evolve fast as we can to bring enormous change ASAP as he constantly challenged his readers and audiences?

Do we get him?—not that he ever played hard to get. Can we dig him? Appreciate eighty years of fearlessly fighting censorship? His wicked mocking of the upper asses? (Larry Hankin of the famed improvisational comedy troupe, the Committee: "The satirist's goal is to climb as high as he can into the tree of absurdity to see the baboon of reality exposing his rump above.")

I was too young in the Sixties to catch the original cream (curdled too soon) of the dream. When everything was everything [Jim Pepper's *Witchi-Tai-To*] and everybody hip was with everybody else hip. In '68, Krassner and the Youth International Party—he came up with "Yippie"—inspired political/cultural revolution in Chicago and beyond. I was twelve, watching it all on TV,

and asked my dad:

"Why are cops beating those kids in the street?"
"I don't know, son." [Question Authority! They don't know everything!]

The first time I saw Paul Krassner perform was in 1977 at the Village Gate. He was so kind, sticking around to confab after. Our conversations went on for forty years. As publisher of *The Realist* (1958-2001), he was my encourager-in-chief. Our only contract was a compact—his hand reaching from his heart out to my hand from my heart. If he's playing at that big karmic card table now, Krassner will never cheat. He always played fair. His radical seminal satirical quarterly featured Paul's "impolite interviews" with Vonnegut, Carlin, Lenny, Leary, Wavy, and Kesey, who explained why Sixties' shakers and groovers—his contemporaries—still stuck together:

"Nobody quits the mob."
Kesey also said, "Anyone who has seen the vision of what can be knows that he either has to do what has to be done in order to bring about what can be, or he is . . . fucking off."

There aren't too many of those leading lights still turned on, brothers and sisters.

In 1979, Krassner and I were journalists in San Francisco. Covering SFPD's White Night riots (Supervisor White got five years for murdering Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Milk), I escaped up Market Street but a cop beat Paul into permanent disability Hot Springs to celebrate with our mentor and his wife, Nancy Cain—they were an adoring couple. We brought a nine-buck Pavilions chocolate swirl cake. Melted. After blowing

out the candles, Paul said, "You know, I recently heard that 86 is the new 85." Later, he dryly explained that while rolling a joint he liked to smoke a joint "to enhance the experience."

In 2012, he drove in from the desert for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) Convention—ah, the bad old days. We did an interview there for public radio's KPCC. He told stories about taking acid with Groucho Marx and smoking a joint (w/opium) at John & Yoko's. [All Hail Marx & Lennon!] Yoko, who funded Krassner's free abortion referral service before *Roe v. Wade*, is pulling brownies from the oven. Meanwhile, Lennon doesn't pass the bone. To which Paul asks: "To *bogart* a joint, is that just

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— Hank Rosenfeld

an American expression, like Humphrey Bogart with the cigarette dangling from his lower lip?" John says [try this in Liverpoolian], "In England, if you remind somebody to pass the joint you lose your turn."

Around three years later, Krassner said he realized Lennon was just fucking with him.

Recently, I went to see the new Woodstock doc on the big screen. This version added a coda with the names of '69ers now gone scrolling up a black background like the Vietnam Memorial . . . Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jerry Garcia, Pigen, Keith Moon, John Entwistle, Max Yasgur, Abbie Hoffman . . .

"Paul Krassner to the pantheon, please!"

Hank Rosenfeld is an author, journalist, and radio storyteller. His fiction and nonfiction writings have appeared in numerous publications, including the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Village Voice*, *Spy* magazine, and the *Realist*.

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AMERICA FIRST AND DIVERSE

J O H N O ' K A N E

A solution to the border crisis is impossible without a comprehensive overhaul of the immigration system. Thomas Friedman suggested what one might look like after his onsite inspection of the San Ysidro border with Tijuana recently. Arguing against the random and chaotic system we have now, he pledged support for a “high wall” but also a “big gate,” insisting we must find a way to efficiently absorb those who will bring the skills and knowhow to strengthen our nation. Perhaps realizing this will constitute a sizable pool, he endorses aid to the countries where the bulk of migrants are coming from to stabilize their societies, as well as a revamped court system that can fairly process deserving asylum seekers (Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, 4/23/19).

Getting tough on entry, like most other nations, while continuing the legacy of welcoming immigrants began soon after the country's inception, is a kinder and gentler approach to exclusion than Trump's “America First” vision, which translates to a quite brutal practice, and a rebuke to the America Diverse vision from many Democrats that invites virtually all comers, whether applicants for citizenship or escapees from unstable environments. Given Trump's views on abortion he would perhaps be best served by going along with these Democrats and let large families of pro-life billboards spread through the hinterlands.

Friedman offers a passable general outline of a “solution.” Unfortunately, there's no political will in Congress to act. The last major piece of legislation was passed in the Reagan administration. President Obama urged Congress to act early in his first term but was forced to settle for DACA, his 2012 executive action. Trump's efforts to cancel this initiative through executive actions have spearheaded his aggressive campaign which is ironically not all that different than Obama's in terms of the numbers of people deported, but the issue of treatment and family separation is another matter.

What alliance of political voices will decide who

the deserving are and what skills are needed? Should this task be left to the private sector, specific profit-driven companies that serve their own constituents first, to make it happen? Enlightened wonks sustained by the clout of peer-driven, but far-from-neutral research? How will the formula be constructed for determining how many should be processed? What's too little; too many?

One thing for sure, the elites who decide these issues and whose employment is secured will not be impacted by the consequences of their choices.

A familiar refrain is that there are many labor jobs to be filled that existing citizens can't or won't do, and therefore we should keep these paths open. The value these workers put into the economy will benefit the larger society. This logic is at odds with Trump's nominal position—as opposed to his scattershot policy directives that support exclusion—that those here deserve priority,

and a restricted labor force can deliver value to them in the form of higher wages. So as migrants swell a labor market these citizens can experience real threats—some jobs are definitely taken in certain situations—and a glut of new arrivals can suppress wage levels.

The perennial problem with American capitalism is that its logic of differential rewards dispensed to different sub-classes and ethnicities in different regions over time is an irrational practice that pits people and groups against each other instead of the system that's responsible. This is hardly conducive to a welcoming synergy. And since wages are relatively low for labor the influx of new workers into the economy has a tendency to make current residents uneasy, especially

since new arrivals can be willing to work for less and this can lead to real job losses. But even if citizens never actually lose jobs to new arrivals they might constantly feel the existential threat of loss and be susceptible to politicians that stir up xenophobic sentiments. The facts about where the labor shortages actually are for migrants to fill might therefore be of little concern to workers at the lowest levels caught in this vortex. And inequality is so deep and pervasive now that few can imagine what a fair economy might look like. Reason can easily be replaced by the absurdity of resentments.

Barack Obama stated in a celebrated 2008 speech on race and class that if America is ever to become a free and equal country where all ethnicities exist in harmony to

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many problems.**

— John O'Kane

identify with one nation (the many in the one, *e pluribus unum*), we must get rid of the resentments that individuals and groups harbor against each other because they feel someone else's gain comes at their expense. To extirpate this bad dialectic is a formidable task since the capitalist system is structured through a language of trade-offs. Capital is generated and executed through differentials, especially the gap between acceptable—defined of course by those who own it—profit levels and wages. Wages that are too high threaten to dry up capital and investment. If resentments are to be modulated and we approach Obama's win-win vision the extreme inequality that now exists must be corrected. Arguably, this will mean the end of capitalism as we know it and at least the beginning of one that forces capital and communal values to coexist. This isn't going to change in time to transform ICE or cancel the family separation policy at the border. But if a comprehensive overhaul is to succeed in the long term the imbalance of excessive profiteering which fuels resentment has to be managed.

