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by JEFFREY ST. CLAIR
23.07.2018

Roaming Charges: Are You Putin Me On?

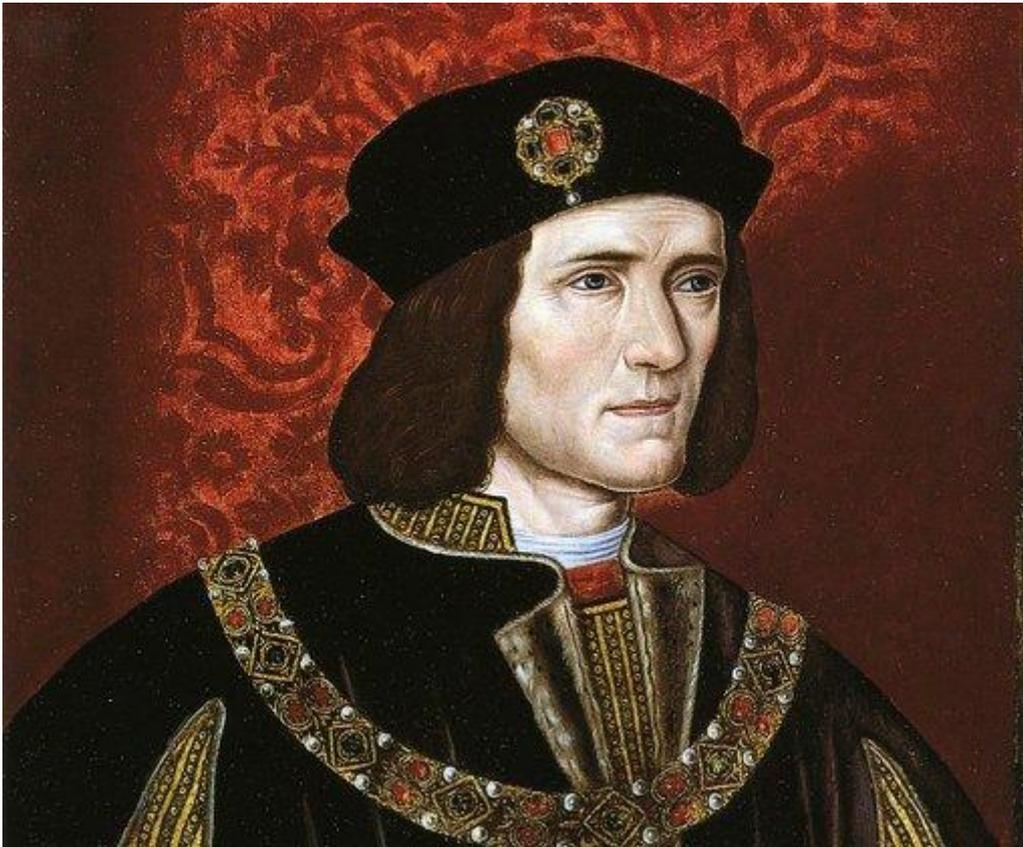


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+ Name this politician...

He is pathologically narcissistic and supremely arrogant. He has a grotesque sense of entitlement, never doubting that he can do whatever he chooses. He loves to bark orders and to watch underlings scurry to carry them out. He expects absolute loyalty, but he is

incapable of gratitude. The feelings of others mean nothing to him. He has no natural grace, no sense of shared humanity, no decency.

He is not merely indifferent to the law; he hates it and takes pleasure in breaking it. He hates it because it gets in his way and because it stands for a notion of the public good that he holds in contempt. He divides the world into winners and losers. The winners arouse his regard insofar as he can use them for his own ends; the losers arouse only his scorn. The public good is something only losers like to talk about. What he likes to talk about is winning.

He has always had wealth; he was born into it and makes ample use of it. But though he enjoys having what money can get him, it is not what excites him. What excites him is the joy of domination. He is a bully. Easily enraged, he strikes out at anyone who stands in his way. He enjoys seeing others cringe, tremble, or wince with pain. He is gifted at detecting weakness and deft at mockery and insult. These skills attract followers who are drawn to the same cruel delight, even if they know that is dangerous, the followers help him advance to his goal, which is the possession of supreme power.

His possession of power includes the domination of women, but he despises them far more than desires them. Sexual conquest excites him, but only for the endlessly reiterated proof that he can have anything he likes. He knows that those he grabs hate him. For that matter, once he has succeeded in seizing the control that so attracts him, in politics as in sex, he knows that virtually everyone hates him. At first that knowledge energizes him, making him feverishly alert to rivals and conspiracies. But it soon begins to eat away at him and exhaust him.

