

PRISON OFFICIALS ARE MORE  
CRIMINAL THAN THOSE THEY INCARCERATE

by Ernesto R. Rodriguez

Prison Administrators and their employees--Prison Guards, have become more criminals than those they keep in the iron cages. Make no mistake about it, they have no concerns other than making a profit like any other business and they are ripping off our tax dollars. Here's how they do it:

They create real monsters of their prisoners by torture and slavery to assure themselves that their money making empires keep bringing in the billions in profits--your tax dollars that could be used to educate our children and repair our roads.. The recidivism rate is 85%.

Prison guards are now providing prisoners, for a profit, with guns, cell phones, drugs, prostitutes, gang member activities, and they steal prison goods like weapons, machinery, food, and large sums of budget money. I spent 26 1/2 years inside their prison iron cages...Read my biography at [www.ironcagebook.com](http://www.ironcagebook.com). And they cause riots and violence to make their funding sources believe they need better pay, more weapons, overtime hours, and to increase their profits with overcrowding and more prison needs. Wake Up America!

In 1995 Walter Winchell said (it's on the internet): "The scourge of the earth is in prison, and the scum of the earth is guarding them." read the reasons he gives for saying what he said.

More prove? Read the book titled: Burning Down The House, by Nell Bernstein. Our children being arrested and incarcerated (for profit) on minor "crimes" as possession of alcohol and truancy.

Need more information? Read: The New Jim Crow, by Michell Alexander, "The Mass Incarceration In The Age Of Colorblindness. How the Latinos and Blacks are the "Targets of Profits."

Want a complete history on prisons and the imprisoning and enslaving of the Black race to pick White plantations' owners' cotton? Read the book, "Tough Texas," by Robert Perkinson.

Wake up America and stop giving our tax dollars to these DOC Criminals who are feeding our imprisoned loved ones maggots in the their food. We can do better.

by Rodriquez  
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BY: LEON Z RBY

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DATED: APRIL 18, 2015

March 28, 2010

## The Land of Lock and Key

By DANIEL BERGNER

Prisons are sacred places. There our society claims control over the lives of men and women; there we assume the roles of gods. And whether the prison sprawls over thousands of acres like the penitentiary farms of the Deep South, or compresses its convicts on tight tiers, the air within holds a particular density, a palpable weight created not only by the crimes the inmates have committed but also by the ownership we have taken of the convicts, whether we acknowledge it or not.

In "Texas Tough," Robert Perkinson, a professor of American studies at the [University of Hawaii](#) at Manoa, delivers an important reckoning with this societal responsibility. Though his loud, machismo-laden title might better serve for a reality show about life behind bars, Perkinson offers a searching history of American incarceration, tracing the failures of our prisons to the approach that Texas and other Southern states have long taken toward their criminals and denouncing the fact that, with about 1.6 million people in our penitentiaries and an additional 800,000 in our jails, the United States locks up its citizens at a higher rate than any other country in the world.

Race and slavery lie at the heart of Perkinson's vision of American penology, and a profound dismay infuses the rhetoric of his opening pages. "Freedom is the United States' founding creed," he declaims in the book's first sentence, and immediately he adds pronouncements from Thomas Paine, [Andrew Jackson](#) and [Barack Obama](#) making the same point. The oncoming irony is unmissable; there isn't much that is subtle about Perkinson's writing, and perhaps there shouldn't be. Not only do we incarcerate at some six times the rate that Britain does, to take one example, or around seven times the rate of Canada, but, Perkinson relates, African-Americans are seven times as likely to be locked up as whites, and "African-American men today go to prison at twice the rate they go to college."

As Perkinson sets out to tell the story of America's movement from, in his words, "the age of slavery to the age of incarceration," with the latter period beginning in the mid-1960s and continuing to the present day, he concentrates on Texas in part because the modern surge of its inmate population has far outstripped even the spike in national numbers. Between 1965 and 2000, the number of prisoners in the country rose by 600 percent; in Texas, the growth was twice that. The state ranks near the very top for the percentage of its people kept behind bars. And for well over a century, Texas has held to a perspective on penology — an outlook devoid even of the goal, let alone the reality, of rehabilitation — that now dominates the nation. The state, in Perkinson's eyes, has provided a "template for a more fearful and vengeful society," for a country that no longer aims, with its inmates, "to repair and redeem but to warehouse, avenge and permanently differentiate convicted criminals from law-abiding citizens."

The template was mostly formed, according to "Texas Tough," by slavery and its aftermath. Defeated in the [Civil War](#), Texas and its Southern confederates were desperate to retain as much dominion as possible over their former slaves, and they found a way through law enforcement. Blacks seized for low-level crimes faced severe punishment with little chance of defending themselves in court. Perkinson tells of a black man sentenced to two years for stealing a pair of shoes and another sent away for five for snatching a bushel of corn. In the three years following the war, Texas' inmate population nearly quadrupled — and darkened considerably in skin color, with former slaves soon outnumbering whites. Over the next few decades, these new black prisoners were rented out to an array of private businesses under a system known as convict leasing, which replicated slavery for its brutality and may well have exceeded it in disregard for human life.

Black prisoners in Texas cut sugar cane and picked cotton on the plantations of the state's agricultural barons. They built the railroads that took the cotton to market. White convicts were leased out as well, but often for less arduous labor. Whipped and driven to work despite malaria and dysentery, or shot trying to escape, blacks fell dead nearly twice as frequently as whites. And the death tolls were high. At one work camp, where the men chopped timber for railway ties, almost a quarter of the convicts perished in a period of four months.

Similar toil and treatment prevailed in much of the South, and even when convict leasing came to an end in the early 20th century — in Texas, the end arrived partly through a campaign waged by an outraged prison pastor and a crusading San Antonio journalist — the system was replaced by government-run plantations and chain gangs. Fatalities declined, but subjugation remained the ethos. And this Southern penological tradition, the book argues, stands in important contrast to the Northern one, which was shaped by idealists whose early-19th-century penitentiaries were designed to restore "the vicious part of mankind to virtue and happiness," in the language of Benjamin Rush, a Pennsylvania doctor and signer of the Declaration of Independence who helped create the Northern model. This method, which stressed solitary confinement and silence, may have been a harsh failure at redeeming convicts, but at least it had reformation in mind.

It is the Southern tradition that has proved, in Perkinson's telling, to have the lasting nationwide legacy, both in the current warehousing of inmates and in the racism now powerfully embedded in American penology. Much as emancipation brought on a penal backlash against Southern blacks, so did the civil rights movement — except that this later reaction was national. Equal protection, desegregation and President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#)'s war on poverty were quickly followed by tougher drug laws and crackdowns on crime that, with conscious intention or not, made blacks a target. Since the triumphs of the civil rights movement, the disparity between black and white incarceration rates has almost doubled. In the early 21st century, the country, Perkinson suggests, has in a sense become the late-19th-century South.

### TEXAS TOUGH

#### The Rise of America's Prison Empire

By Robert Perkinson

Illustrated. 484 pp. Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt &amp; Company. \$35

This is an alarming indictment, built on passionate and exhaustive research. Unfortunately, Perkinson presents his case in a sometimes numbing fashion. He details Texas' prison history decade by decade, failing to fully dramatize the characters who could bring life to his urgent writing. Problematically, too, his case seems, in certain ways, overly broad, and in other ways evasive. The abuses of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo may not be as easily attributed to the legacy of slavery and Southern penology as Perkinson abruptly and sweepingly asserts in his final pages. And along with his condemnations of Texas and America, Perkinson would have done a service by thoroughly examining, rather than nearly ignoring, recent evidence that both the state and the country are holding incarceration rates in check partly by embracing, however gingerly, the spirit of rehabilitation. A new report from the Pew Center on the States, about the country's correctional systems, highlights Texas' nascent commitment to drug treatment behind bars. Perkinson might have offered a glimpse of such programs and a sense of whether they will last.