Not to mention imbalanced policies. The spectacle unfolding at the detention centers is worth noting. The horrific, prison-like conditions the detainees are being subjected to have been well documented. Calls to improve these conditions and give the detainees good healthcare ring eminently humane and rational. But how ironic is it that millions of American citizens at this moment are suffering the same deficiencies. How do we expect these victims to react to the implementation of improvements for those who are not citizens? Without attention to the gaps and insufficiencies in our current system that are pasted over by the "great economy" rhetoric, the win-lose dynamic will persist in spawning resentment.

The sectors of the labor markets that need workers have to be accurately identified. Letting the markets (owned by interests and hardly free and equal arbiters) dictate movements can produce chaotic reversals for citizens who lack the means to fight back. They can experience these events as virtual acts of war against them. They can become the vehicles of a kind of blowback, venting and spreading their frustrations as victims through groups and communities, weakening rational resolve and seeding suspicion and the sense of imminent threat like a contagion. Like in war, when the reciprocating deaths accumulate to the point where revenge explodes into a self-feeding frenzy and the issues that led to conflict are no longer known or of interest.

Evidence that President Trump is not simply anti-immigrant would seem to come from his statements about northern Europe. He welcomes those from the countries that are successful, "good" countries that send us credentialed professionals to, echoing Friedman, help us strengthen our nation. These homogenous countries are successful to a great extent of course because they've managed to—relatively—solve the inequality problem, though some certainly come here for the lower taxes. But this position would seem inconsistent with "America 1st."

Do we have a shortage of people to fill the grad schools for educating the professional workforce? The competition for these slots and the positions sought with the education is fierce, as is simply getting into college. This might help explain the degree to which parents are now going to get their children admitted, especially into the elite colleges and universities. The difficulty of getting into college for many is amplified by the practice of state-funded institutions to recruit students from overseas due



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to austere, budget-cutting policies dependent on higher out-of-state tuition. What does this do to the hard-working student from an extended family where no one has gone to college before who is denied admission?

Friedman's globalization endorses the seemingly rational notion that all countries benefit when "the best" can cross borders to fill needs one country can't, justifying the selection of sports figures, for example, and even medical doctors in demand because their pool is kept artificially low here by the AMA (not to mention the admission of students from elsewhere who often return to their home country, making it more difficult for those here to get in). This system has little space for "the worst" who lack the equal ability to move across borders.

A byproduct of this fierce competition is underemployment. While few deny the value of bringing professionals who possess the skills and training needed here, the stark reality is that many with advanced degrees are forced to work at jobs well below their qualifications. This is an especially serious issue among millennials who have to live with their parents while scraping together a living, but according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics this experience isn't unique to today's college grads. The rate for all college grads ages 22-65 has held steady at around 33% for the past three decades. And for the grads ages 22-27, the numbers rise to 44% (Jessica Lutz, *Forbes*, 7/21/18). The situation is even worse for people of color.

These numbers are not a prominent part of the official stats which unfortunately become the final word on the state of the economy, sending proof-positive signals to all readers of the mainstream media that we need and can absorb more workers. But as Jack Rasmus shows in his evaluation of the Bureau's recent numbers, the underemployed and other less-than-full-time employed persons are counted as employed (*CounterPunch*, 5/8/19, "How Accurate Are the US Jobs Numbers?").

The markets for labor jobs and professional jobs are obviously different, but as college grads take jobs from those below them these workers in turn can put pressure on those below them, etc. Obviously this will reach a limit and few will do jobs that far below their level of competence. Many caught in this situation simply drop out of the work picture and remain hidden in the official unemployment rate.

But the larger issue is the build-up of resentment by those unable to fulfill their potential in the workplace and be fully absorbed into mainstream, everyday life. Whether college grads or the rural working class living in once thriving zones now de-industrialized and de-unionized as a result of companies rushing to capture cheaper wages in the overseas sweatshops, their experience of this structural flaw in the American Dream can only be amplified by witnessing others streaming into the country—compounded by the presence of millions of illegals—who may not even be directly responsible for taking someone's position. This can clearly breed scapegoating, which perhaps explains the recent Harvard-Harris poll. This showed that 81% of registered voters want annual immigration reduced by nearly a third to check the "chain-

migration mess," and 70% want the random and liberal issuing of visas to cease (Eddie Scarry, "Thomas Friedman Joins America," *Washington Examiner*, 4/25/19).

The country is not the same as it was during the golden days of capitalism, the American Century, when progressive tax policies, strong unions, and Keynesian innovations in the public sector allied to increase productivity, and the value from that was distributed much more evenly and fairly. Aggregate upward mobility has been one of the casualties, particularly in the rural areas, despite the celebration of specific instances of entrepreneurial mobility in the media. We've become a sort of unmelting pot with a diversity of segments that can't be easily absorbed into the mainstream, and like many of those forgotten citizens that spearheaded Brexit, they're not happy with the status quo (*Huffpost*, "Unmelting Pot," 5/25/2011).

Friedman is a celebrator of globalization, believing there is virtually no alternative to this mostly benevolent march of progress, but this world system itself, in the current form shaped by American hegemony, is the cause of many problems. The export of neoliberal principles creates failed states from these developing countries that send bodies to the "stable" ones for refuge. The extension of economic influence in these countries is girded with policies sanctioned by the IMF that keep them dependent on loans to survive, assistance that forces adherence to an austerity regime skewed in the favor of the elite. They starve the public sector and dismantle unions to maintain a low-wage, business-friendly culture that artificially represses growth, requiring ever more assistance. These effects have been evident for generations now, thrust in our faces by the Seattle WTO protests in 1999, but much of the developing globe has still yet to recover from the 2008 downturn, enhancing the difficulty of absorbing its people.

Climate change adds to these problems for the warm, low-altitude border countries bearing the burdens brought by first-world polluters.

The expanding military presence where these policies are imposed or near needed resources like oil deepens the displacement and flow of bodies to our borders, supplementing covert war with the force and disruption that will demand perpetual assistance.

Friedman's suggestion that foreign aid would help stop the flow of migrants is welcome. This would require huge transfers of funds along with a reversal of IMF policies. Since the bulk of this aid is now in the form of military aid, this would also require a reset of our foreign policy in the direction of diplomacy and infrastructural investment—but what would happen if we funded this investment before doing it here?—to stabilize these countries.

Perhaps, as Suketu Mehta suggests, we should add up the toll for all the ruination imposed on these countries and construct reparations quotas for their entry (*New York Times*, 6/7/19, "Why Should Immigrants 'Respect Our Borders'?"). Opening up spaces for the ruined could be sold if we change priorities, starting with a massive

infusion of infrastructural investment along the lines of the proposed Green New Deal, paid for with funds from the bloated military budgets. That would correct the problem of underemployment by creating good jobs, and above all reverse the ever-greater reliance on temporary jobs with no benefits begun some forty years ago. Bringing more citizens permanently into the system with higher wages will give them a greater sense of belonging and increase productivity, expand the economy, and open up spaces for more people. The absorption of migrants into these

openings should be guided through a partnership between a strengthened labor movement, business and government that jettisons the reliance on un-free markets. Nothing short of this will begin to reduce the blowback from the win-lose logic.