Sooner or later, he is brought down. He dies unloved and unlamented. He leaves behind only wreckage.

Donald Trump? Not exactly. This is Stephen Greenblatt's psychological profile of Richard the Third in his briskly readable new book, [Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics](#).

+ Based on Trump's infantile performance in Helsinki, we'd probably all be better off if Putin just went ahead and annexed the US.

+ If Trump is serious about a dramatic realignment of US relations with Russia, why did he surround himself with people who are implacably opposed to his approach: Nikki Haley, John Bolton, Mad Dog Mattis, Pompeo Maximus, Bloody Gina Haspel, Christopher Wray, and Dan Coats, who undermined him before Air Force One lifted off from Helsinki? Either Trump should fire them for insubordination or they should resign. Otherwise, this is all psychology not politics...

- + What kind of tyrant would appoint all of his own “deep state” coup plotters?
- + Trump’s doltish prevarications have done more to boost Mueller’s deflating investigation than 1000 hours of the hyperventilating Rachel Maddow....
- + Trump was momentarily on track when he wanted to draw a moral equivalence between the brutish global political games of Russia and the US. But instead of lashing Hillary over her stupid emails, which have nothing to do with antagonizing Russia, why didn’t Trump attack her for her nefarious activities in Ukraine and the decimation of Libya? I know, I know. He’s a dotard.
- + Will Mueller subpoena that soccer ball?
- + Trump didn’t do Putin any favors. The political over-reaction to Trump’s obsequiousness will almost certainly prevent the removal of sanctions on the Russian economy. It may even prompt the imposition of more onerous measures. Russian civilians will almost certainly bear most of the price.
- + Trump should have consulted with his Small Business Administrator Linda McMahon. She could have told him from her experience running the World Wrestling Federation that you have to at least put up a little fight during the Hoedown in Helsinki to make a fixed outcome look if not real, at least entertaining...
- + For those of us anxious for a de-escalation in tensions between the US and Russia, Trump’s petulant display probably ensured that the opposite will happen...
- + Putin and Trump both sought Bibi’s blessing before the summit. Bibi has become the new Billy Graham, who all politicians have on direct dial for consultation in fraught political moments. Graham always considered him a top notch military strategist, once urging Nixon to bomb the dikes in North Vietnam which would have killed a million people.
- + Trump: “What is the server saying?”
The Server: “This subpoena is for you, sir....”
- + Did QE2 ask Putin to show up 30 minutes late for his huddle with Trump as payback for Trump’s tardiness at Windsor?
- + Ari Melber, MSDNC: “Today, July 16, 2018, will go down in the history books as an inflection point in US-Soviet relations.” The Cold War may be over, as Putin declared, but not the Cold War mentality...
- + Ari Melber was 11 when the USSR collapsed.



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Following

While I had a great meeting with NATO, raising vast amounts of money, I had an even better meeting with Vladimir Putin of Russia. Sadly, it is not being reported that way - the Fake News is going Crazy!

7:22 AM - 17 Jul 2018

23,635 Retweets 96,386 Likes



52K 24K 96K

+ You “raised vast amounts of money” for NATO to encircle and threaten Russia and then you had “an even better meeting with Putin?” Both of these things can’t be true. Most likely both are false.

+ Before the Helsinki press conference ended, I predicted that Trump’s puerile performance would lead to new sanctions against Russia. Less than 24 hours later that’s exactly what [Paul Ryan is proposing](#). The question is: was that his real intent or is he just too doltish to realize it would be the inevitable consequence? When stupidity cross-breeds with blinding narcissism.

+ House Republicans, led by Mark Meadows of the “Freedom” Caucus, rushed to defend Trump’s dalliance with Putin by arguing that it was [entirely consistent](#) with the policies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, as if the belligerent policies of those administrations toward Russia were a good thing. We’re definitely lost in the funhouse now.

+ Trump’s servile, almost slavish, posturing in Helsinki was eclipsed by the hysterical reaction of the Democrats and the neocons, who embarrassed themselves with their shrill bleating about Trump having committed treason.

+ Conducting the treason chorus was former CIA director John Brennan, a man who said he once voted for Communist Party head [Gus Hall](#) for president....



John O. Brennan 
@JohnBrennan

Follow



Donald Trump's press conference performance in Helsinki rises to & exceeds the threshold of "high crimes & misdemeanors." It was nothing short of treasonous. Not only were Trump's comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin. Republican Patriots: Where are you???