By documenting relentlessly, almost without counterpoint, the inhumanity that has defined Texan and American incarceration, "Texas Tough" leaves us wondering, despairingly, whether there is any way our society can rise to the godlike responsibility that suffuses prison air, whether there is any way we can rehabilitate our prisons so that we can reliably reform the convicts we lock inside.

*Daniel Bergner is the author of "God of the Rodeo: The Quest for Redemption in Louisiana's Angola Prison" and "The Other Side of Desire: Four Journeys Into the Far Realms of Lust and Longing," which has just been published in paperback.*

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## Professor selected as a Visiting Fellow at University of Oxford program

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Contact: [Robert Perkinson](#), (808) 956-6599

Posted: Jun 16, 2011

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa American Studies Associate Professor Robert Perkinson was recently awarded a research fellowship to participate as a Visiting Fellow at the Harris Manchester College Summer Research Institute at the University of Oxford.

Perkinson is among three university faculty members from Hawai'i who were selected to take part in the week-long independent research program starting on July 4. The program is designed to allow visiting fellows the time and resources to complete an article, book or research paper in their field of study.

Lilia Castle of Chaminade University and Steven C. Combs of Hawai'i Pacific University are the other two recipients. Access to the libraries and other resources of the University of Oxford is made available to Visiting Fellows.

The recipients were awarded the fellowships based on their exemplary contributions to research in their fields. Perkinson, the author of *Texas Tough: The Rise of America's Prison Empire*, will conduct research for an article on social reform techniques in early prisons. He will also research U.S. foreign relations and colonialism with comparative sections on the British Empire for his next book.

Every July, approximately 50 Visiting Fellows gather in Oxford at the Summer Research Institute. Over the years, these distinguished academics have come from 25 participating universities representing seven countries.

Corporate sponsor Hawaii Medical Assurance Association (HMAA) supports the Hawaii program that is coordinated locally by Oxford University's Harris Manchester College Regents Dr. Lawrence K.W. Tseu, attorney William McCorriston and Dr. John Henry Felix.

"The Summer Research Institute allows us to acknowledge some of our best collegiate educators and researchers," said Felix, President and CEO of HMAA. "Not only does the program bring an opportunity to the Visiting Fellows representing Hawaii, but their experiences are brought back to the classrooms, enriching the education of our students."



Robert Perkinson

BX: LEON IRBY

DATED: APRIL 18, 2015

4-24-2015

"I was putting him to bed and told him that even when I'm old and gray and more wrinkly than I am now, I'll still love him and want to tuck him in," she says.

"And he asked why I have wrinkles, and I said, 'Well, I hope some of them are from laughing so much.' And he touched my face and said, 'You're not old, you're just happy.'"

**Green Day, Ringo rock Hall of Fame ceremony**

CLEVELAND — When the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremonies return here every few years to the hall's spiritual and literal home, music history often ignites.

Such was the case Saturday night at the 30th annual gathering, which saw the inductions of Ringo Starr, Bill Withers, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Green Day, Lou Reed and the "5" Royales. USA TODAY's Jerry Shriver captured the celebration.

**They love rock 'n' roll:** Black leather-clad Joan Jett and her Blackhearts opened the show at a sold-out Public Hall by tearing through early hits *Bad Reputation* and *Cherry Bomb* (the latter aided by Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl on guitar and vocals, and original bass player Gary Ryan). She then introduced friend Tommy James to sing psychedelic pop hit *Crimson and Clover*, a 1968 hit for him that became a 1982 cover hit for her. Grohl and Miley Cyrus joined in on vocals (as did the audience). Cyrus then took to the podium to induct the group wearing a midriff-baring top (and not the pasties she was seen in earlier).

Cyrus who, at 22, is more than 30 years the junior of the Godmother of Punk, said she remembered early on wanting to have sex with the singer, whom she called "a wonder woman," an admirable activist and a "bada-babe on the planet."

Jett choked up during the long standing ovation that greeted her arrival at the podium, then acknowledged Cyrus as "another strong woman who does things her way." Before calling out the names of her bandmates in her first group, the Runaways, Jett noted that "rock 'n' roll is an idea and an ideal.

Sometimes we forget the political impact it has on people around the world. ... It's about giving a voice to people who weren't satisfied with whatever box they were put into."

**Blues power:** Electrified, Chicago-style blues music entered the rock mainstream in the mid-'60s via groups such as the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and J. Geils frontman and presenter Peter Wolf reminded the audience of that fact. "They always got the house on fire and played every night like it was the last night."

Surviving members Mark Naftalin, Elvin Bishop and Sam Lay (frontmen Butterfield and guitarist Mike Bloomfield both died in the 1980s but were represented by family members) accepted the award. "That was a kick-ass band and we helped the blues pass over," said Bishop.

A tough-sounding group led by Zac Brown, Tom Morello and harmonica player Jason Ricci reprised the group's *Born in Chicago*, with Brown showing impressive dexterity on guitar. Then, a Bishop-fronted band that included 80-year-old drummer/vocalist Lay and harmonica player Billy Boy Arnold ushered out their segment with the Muddy Waters classic *Got My Mojo Workin'*.

**Texas pride:** Presenter John Mayer inducted Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble, describing Vaughan as "the ultimate guitar hero," having the courage to overcome drug and alcohol addiction and "coming back stronger." That inspired Mayer to resist temptations in his own career, he said. "Heroes live forever." Double Trouble members Reese Wynans, Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon accepted on behalf of their leader, who died in 1990, joined by older brother Jimmie Vaughan, who gave a shout-out to inductees the "5" Royales.

A band led by Mayer, Jimmie Vaughan, Doyle Bramhall II and Gary Clark Jr., plus the Double Trouble members, blasted the rapturous auditorium with Stevie Ray's finest: *Pride and Joy*, *Texas Flood* and a Jimmie song about his brother, *Six Strings Down*.

**Great Green Day:** Members of Fall Out Boy inducted the pop-punkers Green Day (Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt and Tré Cool), joking that it was appropriate since fans often confuse the groups when posing for pictures in airports with fans. Armstrong, wearing a floppy tuxedo bow tie, honored his elders —

Elvis, The Who, the Rolling Stones, Kool & the Gang, Def Leppard — adding, "I feel like my record collection is sitting here in this room."

The group then showered the collected stars and fans with smart, sharp and furiously paced versions of *American Idiot*, *When I Come Around* and *Basket Case*. Armstrong's voice was especially clear and strong and bratty on *Basket Case*.

**Perfect night:** Presenter Patti Smith and Lou Reed's widow, Laurie Anderson, both spoke movingly of the love affair between Reed and New York City, and how the Velvet Underground, said Smith, "were a great band to dance to." Reed, who died in 2013, now is a two-time member of the HOF, having been enshrined as a Velvet member in 1996, also by Smith.

Karen O and Nick Zinner of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs sang a feisty version of *Vicious* before giving way to Beck, who performed a delightful version of *Satellite of Love*.