America can lead in the creation of an international order shorn of toxic me-first nationalism.

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THE REVIVING CHRISTIAN LEFT AND MIGRANTS

LAURA E. ALEXANDER

Holding pictures of migrant children who have died in U.S. custody and forming a cross with their bodies on the floor of the Russell Senate Office Building, 70 Catholics were arrested in July for obstructing a public place, which is considered a misdemeanor.

The protesters hoped that images of 90-year-old nuns and priests in clerical collars being led away in handcuffs would draw attention to their moral horror at the United States' treatment of undocumented immigrant families.

American Catholics, like any religious group, do not fit neatly into left-right political categories.

But ever more they are visibly joining the growing ranks of progressive Christians who oppose President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and federal agencies' negligent, occasionally deadly treatment of immigrants on his orders.

Religious Activism

American Christianity is more often associated with right-wing politics.

Conservative Christian groups advocating for public policies that reflect their religious beliefs have conducted extremely visible campaigns to outlaw abortion, keep gay marriage illegal and encourage study of the Bible in schools. Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis, an Apostolic Christian, was jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses after the U.S. legalized same-sex marriage in 2015.

But there's always been progressive Christian activism in the United States.

I have studied religious thought and action around migrants and refugees for some time – including analyzing the New Sanctuary Movement, a network of churches that offers refuge to undocumented immigrants and advocates

for immigration reform.

Black churches were central in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, and black Christians have continued to engage in advocacy and civil disobedience around poverty, inequality and police violence. Latinos and Native Americans, too, have for centuries fought for “progressive” causes like labor rights, environmental protection and human rights.

So it's not quite right to herald the “rise” of a religious left, as several think pieces have done since Christians began openly resisting Trump's immigration enforcement and other policies. That erases the historic resistance of religious communities of color.

Why Immigration

Still, Trump's hardline immigration policies seem to have spurred a broader population of Christians into action. And their civil disobedience crosses racial, ethnic and even party lines in new ways.

One reason for this is simple: Migration has become increasingly visible in recent years, especially under Trump.

The number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. peaked at 12.2 million in 2007. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama approached this issue by using relatively pro-immigrant language while deporting hundreds of thousands each year.

Though immigration at the United States' southern border has actually been decreasing since 2000, the number of Central American asylum-seekers has grown. In 2014, an unprecedented surge in Central American children seeking asylum protections got significant media attention.

Donald Trump began his presidential campaign the next year with a speech maligning migrants. During his administration, his rhetoric has slowly become policy. But the primary reason Christian groups are now focusing on immigration, I'd argue, is simply that the notion of welcoming strangers and caring for the vulnerable are embedded in the Christian tradition.

In the Biblical text Matthew 25, the “Son of Man” – a figure understood to be Jesus – blesses people who gave food to the hungry, cared for the sick and welcomed strangers. And in Leviticus 19:34, God commands: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you.”

**Jewish and
Muslim organizations
have both provided
humanitarian aid
to Central American asylum
seekers and protested
a federal ban on travel
from Muslim
countries.**

– Laura E. Alexander

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RELIGION AND MIGRANTS

These texts help explain why support for immigrants crosses traditional left-right religious boundaries.

Denominations that are generally considered left-leaning, like the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America publicly oppose Trump's harsh treatment of immigrants. So do the Catholic bishops and Southern Baptists, which are typically more socially and politically conservative.

Welcoming the Stranger

Beyond directly assisting migrants at the U.S. border by offering food, shelter, translation and legal services, many of these Christian groups also believe that in democratic societies they should pursue laws founded on Christian moral teachings.

After all, they point out, God's command in Leviticus was to the nation of Israel – not just individual Israelites. And Jesus often told religious and political officials how to act and criticized the oppression of foreigners, widows and orphans by those in authority.

Faith-based support for immigrants is not limited to Christian groups.

Jewish and Muslim organizations have both provided humanitarian aid to Central American asylum seekers and protested a federal ban on travel from Muslim countries.

And 40 Jewish leaders were arrested in New York City on Aug. 12 for protesting the Trump administration's

detention policies.

Connecting to Politicians and Interfaith Cooperation

The 2020 election season has brought Christian faith-based activism into the political fore. Several Democratic presidential candidates have spoken openly about the faith-based roots of their progressivism.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has referenced the biblical text of Matthew 25 as a touchstone for her critique of wealth inequality and insistence on universal health care.

In pushing for criminal justice reform, Sen. Cory Booker speaks about the Christian tradition of "grace." He's also been known to quote the Prophet Muhammad, Buddha and the Hindu god Shiva.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg is a devout churchgoer who is also gay. He says that his sexual orientation is God-given and that his marriage, in the Episcopal church, to another man, has brought him closer to God.

Talk of an emerging "religious left" is ahistoric. American Christianity has always had its liberal strains, with pastors and parishioners protesting state-sponsored injustices like slavery, segregation, the Vietnam War and mass deportation.

But the high profile, religiously based moral outrage at Trump's immigration policies does seem to be spurring some long-overdue rethinking of what it means to be Christian in America.

Laura E. Alexander teaches religious studies at the University of Nebraska, Omaha.

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WHAT IS LIMINALITY?

JASUN HORSLEY

White Male Edgeman

“Radical changes of identity, happening suddenly and in very brief intervals of time, have proved more deadly and destructive of human values than wars fought with hardware weapons.”

—Marshall McLuhan, *Laws of Media: The New Science*

Probably most people reading this—especially if they spend a lot of time on the Internet—are aware of the growing phenomenon of “social justice warriors” with hair-trigger mouths and clicking mice, fiercely practicing intolerance in the name of tolerance.

Earlier this year, in the small (pop: 6000) Canadian town where I live, a group called Culture Guard were scheduled to speak at the local Royal Canadian Legion. The subject was a nationwide, multi-leveled educational program called SOGI (Sexual Orientation Gender Identification), ostensibly directed towards encouraging “tolerance.” Culture Guard is a conservative organization whose mission is to uphold citizen-driven democracy and community values and expose what they call the “tyranny of politically correct idiotology.”

The event was cancelled after the Legion received 900+ email complaints, including threats. Much to my surprise, the reaction on Facebook to this was mostly gushing gratitude that this diabolical hate group had been righteously silenced. Two fairly typical comments: “Hope we’ve run these poisonous haters out of town” and “No bible thumping flatlander would dare show their face because hate has a weak foundation.”

Apparently, nothing is more immoral to the new moralists than old-style moralism, and if you aren’t in a state of fear or loathing these days—possibly both—you probably aren’t participating in “the debate.” We have

entered a liminal zone in which up can become down, right turn left, and virtue trades places with vice in the time it takes to say “What’s your pronoun?”

Legions of Unreason (The Outer Limits of Liminality)

The attributes of liminality are necessarily ambiguous. . . Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial.”

—Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (95)

When the town hall is overrun by legions of unreason, the desire to map the exits can be overwhelming. The problem is that, nine times out of ten, the proposed solutions only compound the problem. This has become ever more apparent to anyone paying attention to the evolution of progressivism and identity politics, with its endlessly replicating contortions and contradictions.