8:52 AM - 16 Jul 2018

+ As someone who believes that a little "treason" (see the Berrigans, Daniel Ellsberg, Edward Snowden, et al) may at times be a "patriotic" duty to confront a treasonous US foreign policy, I'm sad to report that Trump's senile gibberish in Helsinki doesn't rise to that exalted level. As Henry Kissinger said of Bill Clinton after the bombing of Belgrade, "He doesn't have the moral fiber to be called a war criminal."

+ Hey Democrats, take a short break from your Treasongasm to consider that Flint still doesn't have clean water, kids from central America are still locked in cages, 80,000 people have been without power in Puerto Rico for 10 months, and Israel's bombing Gaza again. Ok, go top yourselves off now...

+ "It shall be treason to scaunderously & malyciously publishe & pronounce, by expresse writings or wordes, that the Kynge is a schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper of the Crowne."

—Treasons Act, 26 Henry VIII, Statutes of the Realm.

+ On December a 1972 tape, Richard Nixon told Henry Kissinger, "The press is the enemy, the establishment is the enemy, the professors are the enemy." (Two out of three ain't bad, Henry.)

+ Yes, that was our pal Sam Husseini who was hauled out of the Helsinki press conference for holding up a piece of paper signaling his intent to ask a question about the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. He had a press pass from The Nation. The press corps did nothing to defend one of their own...

+ Note from Sam: "Just got out of detention. I was held for a time by Finnish authorities at Presidential Palace and then manhandled and cuffed on hands and legs to detention

facility. They wouldn't call my family to tell them I was unharmed. Thanks for well wishes from many good folks. More soon."

+ The dangerous slip of paper Hussein was holding when the Finnish cops hauled him out of the Hoopla in Helsinki...



+ Both Trump and Putin may have come away from Helsinki as losers (especially if new sanctions are imposed on Russia by Congress), but [Bibi wins, as usual](#)...

+ Is Bibi the secret architect of Trump's foreign policy...? It seems Netanyahu pressed Trump to embrace Hungary's viciously anti-immigrant new president [Viktor Orban](#).

+ A recording obtained by the [Times of Israel](#) depicts Netanyahu bragging that he was the one who convinced Trump to pull out of the Iran deal. So many strings, just one bulbous puppet.....

+ What's really happening to the West Bank...

Population: 12% Israeli Settler, 88% Palestinian

State Land Allocation by Israel: 99.76% Settler, 0.24% Palestinian

+ Will someone please send Trump a copy of that old geography computer game "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?"

Trump: 'We would make a great deal with the United Kingdom because they have product that we like. I mean they have a lot of great product. They make phenomenal things, you know, and you have different names – you can say "England", you can say "UK", you can

say “United Kingdom” so many different – you know you have, you have so many different names – Great Britain. I always say: “Which one do you prefer? Great Britain? You understand what I’m saying?”

Piers Morgan: “You know Great Britain and the United Kingdom aren’t exactly the same thing?”

Trump: ‘Right, yeah. You know I know, but a lot of people don’t know that. But you have lots of different names. The fact is you make great product, you make great things. Even your farm product is so fantastic.’

+ Trump declared that as a consequence of his visit to Windsor Queen Elizabeth reviewed her honor guard for the first time in 70 years. Its more like 70 days. But who’s counting? When Trump tells these tall tales do they function as a kind of Viagra for his ego? Or are they meant to send some sort of coded message to Michael Cohen, similar to the way Bill Clinton used to signal Monica Lewinski through the special [neckties](#) he wore during public events?

+ Trump inviting Putin to the White House on the eve of the midterm elections proves that he’s not a Russian mole, but something much worse: an agent of the Democratic Party.

+ Lordy, there’s [a tape](#)!

+ When asked at the Aspen Conference about Trump’s comment that there were “fine people on both sides” in Charlottesville, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen defended the President. “It’s not that one side was right and one side was wrong.” No doubt she’s preparing her own defense for ripping kids from their parents, locking them in cages and then forgetting where she sent them....

+ Members of the Department of Homeland Security’s advisory board on immigration are finally beginning [to resign](#) over the Administration’s family separation policy. What took them so long? Did they finally tire of being persona non grata at their favorite bistros in Georgetown?

+ The whole idea of getting a gig in DC is to become a pig at the trough. If you can’t eat when, where & what you want, what’s the point?