**Wither Withers?:** Speculation was rampant before the ceremony as to whether inductee Bill Withers, who hasn't recorded since the mid-'80s and who has performed only rarely during the past 20 years, would sing. The question was answered — partially — following Stevie Wonder's dignified induction speech. Withers, 76, accepted his award saying, "Stevie Wonder inducting Bill Withers into the Hall of Fame is like a lion opening a door for a kitty cat." Later he

cracked that, "This has to be the largest A.A. meeting in the Western hemisphere."

Withers led Wonder to a harpejji (keyboard instrument) on the stage and sat next to him silently during a moody and powerful *Ain't No Sunshine*, which they had to restart when Wonder discovered he or the band were playing in the wrong key. Withers then escorted him to another keyboard as a band filed onstage, led by John Legend. His *Use Me* was properly dark and funky, and punctuated by jabbing horns. For set closer *Lean on Me*, Legend took the first verse, Wonder the second, and then Legend led Withers to the stage to sing along with the group.

**It didn't come easy:** Ringo Starr was the last of The Beatles to be inducted for his solo work, even though he scored several of the first post-Beatles solo hits. In the building where the group played in 1964, Paul McCartney did the induction, recounting shared hotel rooms and moments of musical amazement, saying "it's a great honor for me to induce him, uh, induct him in to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame tonight."

Starr said he "felt lucky" that the ceremony was in Cleveland. While working in a factory in England, he picked up radio broadcasts out of Luxembourg which carried rock 'n' roll shows hosted by Cleveland DJ Alan Freed, and that spurred his love of the music. He later cracked that an agreement among his mates to fess up to passing gas "is why we all got on so well."

Ringo then climbed behind a drum kit and launched into *Boys*, backed by Green Day. After a lengthy break, during which Starr accepted a few hugs from the crowd ("Hugs are fine, but watch the crazy eyes," he cracked) he joined an all-star group for the ceremony-closing jam session. Starr's brother-in-law Joe Walsh kicked off the intro to *It Don't Come Easy*, with Ringo adding jaunty vocals and flashing a peace sign.

Saying "the stage feels a little empty to me," Starr summoned Sir Paul to join him for *With a Little Help From my Friends*. But they were the frosting as most of the night's inductees and performers also joined in a lusty rendition of the Beatles classic. The supergroup brought down the auditorium with *I Wanna Be Your Man*, as Wonder, McCartney, Armstrong, Legend, Mayer, Wolf, Walsh, Morello, Cyrus, Brown, Grohl and anyone else who could carry a tune or a guitar drove it home. Starr's ocean-wide grin said it all.

**Kenya's Caroline Rotich, Ethiopia's Lelisa Desisa win Boston Marathon**

BOSTON — Lelisa Desisa of Ethiopia reclaimed the title he won two years ago, winning the Boston Marathon by a 31-second margin Monday.

Desisa pulled away from the pack late and continued to create distance all the way to the finish line for a time of 2 hours, nine minutes and 17 seconds Monday in the 119th Boston Marathon.

BY: LEON I RBY

2 of 2 DATE: APRIL 25, 2015

Two years ago Desisa donated his marathon medal to the city, in a show of support for Boston after the bombings.

Yemane Adhane Tsegay of Ethiopia was second (2:09:22), followed by Wilson Chebet (2:10:22) of Kenya.

Caroline Rotich of Kenya won the women's race with a time of 2:24:55. Rotich and Mare Dibaba of Ethiopia ran side-by-side over the last couple miles before Rotich was able to stride ahead with about 30 yards to go and finished four seconds ahead of Dibaba. Ethiopia's Buzunesh Deba took third (2:25:09) followed by American Desiree Linden.

Runners and spectators were greeted with a cold, gray morning Monday.

Balmy weather from the week before gave way to cloudy skies and pending showers. Temperatures were in the low 40s as

thousands of runners gathered in Boston Common, where they jogged and stretched before catching a shuttle to the starting line. School buses lined up for blocks next to the Common waited to take the runners west to Newington and the start of the 26.2-mile journey back to Boylston Street.

Police and increased security were visible throughout the city and especially tight near the finish, where the 2013 race ended in horror as three people died and more than 250 were injured by the bombings that rocked Boston's traditional rite of spring. The tragedy was also the birth of the Boston Strong movement, which continues two years later.

Several runners in this year's field were wounded in 2013 while running or just watching from the crowded sidewalks lining the finish.

Meb Keflezighi, who last year became the first American runner to win in Boston since 1983, finished eighth behind Dathan Ritzenhein, the top American man.

Shalane Flanagan, a hometown favorite who was fourth in the 2013 Boston Marathon, finished ninth Monday.

More than 30,000 people registered for the 2015 marathon, which began with the mobility impaired division, wheelchairs and handcycles. A strong wind kicked up for the start of the women's elite runners at 9:32 a.m. with the first wave of the elite men following at 10.

Two-time defending champion Rita Jeptoo is serving a doping ban after testing positive for EPO in September.

#### Inspiring Venezuelan man last to finish Boston Marathon in 20 hours

An inspirational Venezuelan man has become the last finisher of the Boston Marathon, crossing about 20 hours after he started. Maickel Melamed finished at about 5 a.m. Tuesday, after enduring torrential downpours and thunderstorms for the last few miles. The 39-year-old Melamed has a form of muscular dystrophy that severely impairs his mobility.

He was accompanied along the race by volunteers, and was met at the finish by dozens of cheering friends and supporters. Melamed has participated in marathons in Chicago, New York, Berlin and Tokyo, but he says Boston is special because it's where his parents brought him as a child for treatment.

#### Matt Kenseth gets first win of season at rain-delayed Bristol

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Matt Kenseth won a rain-soaked Food City 500 on Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway in a green/white/checker finish.

Kenseth stalked Kyle Larson, fended off Kurt Busch and Carl Edwards and pulled away from Jeff Gordon in the final stretch to win for the first time since September 2013, a span of 51 races. Kenseth, who led 47 laps, virtually assured himself a return to the Chase for the Sprint Cup.

He blasted from the field on the final restart on Lap 508 to win by .287 seconds.

"It means a lot," Kenseth says of his return to victory lane. "Last year was tough and not winning again this year had been tough. I've been trying to put myself in a position to finally get one. And I can't thank my crew enough, who have been doing a great job with this No. 20 Toyota."

Jimmie Johnson was second, followed by Gordon, Ryan Newman and Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

**CONTENDERS OUT:** Defending series champion and former Bristol-winner Kevin Harvick wrecked out of the top five on Lap 310 when he rammed the careening No. 18 Toyota driven by David Ragan. The sequence began in Turn 1 when Johnson, who had been spun earlier by Kurt Busch, turned the lapped car of Jeb Burton up into Ragan. Harvick was dominant early in the race, leading 184 laps. Tony Stewart bumped Kasey Kahne with 18 laps left, wrecking a No. 5 Chevrolet that had been one of the fastest all weekend. Running second with seven laps left, Edwards washed up into the wall and was plowed by Busch, who was fifth.

**DENNY'S TAKEOUT:** Joe Gibbs Racing prospect Erik Jones, 18, who won his first Xfinity Series race at Texas Motor Speedway last week, replaced Denny Hamlin after a nearly four-hour rain delay in what was his Sprint Cup debut. Hamlin said he "pulled something" in his neck on Lap 12.