One concept I have found invaluable for navigating the increasingly incoherent—and explosive—social landscape is that of liminality. This is an anthropological term (coined in the early twentieth century by folklorist Arnold van Gennep) that refers to the quality of ambiguity or disorientation in the middle stage of religious rites. Later on, anthropologist Victor Turner used it to describe how ceremony masters usher ritual participants from one state to another, as in a coming of age ritual. The liminal stage is the intermediary one in which the initiate is on the threshold (1?men) between his or her old status and a new, as-yet unknown one. More recently, the philosopher Rene Girard (among others), applied the

term to sociopolitical and cultural conditions. And not a moment too soon, since we have now entered a time in history when ambiguity and disorientation have assumed epic proportions.

A few examples from the anthropological database: People trapped in a liminal situation are increasingly unable to act rationally, because the structures upon which their rationality is based have disappeared. (Check.) Being in a liminal state spells crisis for most people. Emotions run wild, making clear thinking all but impossible.

The problem that isn't being addressed by the snake oil salesmen is that the problems underlying liminality are not primarily social problems but psychological ones.

— Jasun Horsley

(Check.) This leads to “mimetic” (imitative) behavior by those trapped in the liminal space. (Check. 4 out of 4.)

In the politics of liminality, the future is unknown; since no one has gone through the process before, there is no one to lead people out of it. This allows for false ceremony masters—politicians, pundits, sophists, and general snake oil salesmen—to fill the void and offer bogus solutions or ways out of the liminal state, to alleviate the disorientation and helplessness of others, thereby perpetuating liminality indefinitely. (Check. Check. Check. Check.)

Conditions of permanent liminality can be maintained by schismogenesis—literally, the creation of a split, a polarity that, if unchecked, pushes the poles further and further apart. (Check!!)

The problem that isn’t being addressed by the snake oil salesmen is that the problems underlying liminality are not primarily social problems but psychological ones. This means they can’t be addressed with social reforms or new ideologies. In fact, those social reforms, policies, and “new” ideologies are, as Freud said of religion, symptoms of the problem itself. And multiplication of symptoms does not indicate that a cure is underway.

Rene Girard, Mimetic Violence and Scapegoating

Everybody tends to merge his identity with other people at the speed of light. It’s called being mass man.

— Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Me: Lectures and Interviews* (p. 268)

In periods of sustained liminality, as now, the structures we rely on become by their nature unreliable. This makes most people extremely anxious, hence highly susceptible to influence and manipulation. A single Tweet can set us off; even a Tweet that fails to get retweeted becomes proof that the world is going to Hell—or that we are. In a liminal zone of “fluid” identities permeated by multiculturalism and pansexuality, the ideological snake oil business booms.

These kinds of interpersonal flame-wars seem like a distorted case of what Turner called “rites of status reversal,” when “the underling comes uppermost.” Turner writes: “at certain culturally defined points in the seasonal cycle, groups or categories of persons who habitually occupy low status positions in the social structure are positively enjoined to exercise ritual authority over their superiors; and they, in their turn, must accept with good

will their ritual degradation” (Turner, 102, 167). This exact scenario played out recently at Evergreen College. Even the fact this article is written by a “privileged” white man and depends on the works of other white men as primary sources makes it ipso facto offensive to some people.

Which way is up and which way is down? What is acceptable behavior? What constitutes maleness or femaleness? What’s a paraphilia and what’s a sexual orientation? When does pride become narcissism? Everything is suddenly “up for grabs” (sometimes literally, cf. #MeToo movement). In “Violence in the media,” media prophet Marshall McLuhan wrote, “Violence, whether spiritual or physical, is a quest for identity and the meaningful. The less identity, the more violence.” The primary consequence of liminality is increased mimesis or imitation (c.f. Girard) because, when old values no longer hold good, no one knows how to act without referring to others. This creates a free-for-all—a climate of social contagion—in which mimetic violence potentially escalates; this in turn creates the corresponding need for a scapegoat—an other—to unify the attention of the group and stabilize the community. Within larger communities such as a nation, an individual scapegoat is not enough, so entire groups are targeted.

This potential for mimetic violence in every community is why the idea of universal values (morality) is fundamental to social stabilization—to the extent that, in Adam Smith’s days, “social” and “moral” were often interchangeable (see Steven Hitlin 2013). In order to provide the guidance, support, and reassurance of stability, a societal system—the institutions it creates and the values it upholds—must give the impression of being unchanging, solid, and fundamental. They can’t be merely the products of human minds trying to work out the best way to organize a community; they must assume the status of holy writ, natural law, or scientific fact.

As above, so below: ideologically-oriented individuals depend on developing convictions and feeling-opinions that assume the solidity, inflexibility, and force of metaphysical beliefs. This is especially so when the beliefs run counter to previously accepted or established beliefs. Witness the secular metaphysics of gender identification, which proposes an empirical—and invisible—“reality” that transcends not just social conventions but biological



truths—rendering them obsolete artifacts of an oppressive former regime.

“Let us be willing to remold society by redefining what it means to be a human being in the 20th century, moving into a new millennium.” (Hillary Clinton)

The Mass Man: Collective Negative Identity and the Abolition of Individuality

When the whole world is globalized, you’re going to be able to set fire to the whole thing with a single match.

—Rene Girard

In times of artificially perpetuated liminality, as now, a particular kind of collective identity arises as a compensatory mechanism, a negative identity that affirms itself by negating what it is “not.” When the other is identified as not merely a single individual but a large, somewhat amorphous group of individuals, it becomes unclear where exactly the line between the community-identity being affirmed and the “other” being negated lies.

The surest way to avoid becoming the other—to avoid being negated by one’s community—is to participate in the negation of the designated other. To refuse to do so is to implicitly affirm the other, which is to negate one’s own identity—i.e., affiliation with one’s group. Witness the piece of ritual theater that played out at Evergreen State College, when participants at a 2016 Equity Council meeting were enjoined to get in an imaginary canoe—representing the State Equity Plan—as a way to signal their solidarity with the campus activists. While an Indian drumbeat and a recording of crashing surf played in the background, the audience was warned there was a “binary choice” between being allies of the State Equity Plan or “becoming enemies.”

So how exactly do we end up with a total intolerance of difference in the name of tolerating diversity? It is not easy to map a burning building while trapped inside it, but what seems to be occurring now is the growing substitution of (rightist) conservative morality with (leftist) ideological correctness. In a kind of funhouse mirror opposition to “the Right,” “the Left” has gradually assumed a position of anti-authoritarian authoritarianism. Girard described this as “mimetic rivalry” and it’s starkly observable in the form of “SJW” progressives looking more and more like “Alt-Right trolls.” The message—and the admonishment—of “The Left,” lest we forget, is all about inclusivity.

Inclusivity demands that all the marginals (what Turner called “the edgemen”) be ushered into the mainstream by creating a mono/multiculture with equality for all—not counting the deplorables, of course, who are ideologically unfit for inclusion. Ironically, and inescapably, this Borgian Prime Directive subtly or not so subtly endorses, and eventually enforces, homogeneity. Like the Starship Enterprise boldly going where no sane society ever went before, individualism is magnanimously imposed upon the collective.

We see this in how socially marginalized people—usually following a period of perceived or actual persecution—are encouraged to identify and take pride in

their marginalized status (gay pride, black pride, transgender pride, etc.), and to assert their right to exist separately from the larger social community, as individuals. This leads to their being incorporated into the larger collective, integrated, or assimilated into the multi/monoculture. The right to be different is asserted, then, not as an end in itself, but as the means of becoming the same.

As this homogenization-in-the-name-of-individuality agenda advances, the potential for mimetic violence increases. In Turner’s “status reversal” rituals, taboo-breaking and totem-smashing was consciously enacted in a kind of Community Theater (which is what ritual is). Today, the performance appears to have gone beyond method, into unconscious voluntary possession—hence the legions of mutually-combusting contradictions that sizzle like matchheads beneath the kindling of every ideological identification.

All this is symptomatic of unconscious, divided, behavior, or schismogenesis. The progressives in my town guarding the culture from its former guardians didn’t realize that the SOGI agenda is self-devouring because sexual orientation is cancelled out, negated, by gender identification. They might be appalled to know, for example, that gender reassignment surgery is booming in the notoriously “homophobic” Iran [ref]—because changing “sex” is a practical, no-nonsense (and irreversible) way to eradicate homosexuality. Or by the fact that the supposedly radical trans-agenda is both ideologically and financially supported by most, if not all, the major corporations (PDF) and government institutions in the world. [ref] The progressives have joined the patriarchy party and don’t even know it.

Right-wing libertarianism advocates the primacy of the individual; Left-wing socialism speaks for the primacy of the collective. Liminality is the collapse of categories, however, and as the category of “individualized sameness” expands to include more and more orientations and identifications, things like biological facts—and eventually any kind of fact, since facts, like numbers, tend to assert the reality of difference—become scapegoats sacrificed on the altar of oneness for all. The old values become the expendable “deplorables,” because the ideology of equality can only extend its assimilation agenda by erasing all differences between people. The final ritual sacrifice is the idea of individuality itself—or possibly the individual him- or herself, if Girard is right about human sacrifice being “the revelatory yet menacing dynamic that animates the whole of this civilization” (*Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, p. 138).

All this goes a way to explaining why every disagreement has started to feel like a battle—not just for our sanity, but for our very existence, and why the feeling of being in an unsafe space is contagious. As a white male “edgeman” mostly content to be condemned to the margins, I am starting to feel like an endangered minority, myself, caught inside an electronic effigy of McLuhan’s mass-man, waiting for that fatal spark.



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THE CHEAPEST WAY TO SAVE THE PLANET GROWS LIKE A WEED

E L L E N B R O W N

Planting billions of trees across the world is by far the cheapest and most efficient way to tackle the climate crisis. So states a July 4 article in *The Guardian*, citing a new analysis published in the journal *Science*. The author explains:

“As trees grow, they absorb and store the carbon dioxide emissions that are driving global heating. New research estimates that a worldwide planting program could remove two-thirds of all the emissions that have been pumped into the atmosphere by human activities, a figure the scientists describe as ‘mind-blowing’.”

For skeptics who reject the global warming thesis, reforestation also addresses the critical problems of mass species extinction and environmental pollution, which are well documented. A 2012 study from the University of Michigan found that loss of biodiversity impacts ecosystems as much as climate change and pollution. Forests shelter plant and animal life in their diverse forms, and trees remove air pollution by the interception of particulate matter on plant surfaces and the absorption of gaseous pollutants through the leaves.

The July analytical review in *Science* calculated how many additional trees could be planted globally without encroaching on crop land or urban areas. It found that there are 1.7 billion hectares (4.2 billion acres) of treeless land on which 1.2 trillion native tree saplings would naturally grow. Using the most efficient methods, 1 trillion trees could be restored for as little as \$300 billion – less than 2 percent of the lower range of estimates for the Green New Deal introduced by progressive Democrats in February 2019.

The Guardian quoted Prof. Tom Crowther at the Swiss university ETH Zürich, who said, “What blows my mind is the scale. I thought restoration would be in the top 10,

but it is overwhelmingly more powerful than all of the other climate change solutions proposed.” He said it was also by far the cheapest solution that has ever been proposed. The chief drawback of reforestation as a solution to the climate crisis, per *The Guardian*, is that trees grow slowly. The projected restoration could take 50 to 100 years to reach its full carbon sequestering potential.

A Faster, More Efficient Solution

Fortunately, as of December 2018 there is now a cheaper, faster and more efficient alternative – one that was suppressed for nearly a century but was legalized on a national scale when President Trump signed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. This is the widespread cultivation of industrial hemp, the non-intoxicating form of cannabis grown for fiber, cloth, oil, food and other purposes. Hemp grows to 13 feet in 100 days, making it one of the fastest

CO₂-to-biomass conversion tools available. Industrial hemp has been proven to absorb more CO₂ per hectare than any forest or commercial crop, making it the ideal carbon sink. It can be grown on a wide scale on nutrient poor soils with very small amounts of water and no fertilizers.

Hemp products can promote biodiversity and reverse environmental pollution by replacing petrochemical-based plastics, which are now being dumped into the ocean at the rate of one garbage truck per minute. One million seabirds die each year from ingesting plastic, and up to 90 percent have plastic in their guts. Microplastic (resulting from the breakdown of larger pieces by sunlight and waves) and microbeads (used in body washes and facial cleansers) have been called the ocean’s smog. They

absorb toxins in the water, enter the food chain, and ultimately wind up in humans. To avoid all that, we can use plastic made from hemp, which is biodegradable and non-toxic.

Other environmental toxins come from the textile industry, which is second only to agriculture in the amount of pollution it creates and the voluminous amounts of water it uses. Hemp can be grown with minimal water, and hemp fabrics can be made without the use of toxic chemicals.

Environmental pollution from the burning of fossil fuels can also be reversed with hemp, which is more efficient and environmentally friendly even than wheat and corn as a clean-burning biofuel.

Hemp cultivation also encourages biodiversity in the soil, by regenerating farmland that has long been depleted

Hemp cultivation is profitable in many other ways – so profitable that it is effectively a self-funding solution to the environmental crisis.

– Ellen Brown

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from the use of toxic chemicals. It is a “weed” and grows like one, ubiquitously, beating out other plants without pesticides or herbicides; and its long tap root holds the soil, channeling moisture deeper into it. Unlike most forestry projects, hemp can be grown on existing agricultural land and included as part of a farm’s crop rotation, with positive effects on the yields and the profits from subsequent crops.

A Self-funding Solution

Hemp cultivation is profitable in many other ways – so profitable that it is effectively a self-funding solution to the environmental crisis. According to an April 2019 article in *Forbes* titled “Industrial Hemp Is the Answer to Petrochemical Dependency,” crop yields from hemp can range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per acre. Its widespread cultivation can happen without government subsidies. Investment in research, development and incentives would speed the process, but market forces will propel these transformations even if Congress fails to act. All farmers need for incentive is a market for the products, which hemp legalization has provided. Due to the crop’s century-long suppression, the infrastructure to capitalize on its diverse uses still needs to be developed, but the infrastructure should come with the newly opened markets.

Hemp can break our dependency on petrochemicals not only for fuel but for plastics, textiles, construction materials and much more. It has actually been grown for industrial and medicinal purposes for millennia, and today it is legally grown for industrial use in hundreds of countries outside the US. Before the US ban, a 1938 article in *Popular Mechanics* claimed it was a billion-dollar crop (the equivalent of about \$16 billion today), useful in 25,000 products ranging from dynamite to cellophane. New uses continue to be found, including eliminating smog from fuels, creating a cleaner energy source that can replace nuclear power, removing radioactive water from the soil, and providing a very nutritious food source for humans and animals. Cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive derivative of hemp, has recently been shown to help curb opioid addiction, now a national epidemic.

Hemp can also help save our shrinking forests by eliminating the need to clear-cut them for paper pulp. According to the USDA, one acre planted in hemp produces as much pulp as 4.1 acres of trees; and unlike trees, hemp can be harvested two or three times a year. Hemp paper is also finer, stronger and lasts longer than wood-based paper. Benjamin Franklin’s paper mill used hemp. Until 1883, it was one of the largest agricultural crops (some say the largest), and 80 to 90% of all paper in the world was made from it. It was also the material from which most fabric, soap, fuel and fiber were made; and it was an essential resource for any country with a shipping industry, since sails were made from it. In early America, growing hemp was considered so important that it was illegal for farmers not to grow it. Hemp was legal tender from 1631 until the early 1800s, and taxes could even be paid with it.

Banned by the Competition?

The competitive threat to other industries of this

supremely useful plant may have been a chief driver of its apparently groundless criminalization in the 1930s. Hemp is not marijuana and is so low in psychoactive components that it cannot produce a marijuana “high.” It was banned for nearly a century simply because it was in the same plant species as marijuana. Cannabis came under attack in the 1930s in all its forms. Why? Hemp competed not only with the lumber industry but with the oil industry, the cotton industry, the petrochemical industry and the pharmaceutical industry. Many have speculated that it was suppressed by these powerful competitors.

William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper mogul, owned vast tracts of forest land, which he intended to use for making wood-pulp paper. Cheap hemp-based paper would make his forest investments a major money loser. Hearst was a master of “yellow journalism,” and a favorite target of his editorials was “reefer madness.” He was allied with the DuPont Corporation, which provided the chemicals to bleach and process the wood pulp used in the paper-making process. DuPont was also ready to introduce petroleum-based fibers such as nylon, and hemp fabrics competed with that new market.

In fact hemp products threatened the whole petroleum industry. Henry Ford first designed his cars to run on alcohol from biofuels, but the criminalization of both alcohol and hemp forced him to switch to the dirtier, less efficient fossil fuels that dominate the industry today. A biofuel-based infrastructure would create a completely decentralized power grid, eliminating the giant monopolistic power companies. Communities could provide their own energy using easily renewable plants.

None of this is new news. Hemp historians have been writing about hemp’s myriad uses and its senseless prohibition for decades. (See e.g. *The Emperor Wears No Clothes* by Jack Herer, 1992; *Hemp for Victory: A Global Warming Solution* by Richard Davis, 2009.) What is news is that hemp cultivation is finally legal across the country. The time is short to save the planet and its vanishing diversity of species. Rather than engaging in endless debates over carbon taxes and Silicon Valley-style technological fixes, we need to be regenerating our soils, our forests and our oceans with nature’s own plant solutions.

Ellen Brown chairs the Public Banking Institute and has written thirteen books, including her latest, *Banking on the People: Democratizing Money in the Digital Age*. She also co-hosts a radio program on PRN.FM called “It’s Our Money.” EllenBrown.com.



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SEARCHING FOR EXTRA- TERRESTRIALS

JASON WRIGHT

In the following Q&A, astronomy professor Jason Wright discusses the public's interest in answering the age-old question: Are we alone?

Since you have a longstanding scholarly interest in extraterrestrial life – and even wrote about the possibility of advanced civilizations in the distant past on Mars or Venus – I presume you've canceled your classes for Sept. 20 and signed up to go to the "raid" on Area 51?

To be honest, I was completely unaware of this "raid" until you brought it to my attention! I work in SETI, the scientific search for extraterrestrial intelligence, and believe me, no one wants to find evidence of extraterrestrial life more than those of us in this field. We scour the skies for evidence of such extraterrestrial technologies with some of the most advanced equipment in the world for understanding what's going on in the sky, and we haven't found anything compelling yet. But we're not paying much attention to what happens in Area 51, even though more than a million people have "signed up" for a citizen raid on Area 51 in Nevada. The U.S. military is warning people to stay away.

Do you think the public knows enough about Area 51? Or is the widespread interest in this raid a good barometric read on how frustrated people are that the government appears to be hiding something there?

I don't know very much about Area 51, but I can say that the intense interest in the goings on there

related to aliens reveals a deep public interest in what kinds of life might exist elsewhere in the universe.

Have you yourself ever tried to do any real research into the happenings in Area 51?

Not Area 51, exactly. The closest I've come was a talk I heard by a physicist describing the fascinating science carried out by the military back in the late 1940s, especially Project Mogul, which launched microphones on balloons to see if they could detect nuclear testing going on in the

lamented that that is no longer the case. If you had your way, how much money do you think the federal government should give America's researchers to search for aliens or evidence of aliens?

The search for life in the universe is a major priority for NASA and American science. Many of our missions to Mars and our space telescopes are designed with the detection of biosignatures in mind – "biosignatures" being signs of life like microfossils or evidence of metabolism in the atmospheres of distant planets. But despite the billions of dollars spent on these missions, I think many members of the public would be surprised to learn that NASA and the National Science Foundation spend next to nothing looking for intelligent life in the universe, including technological life that might, after all, be easier to find. I think the level of funding for the field should be determined the way the rest of science is, by competitive peer review of proposals for research. So, I don't know what the "right" level is, but I know it's not zero.

You're the winner of the 2019 Drake

Award. What is the Drake Award, why did you win it, and what do you plan to do in order to advance what the award is about?

The Drake Award is named after its first recipient, Frank Drake, who more than anyone launched the field of SETI in the early 1960s with his pioneering radio experiments. He also made the first calculation – using what today we call the Drake Equation – of the number of alien civilizations in the Milky Way that might be trying to contact us. The Drake Award is awarded occasionally by the SETI Institute, a research center dedicated to understanding

**It is, after all,
the scientific approach
to answering
one of the most profound
questions ever asked:
Is Earth life unique? Or are
there other beings
like us out there
in the universe?**

– Jason Wright

Soviet Union. It's an amazing story of physics and engineering ingenuity. When one of those balloons with its disc microphones and radar reflectors landed in a farm in Roswell, New Mexico it helped fuel the whole alien craze we're still living with today. It's a shame, because the science-fiction-inspired "aliens" conspiracy theory is – from my standpoint – so much less fascinating than the story of the research that was going on then.

There was a time when the federal government provided researchers with money to search for – and teach about the search for – extraterrestrial life. And you've

humanity's place in the universe. I see this award as validation of my work to help elevate the field of SETI as an academic discipline, and to persuade Congress, NASA and the public that

it is worthy of public investment. It is, after all, the scientific approach to answering one of the most profound questions ever asked: Is Earth life unique? Or are there other beings like

us out there in the universe?

Jason Wright is a professor of astronomy and astrophysics at Penn State. he writes for *The Conversation* and other publications

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LOWER DRUG PRICES NOW

NANCY ALTMAN,
ALEX LAWSON

Across 34 states today, the American people had one unified message for their elected representatives in Washington, D.C.: lower drug prices now.

We are proud that Social Security Works is a founding member of a new broad-based coalition that is dedicated to breaking the stranglehold pharmaceutical corporations have on U.S. policymakers. Our campaign has a simple name, Lower Drug Prices Now, and a simple purpose, to do just what our name says. Our strategy is also simple: to mobilize millions of Americans across this country to stand up and demand that politicians choose a side, the American people or the pharmaceutical corporations.

Our coalition is still growing, but already is made up of organizations representing tens of millions of people united around four principles that guide our efforts to smash pharmaceutical corporations' monopoly power:

Government Responsibility: It is our government's responsibility to guarantee that everyone in the United States, no matter where they live, what they look like, or how much money they have, has access to affordable medicines they and their families need to stay healthy.

Affordable Access: Drug corporations and their lobbyists have rigged the rules in order to drive up profits, putting medicines out of reach for millions of people. We must topple the barriers that systematically deny people access to the medicines they need. Solutions to the affordable medicine crisis must ensure no one gets

left behind.

Making the System Fair: We must harness the government's power to curb drug corporations' power to extract profits at the expense of people's health.

Putting Public Good Ahead of Corporate Profit: We as taxpayers foot the bill for a substantial amount of drug research, development and innovation, as well as for drug purchasing through Medicare, Medicaid, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. We also, through our government, provide

how popular our ideas are. The polling reveals that Republicans, Independents and Democrats all agree about the need for structural changes that eliminate corporate monopoly power.

An overwhelming majority, 84.2 percent, support allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices with pharmaceutical companies. Only 4.7 percent oppose allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices with pharmaceutical companies.

Those numbers cut across the ideological divide. Ninety-one percent of Democrats, 81 percent of Independents, and 77 percent of Republicans support allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices. Opposition was nearly nonexistent, with only 3 percent of Democrats, 5 percent of Independents, and 7 percent of Republicans opposing the policy.

68.5 percent support allowing the production of generic versions of life-saving drugs if the government determines that a drug company has raised prices beyond patients' ability to pay.

61.2 percent support allowing the production of generic versions of life-saving drugs if the government determines the price of the drug is

higher in the United States than it is in other countries.

As the last two points show, allowing Medicare to negotiate prices is literally the least we can do. The American people want much bolder, transformational change. And support for bold proposals holds even after being forced to listen to industry propaganda. The polling looked at levels of support for allowing competition from generic pharmaceuticals to help lower drug prices versus anchoring the price of drugs to those in other countries.

The power of the pharmaceutical industry is entrenched in our political system. The only way we're going to end their greed is with

**68.5 percent support
allowing the production
of generic versions of
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determines that a drug
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prices beyond patients'
ability to pay.**

— Nancy Altman, Alex Lawson

patent protections for drug corporations. We must ensure government funding, benefits, and incentives prioritize medical breakthroughs that most serve the public good rather than those that primarily extend monopolies and increase corporate profits.

Our coalition has come together to fill the gap between what the people want and demand of their elected representatives and what politicians are serving up in terms of addressing (or not addressing) high drug prices. The time for tinkering around the edges is over. Alongside the 51 events in states around the country today, Lower Drug Prices Now released new polling from Data for Progress that demonstrates just

organized people power. The polling is clear: As polarized as we are over many issues, we are not polarized about drug prices. Americans across the political spectrum want, and need, lower drug

prices. Our coalition is going to mobilize millions of people across the country to demand our politicians represent our will and take on the greed of the pharmaceutical industry to lower

drug prices now—lives truly depend on their action.

Excerpted from Independent Media Institute: Economy for All.



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MEDIA AND CLIMATE CRISIS

JESSICA CORBETT

While Hurricane Dorian marched up the U.S. Southeastern coast Wednesday after devastating the Northern Bahamas, advocates for ambitious climate action reiterated the global emergency's connection to extreme weather—even as an analysis showed that major corporate news outlets are failing to report on it.

After making landfall as a Category 5 hurricane, Dorian crawled across the Bahamas—leaving a trail of utter destruction in its wake. The Union of Concerned Scientists explained earlier this year how experts believe the human-caused climate crisis is causing more intense hurricanes.

While hurricanes are a natural part of our climate system, recent research suggests that there has been an increase in intense hurricane activity in the North Atlantic since the 1970s. In the future, there may not necessarily be more hurricanes, but there will likely be more intense hurricanes that carry higher wind speeds and more precipitation as a result of global warming.

The impacts of this trend are likely to be exacerbated by sea level rise and a growing population along coastlines.

“Although Hurricane Dorian exemplifies what climate scientists have warned about, major U.S. media outlets are failing to connect the climate crisis to the strongest Atlantic storm ever to hit land,” Public Citizen declared in an analysis recently.

The consumer advocacy group found that “between Friday and Monday, climate or global warming was mentioned in just 7.2 percent of

the 167 pieces on *ABC*, *CBS*, *NBC*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *Fox*. The top 49 newspapers by circulation didn’t do much better. Of them, 32 covered Dorian in their print editions, but only eight papers connected Dorian to climate. Of 363 articles about Dorian in those papers’ print editions, just nine (2.5 percent) mentioned climate change.”

Public Citizen highlighted the findings on Dorian coverage in a pair of tweets. “For the last damn time: Climate change makes hurricanes worse,” and “the media’s cowardice

media outlets can report about a storm of epic proportions that is exactly what climate scientists have warned about yet fail to mention two key words: ‘climate change,’” said Allison Fisher, outreach director for Public Citizen’s Energy Program. “We can’t address the looming climate catastrophe if we aren’t talking about it.”

Public Citizen was far from alone in that observation. As *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt wrote Tuesday, “much of the conversation about Hurricane Dorian—including most media coverage—ignores climate change.” According to him, “That’s a mistake. It’s akin to talking about lung cancer and being afraid to mention smoking, or talking about traffic deaths and being afraid to talk about drunken driving.”

“The media needs to do more,” Justice Democrats wrote in an email to supporters Wednesday. “These natural disasters are escalating because of climate change, but too few reporters and pundits are willing to make that connection clear to the public. It doesn’t matter if the climate crisis is a politicized issue—we can’t afford to protect the feelings of conservatives and climate deniers in an era where we’re seeing record high temperatures, massive ice melts, and deadly natural disasters.”

While much of the corporate media failed to make the climate connection in Dorian coverage, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) acknowledged it on Twitter. Sharing a video taken from a helicopter over the Bahamas, she tweeted, “This is what climate change looks like: it hits vulnerable communities first.”

This is what climate change looks like: it hits vulnerable communities first.

I can already hear climate deniers screeching: “It’s always been

These natural disasters are escalating because of climate change, but too few reporters and pundits are willing to make that connection clear to the public.

— Jessica Corbett

makes climate change worse,” the group wrote.

For the last damn time: Climate change makes hurricanes worse.

And also: Climate change makes floods worse. Climate change makes droughts worse. Climate change makes wildfires worse.

And finally: The media’s cowardice makes climate change worse. pic.twitter.com/FRbMjkGMgA

— Public Citizen (@Public_Citizen) September 3, 2019

“It is mind-boggling that major

like this! You're dim," etc.

No. This is about science & leadership. We either decarbonize&cut emissions, or we don't & let people die. <https://t.co/paUHKAp03e>

—Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (@AOC) September 3, 2019

Ocasio-Cortez, the House's lead sponsor of the historic Green New Deal resolution unveiled in February, added that the global community has a clear choice: either decarbonize and dramatically reduce planet-heating emissions—or don't, and "let people die."

Aerial footage of the Bahamas post-Dorian was also shared on social media by Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old whose protests outside the Swedish Parliament last year helped spur the global climate strike movement. The teen activist tweeted Wednesday, "How many more nations in ruins do we need to see?"

How many more nations in ruins do we need to see?#ClimateEmergency#EcologicalEmergency <https://t.co/rHvNjpGnFc>

—Greta Thunberg (@GretaThunberg) September 4, 2019

The independent news program *Democracy Now!* is among the outlets that have acknowledged how the climate crisis relates to Dorian, including with

a Wednesday morning report entitled, "'This Is a Climate Emergency': Islands Devastated by Dorian Are on the Frontlines of a Dying Planet."

"While the science has yet to come in on the specifics of just how much worse climate change made Dorian, we already know enough to say that warming worsened the damage," Michael Mann, a professor at Pennsylvania State University, and Andrew Dessler, a professor at Texas A&M University, wrote in an op-ed published by *The Guardian*.

After outlining what scientists do know about planetary heating and hurricanes—including the evolving theory that climate change may cause storms to stall, leading to extra flooding and damage—the pair concluded that Dorian is "a preview of the climate crisis to come. The only question is whether we have the foresight to address it."

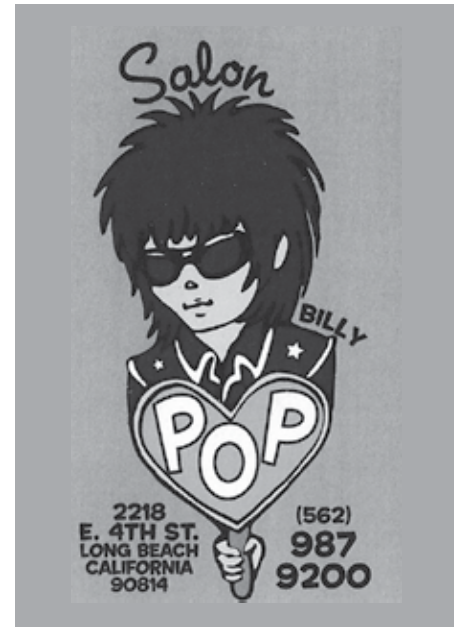
"Global heating made Hurricane Dorian bigger, wetter – and more deadly" | My op-ed with @AndrewDessler in The @Guardian: <https://t.co/eWBHpB6Jgv>

— Michael E. Mann (@MichaelEMann) September 4, 2019

Emergency response and humanitarian crews continued assessing the damage in the Bahamas

and providing relief to residents of the islands Wednesday while Dorian moved parallel along the Florida coast as a Category 2 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph. According to the National Hurricane Center, as of mid-afternoon Wednesday, there are various hurricane, tropical storm, and storm surge watches and warnings in effect between Florida and Virginia.

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STOP BLAMING MENTAL ILLNESS

ALAN I. LESHNER

The United States is experiencing a public health epidemic of mass shootings and other forms of gun violence. A convenient response seems to be blaming mental illness; after all, “who in their right mind would do this?” This is utterly wrong. Mental illnesses, certainly severe mental illnesses, are not the major cause of mass shootings. It also is dangerously stigmatizing to people who suffer from these devastating disorders and can subject them to inappropriate restrictions. According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, the best estimates are that individuals with mental illnesses are responsible for less than 4% of all violent crimes in the United States, and less than a third of people who commit mass shootings are diagnosed as mentally ill. Moreover, a large majority of individuals with mental illnesses are not at high risk for committing violent acts. Continuing to blame mental illness distracts from finding the real causes of mass shootings and addressing them directly.

Mental illness is, regrettably, a rather loosely defined and loosely used term, and this contributes to the problem. According to the American Psychiatric Association, “Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior...associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.” That broad definition can arguably be applied to many life stresses and situations. However, what most people likely mean when they attribute mass shootings to mental illness are what mental health professionals call “serious or severe mental

illnesses,” such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression. Other frequently cited causes of mass shootings—hate, employee disgruntlement, being disaffected with society or disappointed with one’s life—are not defined clinically as serious mental illnesses themselves. And because they have not been studied systematically, we do not know if these purported other causes really apply, let alone what to

funder of the public health aspects of firearm-related violence research, and much was being learned. But in 1996, Congress passed the so-called “Dickey Amendment” to the appropriations bill for the CDC, which was interpreted by the agency as prohibiting support for any firearm-related studies, and therefore the agency stopped funding this research. Although agencies including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation have devoted small amounts to studies related to firearm violence, Congressional actions over the last few years have discouraged such investment, and both agencies have virtually stopped funding that kind of work.

There is now a new opportunity to apply science to the problem of mass shootings. In June 2019, the funding bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives included \$50 million for the Department of Health and Human Services, split between the NIH and CDC, to support research on firearm violence. It is not a lot of money, given the scope of the problem, but surely a start. The Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council (now parts of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine) laid out a detailed research agenda in 2013 for investigating firearm-related violence that could easily be updated. The Senate and the White House should agree to this funding bill,

and the country should stop scapegoating people who suffer from mental illnesses and get on with determining the real causes of mass shootings.

Alan I. Leshner is the interim chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of *Science*. leshner@aaas.org.

**Unfortunately,
it has been difficult
to determine
precisely the causes
of mass shootings
and the appropriate
approaches
to preventing them, largely
because of a dearth
of public funding
for this line
of research.**

— Alan I. Leshner

do about them if true.

Unfortunately, it has been difficult to determine precisely the causes of mass shootings and the appropriate approaches to preventing them, largely because of a dearth of public funding for this line of research. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had historically been the major



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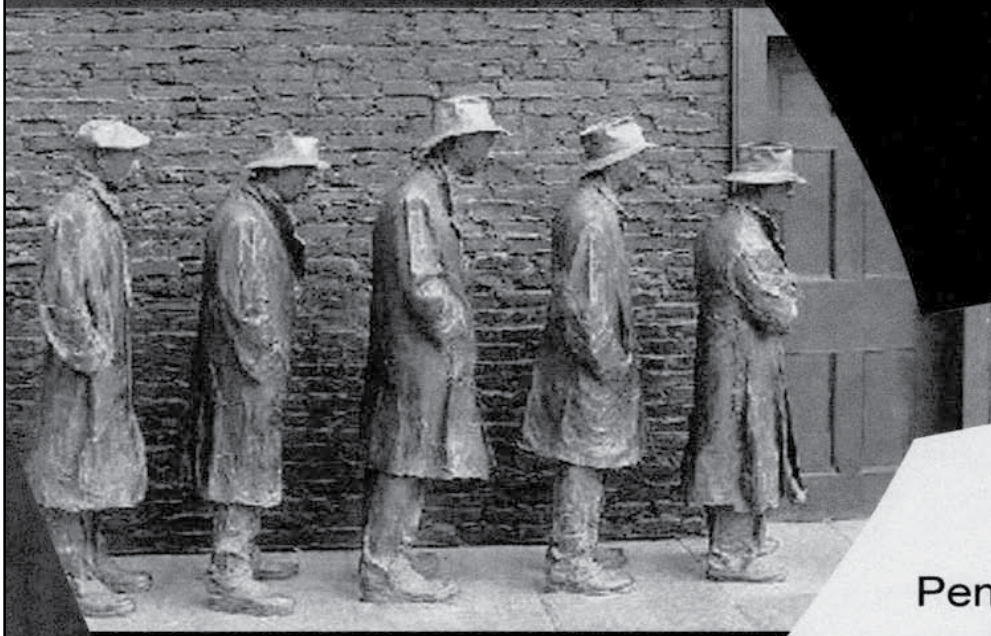
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