+ When it comes to the real Resistance, the act of one Red Hen has been worth a million pink pussy hats on parade.

+ Here’s Trump talking trash about Angela Merkel’s immigration policy to Tucker Carlson: “She allowed millions of people to come in & when they came into Germany they passed everywhere else & they went to other countries. Obviously it’s hurt Angela, I

don't want to say who is better [between her & Putin] but she's been very badly hurt by immigration”

“Millions,” eh? (Last year, Germany admitted [186,644 asylum seekers](#), most from Syria.)

But not a word critiquing Putin for opening Russia to immigrants, perhaps because this act of generosity was toward racist white [Boer and Afrikaner plantation owners](#) fleeing land redistribution in South Africa, who presented no “cultural challenge” to the status quo?

When it comes to immigrants from the former Soviet republics in Central Asia, [Putin's policies](#) of racial profiling, prolonged detention and interrogation are so stern that they would make J. Beauregard Sessions long for another “how-to” session with his old pal Sergey Kislyak.

+ Will Geary prepared this animated map of weapons exports from the US from 1950 to 2017, arming death squads across the globe...

+ One of the foulest policies of Obama time was his drone assassination program, including the targeting of American citizens. Yet, this is one Obama policy Trump has no interest in wiping out. He pledged to expand it and he has followed through.

+ Instead of pulling out of Afghanistan, Trump has doubled down, sending more troops and dropping more bombs, all with predictable consequences. In the first six months of 2018, at least [1,692 Afghan civilians](#) have been killed, the most the long history of this war without reason.

+ This random Scott Pruitt anecdote pretty much sums up the baseness of this ghoulish band of hypocrites: “Pruitt’s staff consulted a top chemicals expert at EPA, worried about whether a desk containing formaldehyde would make him sick. That was just months before his top aides blocked a study on health dangers of the same chemical.”

+ [Joe Lieberman](#), is now going after the Lipstick Lenin, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, telling Democrats to vote for Joe Crowley, the person she smoked in the primary, who stubbornly refuses to have his name stripped from the Working Families Party ballot line. Whatever radical impulse there is behind Ocasio-Cortez’s campaign is already diluted by virtue of her running as a Democrat, but if Lieberman’s attacking you, you must have gotten under the right people’s skin...

+ Why those who know better still stick with Trump: the top 1% of wage-earners (those earning more than \$607K) will pay [\\$111 billion less](#) in federal taxes this year than if the tax laws remained unchanged since 2000, more than the bottom 60% saved.”

+ It is with profound sadness that I am forced to report the disappearance of [Alice Donovan](#) from Twitter. She survived many assaults on her character & good name but has

finally gone missing, perhaps she was renditioned as part of the secret agreements in Helsinki. Shall we signal an Amber Alert? Put her face on milk cartons (her healthy image would certainly help boost the fortunes of a US milk industry burdened by the savage trade policies of those dirty Canadians)....



+ W.'s "Library" has just posted all of the available Brett Kavanaugh files from his time in the Bush Administration. It should come with a warning label: "CAUTION: reading could be like dropping bad acid. Proceed at your own risk."

+ Papa John Schnatter now says that he regrets resigning after his repeated deployment of the n-word during staff meetings at his pizza empire leaked to the press. Papa John, who is probably responsible for more heart disease and obesity in America than McDonalds, could have simply followed Trump's lead and said: "What I meant to say was 'not a n-word.' Kind of a double negative thing. I thought I was clear about that. Just stick that in there. Ok?"

+ This just in from Bernie Sanders:



Bernie Sanders ✓
@SenSanders

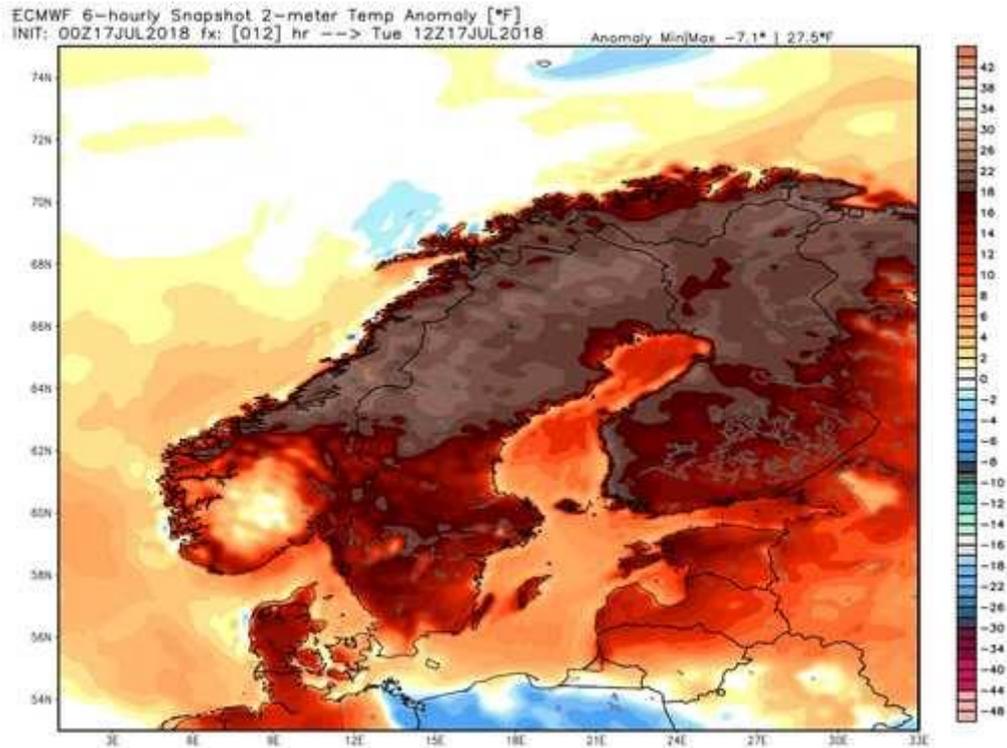
Follow

If President Trump won't confront Putin about interference in our elections and his destabilizing policies, Congress must act. Tweets and speeches are fine, but we need more from Republican senators now.

WHAT CONGRESS MUST DO TO REIN IN TRUMP:

- > Make it clear: we accept the assessment of our intelligence community that Russia meddled in our election and in other democracies.
- > Move aggressively to protect our election systems from interference by Russia or any foreign power.
- > Demand that the sanctions against Russia that were passed last year be fully implemented.
- > Make it clear: we will not accept any interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Mueller, and that the president must cooperate with this investigation.

Bernie, why don't you leave this kind of crap to Pelosi and Schumer, who won't even reform the Democratic Party's own election policies to stop them from suppressing the vote for candidates like yourself?



(Map Weatherbell.com)

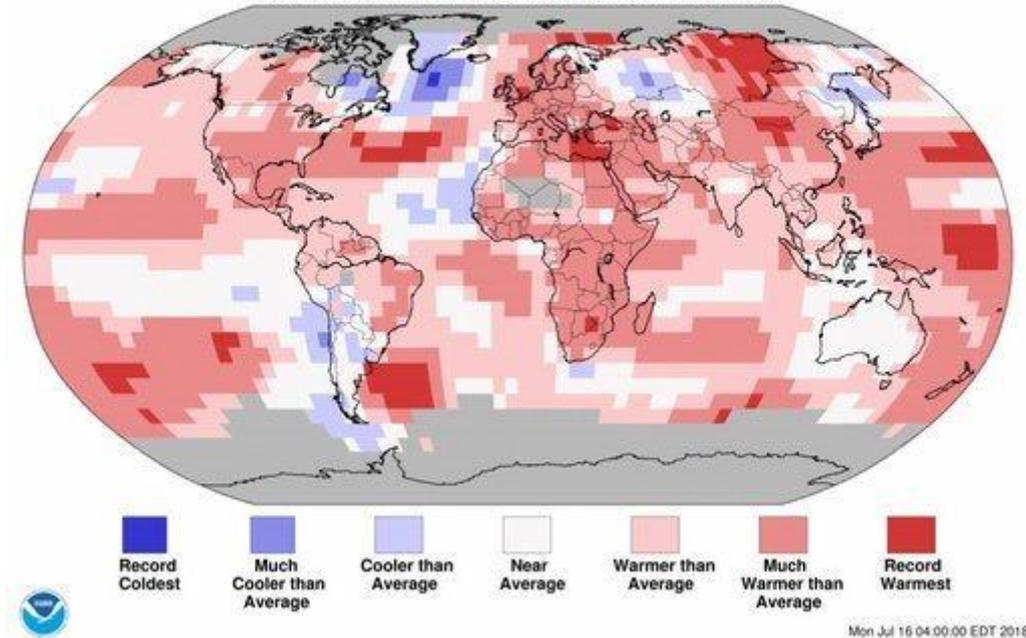
+ This week temperatures were 20 degrees higher than normal in Finland, Norway and Sweden, shattering all-time records. The mercury neared 90F on the edges of the Arctic Circle, sparking [wildfires](#) in the tundra. Presumably not all of this warming was driven by the hot air released at the recent Hoedown in Helsinki...