**ANOTHER HIT:** Busch crew chief Tony Gibson suffered a recurrence of a kidney stone after the Lap 22 interruption and watched the race from his motor coach after being evaluated by doctors.

**ROGER AND OUT:** Team Penske's Brad Keselowski crashed into teammate Joey Logano after losing control of the No. 2 Ford off Turn 4 and sliding into traffic on Lap 19. Logano's No. 22 Ford also sustained major damage. Keselowski said the car "flew crazy sideways."

"I would like to blame the rain but I honestly don't know," he said. "I really hate that a tore up my teammate in the process."

Logano said the track "wasn't wet yet." "It happened quick, obviously," he said. "You think you get early in this race and kind of want to settle in and just starting to get the top worked in a little bit there, and Brad just got loose underneath that lapped car. You start checking up and it looked like he was going to have it saved and he checked up more than I expected and the next thing you know I'm in the back of him and we're both headed towards the fence."

Logano returned 52 laps down and finished 40th, Keselowski 35th.

**RAIN:** The race began roughly 78 minutes after its scheduled start time as the .533-mile track was dried by eight Air Titan 2 systems. The initial green-flag period lasted just eight minutes and 22 laps before rains inundated the race track. Racing resumed after a three-hour, 58-minute delay. A second, 13-minute, 32-second red-flag period was issued on Lap 273 to allow track-drying for another brief shower. A third occurred on Lap 505 as the field circled under caution in a drizzle, awaiting a green/white/checker finish.

**Tim Tebow is Chip Kelly's latest chance to prove he's smarter than everyone else**  
Tim Tebow is on the precipice of signing with the Philadelphia Eagles Monday, reminding us all that if at first we don't succeed, try two more times, fail, get a job on TV, and then try again.

Tebow believes that he is an NFL player, despite every NFL team he's played for believing otherwise. When faced with the fourth coming of Tebow, some say "why the heck not?" It could be different this time. Then again, it probably won't be. It would be one thing if Tebow was coming off a thrilling victory in the 2012 AFC Wild Card game, and into a system built for him. But we're three years removed from that version of Tebow. Even the Tebow who spent a confusing year in New York with the Jets would have a better chance of assimilating, which is saying something.

But Tebow has been removed from an NFL team environment for quite some time now. He's moved on to other career ventures, most notably television. His presence has improved in front of a camera while reading a teleprompter, and while those skills are important in his current line of work, they don't necessarily translate to his prospective place of employment. Perhaps this is all an elaborate set up for a new reality series (working title: *19 Teams and Counting*). Of course should Tebow find success with the Eagles, maybe Brian Williams will have a future with the Patriots. They seem to have a few things in common.

In the end, it doesn't matter if anyone outside of Chip Kelly thinks Tebow is capable. Kelly sees the beauty in fourth chances and has an almost euphoric disregard for logic. The decision to sign Tebow doesn't come from a place of need. There are plenty of younger options with far less baggage and a much higher potential Kelly could sign as his third-string quarterback.

SCHOLASTIC

# News

with Weekly Reader

ISSN 1548-1548

February 23, 2015

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## iHola, cuba!

The United States is working to improve relations with one of its closest neighbors. Page 4

video

A History of Cuba

[www.scholastic.com/sn56](http://www.scholastic.com/sn56)

Students in Havana, Cuba, wave their national flag.

BY: LEON IRRBY DATED: APRIL 25, 2015

# In Cuban Capital, Change Stirs Fears

HAVANA—Israel Rodríguez, a bartender at a state-run hotel, spent his savings to build a 36-seat mini-theater at his residence here after the government last year allowed dozens of private 3-D cinemas to open.

But just a few months later, the government abruptly cracked down on the cinemas, saying that the diversion was corrupting youth. Some Cubans speculated that the government was worried of the private theaters emptying state-run facilities and even using them to show subversive programming.

"If the captain tells us to shut down, we shut down," Mr. Rodríguez said this week, recalling a long authorization process and costly equipment imports. "I still have everything there, as good as new. Maybe one day the government will change its mind."

Despite high hopes around a new chapter in Cuba's economic and diplomatic links with the U.S. following the announcement last week by Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro to thaw relations frozen for 54 years, the communist island's revolutionary past suggests change will come slowly here. Just three days after the surprise announcement, state

newspaper Granma showed a front-page photo of Mr. Castro shaking hands with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, a brazen Washington critic.

The visit by Mr. Rogozin—who said via Twitter that the U.S. will "suffocate" Cuba as it begins to mend ties and has argued for Russia's right to annex Alaska—served as a sobering reminder of the long road ahead for Cubans hoping that rapprochement leads to an economic boost.



Cubans waiting on Tuesday near the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to seek visas.

"Change? We'll have to see it to believe it," said taxi driver Sandalio Gomez, one of many here who are skeptical that a totalitarian state will suddenly open up. "The idea of improving relations is good. This is a poor country and we can use the economic help. But for now all we can do is hope."

It isn't easy changing minds in Cuba, which in many ways appears to be stuck in another era. Rundown buildings crowd this capital city, which remains

little changed since the guerrilla forces led by Fidel Castro ousted Gen. Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Vintage American sedans, called "almendrones"—or big almonds—because of their bulky rounded exterior, still ply the streets.

The détente calls for the ideological foes to establish formal relations, including embassies. The U.S. will also let American residents quadruple the amount of remittances they can send to the island. The new rules also

allow U.S. exports of telecommunications and agricultural gear, as well as construction materials.

What it doesn't signal, at least not yet, is a Chinese-styled sudden shift toward freer markets or more political freedom, analysts say.

"It's not realistic to expect Cuba to transform overnight," said Emily Parker, author of "Now I Know Who My Comrades Are," a book on underground Internet use in Cuba,

Russia and China. "The Cuban government...recognizes that free Internet would pose a threat to its control over information."

Only a fraction of Cubans have access to the Internet, and many of those are party or army officials. The government also tightly regulates content, sending most Cubans to an intranet that usually links to pro-government websites, says Freedom House, an organization that tracks freedom around the world.

Still, the U.S. moves could boost Internet access, Ms. Parker said, and despite government attempts to control the Web, help ordinary Cubans gain access to information and empower them to report injustice.

Ismael Pérez, a chauffeur, wondered if the changes that may be coming to Cuba would be good for people like him. Mr. Pérez has worked for the state all his life but now, he and many other drivers are being taken off the state payroll as the government tries to cut expenses. "I don't have that experience in private business, you understand?" he said. "We are afraid of changes."

Clues to how Havana views the new political landscape can be found in Mr. Castro's announcement of the secret talks his government had been holding with U.S. officials for some 18 months, said John Kavulich, an adviser on the Cuban economy.

Dressed in a military uniform, Mr. Castro "was making it clear that Cuba was still at war, that it was still under attack," Mr. Kavulich said. "The Cuban government will only embrace the components of change that they feel they can manage and can survive."



**Re: Parole Rule petition went out the 6<sup>th</sup> - needs support.**

Well, the rule change petition is finally done and went to DOC Secretary Wall, Parole commissioner Dean Stensberg and Health director James Greer on the 6<sup>th</sup> of april. After long search for exactly WHO does PAC rules, we got such contradictory answers that we were advised to send to both parole commissioner and Wall . And because the health department is directly affected, we are sending there also. ( The statutes clearly state that the DOC has the only power to make the rules but when calling the parole people, they say they do -so our legis guide suggested send to all, quoting statutory authority and stating all need to be in on the discussion)

High hopes that this will at least spark a discussion in the right direction. They must by law answer this petition. The petition is online at : <https://ffupstuff.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/parole-rule-petition-stat-227.pptx>;; FFUP will be coming out with the newsletter early May which will update on what WISDOM is doing and will have the rule change requests in it ( 2 pages ) and if you want full copy of 27 page thing, Let me know, I will slowly get them out; The broad outlines and goals for the rules are on page 5 of this 27 page tome. The rules themselves, that prisoners and I believe will open up parole, are on pages 6 and 7. The rest of the document is supporting arguments and the history of this fiasco. This newsletter will be mostly on campaign and next will start the regular newsletter, with plenty of your submissions

For families, we also have new parole web which has all our campaign materials. This is the address: <http://secondchancewi.blogspot.com/>. It needs a lot of work but is a start.

Our next move is contacting legislators requesting that that they ask DOC Secretary Wall and Parole commissioner Dean Stensberg to implement the new rules and I ask those of you who have engaged families, ask them to contact their legislators by phone or mail or email. All your efforts are important and are appreciated. I have been calling/emailing the Corrections committee and the budget committee and there is support and interest (\$\$\$Savings).

We do have a new parole chairman -Dean Stensberg, whose hearing is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and don't worry , there are lots of comments going in to members of the committee that are interviewing him. From what I hear from a legislative aide, Dean Stensberg has had many positions in the justice department and does listen. We need to educate him and all legislators. It is a good time for all our efforts. I still keep the goal on mind-**out by end of 2015!!! Below is sample letter to legislators.** (We can at least have the door pried open by the end of this year of we get the word out- it I the money waste and the budget crisis that will do it)

You can also make it simple: call and ask your legislators to educate themselves on old law prisoners and the need to reinstate parole!! Then tell your story.

BY: LEON IRBY

DATED: APRIL 25, 2015

Please ask families and friends to write or call!!

Here is the website to find out your legislators' contact information: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>  
phone number to get contact info on legislators is: 800 362-9472 (state switchboard)  
address for senators: PO Box 8952, Madison, WI 53707  
address for representatives: last name a-l : PO Box 8952, Madison 53708; m-z : PO box 8953;  
Madison 53708

**And here is a sample letter:**

**Date**

Dear Representative/ Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

I write to bring an important matter to your attention. Increasing attention has been Wisconsin's incarcerated "Old Law Prisoners." These are the over 2500 prisoners long eligible for parole, many rehabilitated, who are being held in our prisons at enormous cost in lives and resources. I come to you with a solution, a **Petition for Parole Rule Changes Using Statute 227** that if adopted, would make the parole system work as it was intended. This parole rule change petition was sent to DOC Secretary Wall and Parole Chairman Dean Stensberg April 6<sup>th</sup> and is written under the rubric of statute 227, which mandates that the rule proposals be seriously considered and the petitioners be given a considered response.

I write to ask you to look over the petition in the attachment or online (address below) and contact Parole chairman Stensberg and DOC Secretary Wall to ask that they adopt these rules. There need be no law changes to fix our broken system. The vague and subjective nature the present parole rules (PAC106) allow for contradicting and ever changing unwritten guidelines and rules that keep the parole ready inmate incarcerated year after decade. Because of the health care needs for this aging group of prisoners, the Department of Corrections has no funds for rehabilitation, mental health treatment or adequate professional staff. For there is no Medicare or Medicaid for prisoners and we the WI taxpayer must pay 60 to 100 thousand dollars a year per inmate to provide health care as they age and become sick. The result is that we Wisconsin taxpayers for the first time in history spend more on our prisons than we do on the entire College system. And it is not good health care, for prisons are not set up to care for the aged and infirm.

All Old Law prisoners are over 30 and many have families waiting for them and all are past the age when most crime is committed. Our new rules will ensure that those that are ready for release will get to go back to their communities and will stop the enormous waste in lives and resources. Please take a serious look at the petition in attachment or online at

<https://ffupstuff.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/parole-rule-of-petition-stat-227.pptx>, and consider supporting it...

Thank you,

*Your name and address. Make sure you give your address as they DO pay attention to their constituents. Your name and address. Make sure you give your address as they DO pay attention to their constituents. Also, it is good to get to know your legislative aides (they are who you will speak to if you call, who will read your email and decide where to direct it.) - tell your story, they have the ear of their boss who has the power to help you and they often do help their individual constituents.*

Mission operators in mission control at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Maryland, have been carrying out a series of orbit corrections that will delay the spacecraft's inevitable crash.

The final maneuver will take place next Friday, April 24.

"Following this last maneuver, we will finally declare the spacecraft out of propellant, as this maneuver will deplete nearly all of our remaining helium gas," Daniel O'Shaughnessy, mission systems engineer at APL, said in a news release. "At that point, the spacecraft will no longer be capable of fighting the downward push of the sun's gravity."

The impact is expected to take place out of view on April 30. However, scientists are hoping the fresh impact crater will give them new insight into the planet.

"Having an impact crater, even a small one, whose origin date is precisely known, will be an important benchmark," Sean Solomon, the mission's principal investigator and director of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, New York, told Space.com.

The MESSENGER (MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry and Ranging) spacecraft was launched in 2004 and entered the planet's orbit on March 18, 2011.

While the spacecraft's mission may be ending, scientists are celebrating all they've learned about Mercury over the past four years.

For the first time in history we now have real knowledge about the planet Mercury that shows it to be a fascinating world as part of our diverse solar system," John Grunsfeld, associate administrator of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA said in a news release. "While spacecraft operations will end, we are celebrating MESSENGER as more than a successful mission. It's the beginning of a longer journey to analyze the data that reveals all the scientific mysteries of Mercury."

Those mysteries may even hold a clue to the formation of life on Earth.

As Mercury is the planet closest to the sun, temperatures can reach 800 degrees Fahrenheit. However, craters at the poles are permanently in shadow – and in 2012, MESSENGER discovered evidence of water ice deposits and other volatile material locked in those polar regions. It also found a dark layer covering the ice, believed to be organic compounds.

Scientists think those materials arrived on the planet much in the way MESSENGER will arrive: by crashing there.

The water now stored in ice deposits in the permanently shadowed floors of impact craters at Mercury's poles most likely was delivered to the furthest planet by the impacts of comets and volatile-rich asteroids," Solomon said in a news release. "Those same impacts also likely delivered a dark organic material."

The evidence found by MESSENGER lends support to the theory that comets and asteroids delivering ice and organic compounds may have played a role in the formation of life on Earth.

First-ever photo of rare monkey species proves they're not extinct

Two researchers working in the humid, swampy forests of the Congo captured the first photograph of a monkey species thought by some to have gone extinct. The monkeys, a mother along with her young offspring, are Bouvier's red colobus monkeys, which had not been seen in more than 50 years, according to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

The photo was snapped in March by Lieven Devreese, an independent field researcher, who with partner Gaël Elle Gondo Gobolo, was searching for the rare creature in Congo's newly-created Ntokou-Pikounda National Park. Established in 2013, the park is home to thousands of gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants and other species.

Devreese and Gobolo embarked on their journey in February to try to photograph the Bouvier's red colobus, and gather data about the species' distribution.

According to a WCS press release, Devreese and Gobolo followed advice from local people who knew the red colobus' sounds and behavior. The two eventually found a group of them in the swamp forests along the Bokiba River

Our photos are the world's first, and confirm that the species is not extinct," Devreese said.

WCS teams also surveyed the entire park in a systematic way, making about 30 transects, according to Fiona Maisels, a conservation scientist at WCS. But they only heard Bouvier's red colobus monkeys on four occasions.

"By contrast, [Devreese and Gobolo] heard and/or saw the other monkey species fairly frequently," Maisels told Mashable in an email.

The Bouvier's red colobus' numbers had plummeted due to human hunting, and poachers are still a danger due to rising demand for bushmeat. Along with other types of red colobus monkeys, they tend to be friendly toward humans, which makes them an appealing target for poachers.

According to WCS, the Bouvier's red colobus monkey, scientifically known as *Piliocolobus bouvieri*, is a species of monkey endemic to the Republic of Congo. Little is known about the species, however, and the most recent unverified sightings were in the 1970s until WCS surveys recorded red colobus sounds in what is now Ntokou-Pikounda National Park in both 2007 and 2014.

"Red colobus become uncommon pretty rapidly because of their overly trusting behavior vis-à-vis humans on the ground — which is why the colobus and child allowed herself to be photographed so

nicely by Lieven," Maisels said. "This species used to occur all the way from where it was recorded on this occasion all the way south to the Lefini Reserve in Congo, but they had already been hunted out of the southern portion of the range by the 1990s."

The photograph suggests there may be other species of swamp-dwelling monkeys that are nocturnal, which no one has seen simply because researchers have not searched so extensively for them, she added.

"It took someone who was specifically oriented towards finding out the distribution of this particular monkey species (Lieven) to get close enough for the confirming photo," Maisels said. "As I said before, hats off to him!"

Wisconsin students team up for Day of Action against proposed state budget

College students across the state teamed up with members of the College Democrats of Wisconsin Thursday to reach out to legislators, requesting they resist the budget cuts on the UW System.

The current status of Gov. Scott Walker's proposed state budget includes a \$300 million cut to the UW System and removes shared governance and tenure from state statute.

The College Democrats of UW-Madison invited students to their office in the Student Activity Center to call legislators, as part of the statewide event.

"It's really good that people know students aren't here, just twiddling our thumbs as all these threats are coming through," said Vice Chair of the College Democrats of UW-Madison Jenny Tasse.

"Continuing this pressure, continuing the conversations is super important," Tasse said. "Most importantly we need to make sure that when we come back to school ... the Regents are held accountable and know that we won't accept being cut."

Chair of the College Republicans of UW-Madison Courtney Mullen said while they do not currently have a campaign in support of the proposed budget, they are preparing statements for a debate with the College Democrats, scheduled for Thursday.

4-17-2015  
Scott Walker's Wisconsin approval rating drops in latest poll

As Gov. Scott Walker moves closer to a formal announcement that he will run for president, a new poll shows his approval rating in Wisconsin is slipping and some of his legislative priorities are deeply unpopular.

Still, the poll released Thursday by Marquette University Law School found Walker leading the Republican presidential field in Wisconsin. And nearly two-thirds of GOP-leaning voters in the state want him to run.

The poll also showed Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson distantly trailing former Democratic U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold. Johnson had 38%, and Feingold had 54%.

Johnson unseated Feingold in 2010. Feingold hasn't announced his plans but is widely expected to run again.

Johnson's lag behind Feingold is a sign "that (Feingold's) not been forgotten, nor has the public seemingly turned against him in his time away from the state," said Charles Franklin, director of the poll.

Franklin added that Johnson's relative anonymity in Wisconsin is not uncommon among first-term members of Congress.

Walker's approval rating dropped to 41%, down from 49% in the last poll on Oct. 26, just before he faced Democrat Mary Burke in his re-election race. The latest poll showed 55% of voters disapproved of how Walker is handling his job.

As he assumes a national profile, a majority of polled voters think the state is now headed in the wrong direction. Also, Walker faces challenges on some of his top goals as Republicans who control the Legislature work on his state budget.

Some of Walker's budget proposals were overwhelmingly unpopular, the poll found.

For instance, 78% of voters opposed Walker's plan to cut aid to schools by \$127 million. Nearly as many, 70%, oppose Walker's plan to cut \$300 million to the University of Wisconsin System.

Walker, who is in Europe this week on a trade mission, told reporters in a conference call that he expected to be able to prevent the cut to schools and possibly could reduce the size of the budget reduction for UW.

Lawmakers will get new revenue estimates soon and they believe the figures will show the state will take in more money than originally believed, giving them the ability to shore up parts of the budget.

Walker said he believed his numbers had dipped because the attention on the budget is focused on areas of disagreement. He said other parts of his budget — such as extending a tuition freeze for two more years — would be popular and his numbers would recover this summer.

In the end, in June, once the budget's completed, once we've signed it and all those other positives are out there, I think (the approval rating) will have a significant change," he said.

In a statement, state Sen. David Hansen (D-Green Bay) said the poll shows a majority of voters oppose many of the governor's proposals.

Wisconsinites are seeing through his strategy to divide and conquer," Hansen said.

Thursday's poll was released the same day a former campaign manager for Walker formed a super PAC to boost Walker's presidential bid.

In a head-to-head matchup Walker trailed former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton 52% to 40%. Clinton also led all the other likely Republican candidates.

Among GOP voters, Walker easily led other Republican candidates. He had 40%, compared with 10% for U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, 8% for former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, 6% for U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and 6% for New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

Franklin noted that a strength of Walker since January is that he has been able to sustain high poll numbers against the field.

"The caution, though, is the dynamic of new candidates entering," Franklin said, noting that Cruz realized an immediate spike when he formally announced his candidacy.

The poll of 803 respondents was conducted between April 7 and April 10 and included landlines and cellphones.

The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for most questions. The margin of error is more than 5 percentage points for questions that dealt with a subset of voters, such as only Republican- or Democratic-leaning voters.

Since Marquette's polling began in January 2012, Walker's lowest job approval rating was 46% in September 2012.

Walker has reached a high of 51% five times, according to polling data.

Walker's first term focused almost exclusively on running affairs of the state. But in his second term, he has spent an increasing share of his time on his presidential aspirations, making visits to Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina and overseas.

Meanwhile, in Wisconsin, 53% of registered voters said the state is now headed down the wrong track, while 43% believe it's headed in the right direction. That's a turnaround from last fall. In October, 51% said the state was headed in the right direction; 44% said Wisconsin was on the wrong track.

Franklin said the drop in Walker's approval rating is driven by myriad factors, ranging from his presidential aspirations to controversial measures in his budget.

"All of those together conspire to create a more negative view of the state right now, coupled with his presidential travels, and the fact that he's not here, if you will, campaigning for his budget, campaigning for his role as governor, then all of those pressures push against his job approval rating."

The poll also showed that 79% of voters opposed public funding for a 700,000-square-foot arena for the Milwaukee Bucks in downtown Milwaukee.

On other topics:

■ Natural Resources Board. A total of 60% said they oppose plans by Walker to take away the

policy-making powers of the seven-member board. Thirty percent said they support the change.

Legislators have said recently that voters have been telling them that they opposed plans to make the board advisory. The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee dropped Walker's plan from the budget on Wednesday.

■ Vouchers. A slight majority oppose removing limits on the number of students outside of Milwaukee and Racine that can receive publicly funded vouchers. Fifty-four percent oppose removing the limits and 37% favor ending the limits, which is now set at 1,000 students.

■ Right to work. The legislation, which was signed into law last year, bans labor contracts that would make it mandatory for workers to pay union fees. In the poll, 44% said they support the law; 50% said they oppose it.

Cubs will call up Kris Bryant on Friday

Kris Bryant's long-anticipated debut for the Chicago Cubs is less than 24 hours away.

Bryant, baseball's top prospect whose major league debut was delayed so the club could retain his rights another year, will be recalled Friday and will be in the lineup for the Cubs' game against the San Diego Padres at Wrigley Field, according to a person with direct knowledge of the situation.

The person spoke to USA TODAY Sports on condition of anonymity because Bryant's call-up has not been announced.

ESPN Chicago is reporting that Bryant will be called up on Friday, quickly ending the guessing game of when the game's most promising young talent would arrive.

Bryant, 23, was USA TODAY Sports' Minor League Player of the Year in 2014, when he hit 43 home runs and drove in 110 runs in Class AA and AAA ball.

Today I got to tell my family that my dream is coming true. Can't really put into words what that feels like. So excited for this journey!  
— Kris Bryant (@KrisBryant\_23) April 17, 2015  
Despite his stellar year, the Cubs did not recall Bryant during the September roster expansion, and indicated he would not break camp with the club this spring. Keeping Bryant in the minor leagues until Friday will cost him a year of major league service time, ensuring the Cubs retain his rights through 2021. Bryant batted .321 and hit three home runs, including a three-run shot on Thursday, in his three weeks at Class AAA Iowa.

Meanwhile, incumbent third baseman Mike Olt suffered a wrist injury just as the date to delay Bryant's service time neared.

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BY: LEON ZIRBY DATED: 4 OF 4 APRIL 28, 2015

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As Gov. Scott Walker moves closer to a formal announcement that he will run for president, a new poll shows his approval rating in Wisconsin is slipping and some of his legislative priorities are deeply unpopular.

Still, the poll released Thursday by Marquette University Law School found Walker leading the Republican presidential field in Wisconsin. And nearly two-thirds of GOP-leaning voters in the state want him to run.

formula used to determine which parts of the country would need federal approval — known as pre-clearance — to change their voting procedures was outdated. The court instructed Congress to write a formula that was reflective of current conditions, but Congress has yet to act.

"The Voting Rights Act is being dismantled," said Kirsten Moller, who traveled to Selma from San Francisco to be part of the commemoration. "We need to protect it. It's not a given. We need to be vigilant."

"The voting rights act is being dismantled. We need to protect it. It's not a given. We need to be vigilant."

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who was among the dozens of Washington lawmakers to travel to Selma this weekend, called out her fellow lawmakers for failing to take action on the Voting Rights Act, nearly two years after the high court decision.

"We have not in the United States Congress reinvigorated the Voting Rights Act gotten it back to the president for his signature," Warren said. "That's what we should be talking about today."

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, who was also in Selma on Saturday, said the issue should be debated by Congress, but he resisted Democrats' efforts to tie it to the Bloody Sunday anniversary.

"This is about more than tweaks of the Voting Rights Act," he said. "This is about how do we secure that we have equal justice and that we learn from lessons of the past." Gatrice Benson, a Selma native now living in Georgia, got a call from her 73-year-old grandmother not long after Obama finished his speech.

Her grandmother, Mary Martin, tells stories about the flurry of activity around Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in March 1965. The church, not far from her house, was at the center of organizing activity at the time of the voting rights marches. She couldn't join her granddaughter at the foot of the bridge on Saturday, but watched the television coverage.

"When she saw the pictures of Obama crossing the bridge, it was just so powerful," Benson said. "She cried and I cried, too." Eric Archie, 52, a construction manager from Montgomery, called the event "a celebration for me ... Something that divided us is now unifying."

Archie brought his 8-year-old son Amari, who he said became interested in history after seeing the film Selma.

"I want him to see Selma," Archie said. "Maybe 50 years from now, he can tell his children he was at the 50th anniversary."

**Obama reads 'mean tweets' about himself**  
Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel likes to have celebrities read "mean tweets" about themselves, and on Thursday he got an especially prominent person to do it: President Obama.

"Is there any way we could fly Obama to some golf course halfway around the world and just leave him there?" Obama said in

quoting a tweet from RWSurferGirl (we're assuming the RW stands for "right wing.") "Well ... RWSurferGirl," Obama replied, "I think that's a great idea."

The president then read another tweet: "A 30 rack of Coors Light is \$23 now at Sun Stop. Thanks, Obama."

"Mean Tweets" is a frequent bit on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.

Obama chuckled at another missive from one of his Twitter critics: "How do you make Obama's eyes light up? Shine a flashlight in his ears."

"That's pretty good," Obama said.

**Secret Service agents nearly drove over 'suspicious package' in investigation near White House, sources say**

The two Secret Service agents who were drinking on the night they drove into a crime scene investigation near the White House almost ran over a "suspicious package," sources told Fox News on Thursday.

The details of the March 4 incident come as officials seek to downplay what's been the latest embarrassing episode for the troubled agency.

Police were examining the package around 10 p.m. when the two senior agents — one of whom is a top member of President Obama's protective detail — arrived at a guard shack checkpoint that had been vacated due to its proximity to the package, which turned out to be a book covered in a shirt.

But when the agents — identified as Mark Connolly, the second-in-command on Obama's detail, and George Ogilvie, a senior supervisor in the Washington field office — realized the guard shack was unoccupied, the government car backed up a few feet and "nudged" an orange, four-foot-tall traffic barrel that had been placed in the roadway, sources said.

The sources said the car did not appear to be out of control or traveling at a high rate of speed, and when the barrel was struck by the car, it did not tip over or cause damage to the vehicle. They nearly ran over the package that was being examined, although they did not run over it.

The incident, which happened during a steady downpour, was over in less than 30 seconds.

The Washington Post has reported that the officers on duty who witnessed the incident wanted to arrest the agents and conduct sobriety tests, but they were ordered by a supervisor on duty that night to let the agents go home. One source told Fox News they could smell alcohol on the agents, and said it was well-known that Secret Service agents had been attending the retirement party of spokesman Ed Donovan earlier that night. Another source told Fox News that Secret Service Director Joseph P. Clancy wasn't notified immediately because the incident wasn't initially seen as a problem, but that he and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson were notified the next day.

A spokesman with the Department of Homeland Security inspector general's office told Fox News on Thursday that they are now investigating the incident, after it was referred by the Secret Service.

"We cannot discuss details of our ongoing investigation," the spokesman said.

Obama was informed of the incident earlier this week, but has "full confidence" in Clancy, who took over the agency in February, White House Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said Thursday. But reaction on Capitol Hill has ranged from outraged to incredulous.

"These embarrassing incidents have a profoundly negative effect on the reputation and motivation of thousands of hard-working Secret Service members who have committed their careers to protecting the president," Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., said in a statement Thursday. "A few bad apples are forcing the Secret Service to account for itself in the media and distracting it from a mission in which it must not fail. This is not acceptable."

"The bottom line is the Secret Service has to get overhauled," Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said. "What happened the other day shows the overhaul has long a way to go." The incident is the latest in a series of embarrassing episodes for the Secret Service, which have raised questions about the agency's leadership and ability to protect the president.

In September, a man with a knife climbed over the White House fence, sprinted to the mansion's front door and made it to the East Room. The incident led to the resignation of the agency's director, Julia Pierson. Six months before, several agents were implicated in tales of heavy drinking, one of which took place ahead of a presidential visit to the Netherlands and the other after a late-night traffic accident in Miami.

In the spring of 2012, some agents and U.S. military personnel who were preparing for a presidential trip to Cartagena, Colombia, for the Summit of the Americas hired local prostitutes and brought them back to their hotel rooms.

A total of 13 of Secret Service officials were implicated. Three employees returned to duty, six either resigned or retired and four had their clearances revoked and were removed, according to an inspector general report.

Clancy is scheduled to appear before the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. The routine meeting is intended to discuss fiscal matters, but a senior congressional source told Fox News on Thursday that the director would be questioned about the barricades incident. "He is in for a hell of a grilling," the source said.

**Air Force Security No Longer Banned From Saying 'Have A Blessed Day'**

After a brief hiatus, Air Force security guards at a Georgia Air Force base can once again wish visitors a "blessed day" after a rule

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BY: LEON IRBY DATED: APRIL 28, 2015

## Obama, Bush, civil rights icons retrace Selma march

SELMA, Ala. — President Obama, speaking Saturday at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, placed Selma in the pantheon of historical sites alongside Concord, Gettysburg and Kitty Hawk.

Then Obama, joined by his wife Michelle and their daughters, walked hand-in-hand with one of the original Selma marchers, Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., across the 1,200-foot-long, steel-and-concrete bridge to commemorate the bloody civil rights confrontation 50 years ago that transformed America. Former president George W. Bush and other dignitaries and activists joined them.

It was a particularly poignant moment for a president who has traced the events on Bloody Sunday in 1965 to raising the nation's conscience and changing its voting laws, opening the way for his election as the country's first African-American president. And an especially sweet moment for the 75-year-old Lewis, who suffered a cracked skull five decades ago when Alabama state troopers and Sheriff Jim Clark's posse used billy clubs and tear gas against civil rights activists as they attempted to march to Montgomery to demand the right to vote. With temperatures heading to the 60s, thousands of people packed downtown Water Street, stretching away from the stage at the bottom of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

"There are places, and moments in America where this nation's destiny has been decided," Obama told the crowd. "Many are sites of war — Concord and Lexington, Appomattox and Gettysburg. Others are sites that symbolize the daring of America's character — Independence Hall and Seneca Falls, Kitty Hawk and Cape Canaveral. Selma is such a place."

Obama used the very place he stood to underscore the challenge that civil right activists faced five decades ago.

"The Americans who crossed this bridge were not physically imposing," he said. "But they gave courage to millions. They held no elected office. But they led a nation."

"They marched as Americans who had endured hundreds of years of brutal violence, and countless daily indignities — but they didn't seek special treatment, just the equal treatment promised to them almost a century before."

Before his speech, Obama signed legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to these "foot soldiers" of the Selma voting rights demonstrations, including the eventual march to Montgomery that took place March 21-25, 1965.

The president attempted to draw a direct line from the past to the present — and the future — by addressing such sensitive issues as recent racial clashes in Ferguson, Mo., and political disputes over renewing the Voting Rights Act that Selma helped deliver.

He rejected those who argue that there had been little real change in the past 50 years.

"To deny this progress, this hard-won progress — our progress — would be to rob us of our own agency, our own capacity, our responsibility to do what we can to make America better." He also rejected the notion that racism in America had been banished.

"We just need to open our eyes, and ears, and hearts, to know that this nation's racial history still casts its long shadow upon us."

"Fifty years from Bloody Sunday, our march is not yet finished. But we are getting closer."

President Barack Obama

Instead, he argued, "Selma teaches us, too, that action requires that we shed our cynicism. For when it comes to the pursuit of justice, we can afford neither complacency nor despair."

"Fifty years from Bloody Sunday, our march is not yet finished, but we are getting closer," Obama told the crowd. "Two hundred and thirty-nine years after this nation's founding, our union is not yet perfect, but we are getting closer. Our job's easier because somebody already got us through that first mile. Somebody already got us over that bridge."

In the lead-up to the president's remarks, speakers blared gospel and '60s tunes, while a video board displayed documentary images from the civil rights area, including the replay of a phone conversation between President Lyndon Johnson and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

Celebrants snapped pictures of each other or of celebrities in the crowd that included Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III.

Many of the parents and grandparents of people who lined Water Street couldn't vote in some states because of restrictive racial policies; that started to change on March 7, when state troopers attacked marchers on the bridge in Selma, sending more than 50 people to the hospital, but also galvanizing support for the federal Voting Rights Act later that year.

Ron Davis, only 2 years old during the Selma attack, lived to see millions of Americans join the voter rolls — and he grew up to be the two-term mayor of Prichard, Ala.

"You think about what our ancestors did to fight for us," Davis said as he awaited Saturday's events.

Jan Meadows, 73, who traveled from Atlanta to Selma to hear Obama speak, said the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — combined with the Civil Rights Act the year before — "gave us the right to get political power."

That power enabled African Americans to advance economically and socially, said Meadows, who became an architectural interior designer. "We were able to vote, we were able to elect black officials — we were able to go to school," she said.

There are also vast economic problems in Selma and elsewhere. Many boarded-up businesses in Selma's small downtown were

decorated for Saturday's ceremony. The area's poverty and jobless rates remain high. "I'm hoping this will bring on changes, not just in Selma, but in the South," said Annice Jordan, 72, a retiree from Seattle who was born in Selma. "When it comes to poor people, things are sad."

For Sidney Willis, 69, of Mobile, Ala., this is his ninth straight Bloody Sunday commemoration. All these years later, Willis said, the event remains as poignant as ever. The commemoration helps assuage some of the hurt he felt as a black man coming of age in the South during a tumultuous moment for America, he said.

"I knew what it was to see segregation," Willis said. "When I was in the Coast Guard after high school, there were places the white guys could go that I wouldn't have been allowed to frequent. We've made progress from those days, but we still have a long way to go."

Luci Baines Johnson, the late president's younger daughter, recalled to USA TODAY being by her father's side the day he signed the voting act into law.

"This marks a sacred moment in our history," said Johnson, who traveled to Selma to join in the commemoration. "There were so many heroes that led to this day, the ones whose names we know but also those who were fighting in the shadows and whose names weren't recorded in the history books." Obama previously took part in the annual commemoration in 2007, when he was serving in the Senate.

The commemoration comes at another difficult period in race relations in America, following the recent high-profile killings by police of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y., and Tamir Rice in Cleveland, all black men.

This week, the Justice Department issued a scathing report detailing institutional racism in the Ferguson Police Department, while clearing former police officer Darren Wilson for the shooting last summer of the unarmed 18-year-old Brown, whose killing galvanized nationwide protests. Brown's family announced this week their intention to file a wrongful death lawsuit against Ferguson and Wilson.

"I feel a direct connection to what happened in Selma and wanted to be here," said Gwenn Carr, the mother of Garner, who took part in the commemoration. "What happened back then, what's happening today, it's déjà vu." Over the past two days, at forums and gatherings at some of the same Selma churches that served as the nerve centers of the 1965 movement, civil rights leaders have been calling on Americans to pressure Congress over the passage of stringent voter ID rules and other new voting rules that have been passed in several states after the Supreme Court struck down a key provision in the landmark legislation nearly two years ago.

In what is known as the Shelby ruling, the high court ruled that the Voting Rights Act