+ Global temperatures in June 2018 were 5th hottest on record...

Land & Ocean Temperature Percentiles Jun 2018

NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information

Data Source: GHCN-M version 3.3.0 & ERSST version 4.0.0



+ The latest weather phenomenon to afflict the great plains is “flash droughts,” sudden periods of intense heat, low humidity and low rainfall capable of killing of wheat, soy beans and corn plantations. Last summer eastern Montana and the Dakotas were hit hard by such flash droughts for the third time in the last five years. Farmers are praying for rain this year, but are they [asking the bigger question](#)? Hell no. They’d rather pack up all their shit, shoot their dogs and take a long ride in their Dodge Ram trucks to Bakersfield than admit it’s climate change.

+ Imagine the incandescent howls from the “originalists” if the constitutional right to own a gun was subjected the same kind of onerous, invasive and humiliating conditions it takes to get [an abortion in Mississippi](#).

+ When I went to NYC in the late 70s and early 80s, one way I explored the city was by visiting as many record and book stores as possible over a long weekend. They’re almost all gone now, but here’s a “lipstick tracing” of [what it once was](#)...

+ Even the Onion couldn’t get away with running this story about Bobby Wilson, an Arizona politician running on a Good Guys With Guns platform, who claims that he once fended off an intruder with a gun that was hidden under his bed. It turns out that [the intruder was his MOTHER](#). He shot and killed her and his sister and burned their bodies. He was tried and acquitted for murder...Now he may end up with a seat in the Arizona state senate.

- + Speaking of guns, heavy-metal snowflake Ted Nugent lost his nerve at the last moment and decided to ban guns from his upcoming concert in Roanoke, Virginia. As the White Panther John Sinclair, who has known Nugent since he fronted the Amboy Dukes and referred to himself as the Motor City Madman, “Ted Nugent is an asshole, he always was.”
- + Nugent, Sly Stallone, Scott Baio and must be really bummed about the fact that Trump has yet to name any recipients for the [National Medal of the Arts](#).
- + Is AMLO already in retreat...Newly-elected Mexican president Lopez Obrador has signaled his willingness to [approve oil and gas pipelines](#) from the US and Canada across indigenous land in Mexico.
- + “Generalissimo Franco is still dead...*or is he?*”
- + From Roy Moore to the [Beach House Sheriff](#), few states do pedophilia quite like Alabama....
- + For those of you who watched “Wild, Wild Country” on Netflix about the cult of the Bhagwan, there huge and deadly fire racing across the Oregon high desert very close to the site of Rajneeshpuram. The fire leapt 18 miles in a matter of hours and has now scorched over [70,000 acres](#).
- + Jesus: “Dear Hippie Pope, I’d much prefer a partner with [a little more experience](#)...”
- + Why American avant-garde composer [Carl Stone](#) got fired from his job as a disk jockey....

I had a show on KCRW for a very short time. I hadn’t really listened to KCRW before I worked there. I was listening to KPFK, which had a much more radical point of view. The program director stormed into the master control one day saying, “They don’t want to listen to this at 8:30 in the morning,” and that was it. The thing that sent her over the edge was when I played the complete version of [Steve Reich’s “Drumming.”](#) It’s about two hours long .. Without a break from beginning to end! She says, “Two hours of drumming, are you out of your mind?!”

With a Brat Like That...

Sound Grammar

What I’m listening to this week. Still recreating my vinyl collection. Here are last week’s acquisitions...

[The London Sessions](#) by Howlin’ Wolf

[Across a Crowded Room](#) by Richard Thompson

[Far From Over](#) by Vijay Iyer Sextet

Booked Up

What I'm reading this week.

[The Death of Truth](#) by Michiko Kakutani

[Rendezvous with Oblivion](#) by Thomas Frank

[American Nightmare](#) by Henry Giroux

What is the Main Danger?

Hadn't read Foucault in a while and thumbed through a volume of miscellaneous essays late last night when wine and a joint couldn't help me fall asleep. Hoping that some of Foucault's normally hypnotic syntax would do the trick, I was surprised by the clarity of this paragraph, which, perversely, kept me up for another hour...

Michel Foucault: "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger."