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THE INDYPENDENT

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SHOW, P8**

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SEA, P12**

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HOW TO WIN IN THE AGE OF TRUMP

**WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE
BATTLE AT STANDING ROCK, P4
BY PETER RUGH**



A water protector stands her ground near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota.

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SPECIAL MESSAGE

SHUT IT DOWN!

The Indypendent is a terrible, terrible newspaper, way worse than the failing *New York Times*. It not only says mean things about me all the time, but every month it writes about greedy unions, lazy tenant groups, Black Lives Matter, and professional protesters. They can't write a kind word for America's hardworking CEOs? Its beautiful oil and gas companies, impeccable police and gorgeous landlords like me? Sad!

I could put this paper out of business on Day One, but why should I bother? I've declared bankruptcy four times, so I know if you don't have the money to pay your bills, you're in serious trouble.

The Indy doesn't have millions of dollars like my friends at Breitbart and Fox who are telling the world how great I am. It relies on contributions from readers like you to cover their budget just like Bernie trying to run for president on \$27 donations — Pathetic!!

They've crawled along for 16 years, but not anymore.

This year, readers like you who are in shock over my awesome victory won't send them money. Then, they will be gone. Poof! No more *Indy*. Won't be able to pay its rent or keep the lights on or pay its measly staff. No more dough to say terrible, terrible things about me.

Now I'm not one to gloat. In fact, people tell me all the time how humble I am. But if *The Indy* is severely hobbled by lack of reader support or even went out of business, I say that's a wonderful thing.

Who needs their "facts"? Facts are stupid. And what the hell is social justice? Solidarity? Why should anyone want to write about that? Here's a real news story: My steaks are delicious! The most succulent cuts of flash frozen Angus Beef you'll find anywhere. Why don't they write an article about that?

If you want real news, follow me on Twitter! Don't waste your time with these losers.

Think about it this way:

For \$100 you can help *The Indy* print 1000 copies. For the same amount you can buy a brass Make America Great Again Christmas Ornament finished in 24-karat gold. Give \$50 and you'll sponsor 500 editions of *The Indy*. Or else, you can purchase a gift set of my cologne, Success By Trump. So what do you say folks? Inhale my musky essence, gaze upon my shiny holiday bric-a-brac or support an independent newspaper? I trust your decision will be in line with the winning spirit of Christmas.

YOUR TOTALLY AWESOME PRESIDENT-ELECT,

Donald J. Trump

FOR DISSENTING VIEWS (YES, THEY ARE STILL ALLOWED, AT LEAST FOR NOW) ON WHETHER TO SUPPORT THE INDY DURING ITS ANNUAL YEAR-END FUND DRIVE, SEE PAGE 23 AND THE BACK PAGE.



GAGE SKIDMORE/FICKR

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Free people need a free press, help keep us going.



STANDING ROCK NATION

BY PETER RUGH

It was approaching midnight on Friday, Dec. 2, when Halim Nurdin decided to take a break from his political science paper. The subject of his essay: democracy and inequality. The 24-year-old former Marine corporal, three years into a history degree at Long Island University, began scanning social media to see what his friends were up to when an item in his Facebook newsfeed caught his eye.

Less than 24 hours later Nurdin stepped off an airplane in Fargo, N.D. The following evening, his rented Chevrolet Cruiser rolled into the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. The first snowflakes of a blizzard were beginning to fall, but fireworks lit up the sky.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux and their supporters have worked to prevent a multibillion-dollar consortium, Energy Transfer Partners, from installing an oil pipeline on their land. Part of a 1,172-mile project intended to carry oil from the Great Plains to Mississippi River ports in Illinois, the Dakota Access Pipeline was slated to travel through burial grounds the Sioux hold sacred. It would also have passed beneath the Missouri River — the reservation's only source of drinking water. What began over the summer as a small protest camp established by the tribe to impede construction blossomed over the fall into a tent city with 15,000 inhabitants.

"Visually, it was just astounding how enormous it was," recalled longtime activist Nancy Romer, a retired professor of psychology at Brooklyn College who visited the encampments in November. "There were all these teepees and yurts and tents and RVs and school buses." A half-dozen camps sprouted up, dozens of kitchens and schools, supply and medical tents. Tens of thousands of people travelled through Standing Rock.

"It was a liberated zone built by people who shared politics," said Romer.

Nurdin was part of a deployment of veterans to the reservation that weekend. About 2,000 were expected to turn up; more than 5,000 arrived. Many, including Nurdin, had never attended a protest in their lives, but decided to take part as word spread on social media that they were needed.

"The road leading into the reservation was backed up for miles," Nurdin said. "My expectation was that on Monday we would form a line in front of the protesters, but it turned out our presence alone did more than enough."

The vets' arrival at Standing Rock proved to be the final push needed in the protracted battle for public trust between Energy Transfer and its opponents.

In September, video shot by *Democracy Now!* of security guards siccing German shepherds on peaceful demonstrators — water protectors, as the Sioux called themselves — went viral. Later, when Americans by the million were traveling for Thanksgiving — a holiday intended to commemorate the relationship between our continent's original inhabitants and its colonizers — news of Native Americans being blasted by water hoses in subfreezing weather emanated from airport televisions and car radios. A young woman from the Bronx, Sophia Wilansky, was forced to undergo multiple surgeries after local law enforcement unleashed a torrent of rubber bullets and concussion grenades at the protectors, destroying bones in her arm.

Such acts of brutality harkened back the 1960s, with its images of Alabama police attacking civil rights demonstrators with clubs, dogs, and fire hoses: uniformed men treating people like dirt to be washed from the

face of the earth. It was as if the results of the presidential election were manifesting themselves even before Donald Trump took office.

"We took an oath to defend America from foreign and domestic threats," Nurdin said. "People have a right to peaceful assembly and freedom of speech, and they were being brutalized, being told to shut up. Shooting water at people in freezing temperatures, throwing stun-grenades and tear gas canisters at them — that's a domestic threat."

On Sunday, Dec. 4, as more veterans streamed into Standing Rock, word came down that the Army Corps of Engineers had denied Energy Transfer a permit to drill beneath the Missouri. Celebrations erupted in the camps.

"What happened at Standing Rock was to me one of the most profound manifestations of people struggling for their rights, for sovereignty and for the earth that I have ever seen," said Tarak Kauff, who served in the Army's airborne infantry from 1959 to 1962.

Yet throughout the rest of the nation, a different story has unfolded in recent months, perhaps the greatest victory the forces of ignorance, bigotry, fear, misogyny and violence in America have scored in decades. The rise of barbarism from beyond Standing Rock could nullify its accomplishments, if the lessons learned within the encampments go unheeded.

VALUES

The good news, you might say, is that Donald Trump has finally stripped away the last vestiges of respectability from American politics. America is the champion high-school quarterback who can't read; its presumed sense of predestined glory and "exceptionalism" all hollow posturing. Trump demonstrates unequivocally that there is no inherent dignity in any office, including the highest in the land.

Contrast Trump's celebrity feuds, his shameless self-promotion, his talk of "grabbing pussy" and his racial incitement with the displays of resolve witnessed at Standing Rock. A people pushed to the brink of extinction by "Manifest Destiny" held their heads high and refused to back down as all manner of state-sanctioned violence bore down on them. They demonstrated that persistent, collective acts of peaceful dissent can overcome concussion grenades, rubber bullets, schutzhund packs, tear gas, mace and the wealthiest corporations in history.

For decades the political right billed itself as the party of patriotism, family and faith. The left recoiled from these notions given how they manifested themselves — endless wars, bombed abortion clinics, scandal-tarred evangelists like Jim Bakker. Now, the "party of values" has elected an American *Père Ubu* (French playwright Alfred Jarry's embodiment of all that is gross, greedy, and piggish) as an instrument of



DAWN OF A NEW DAY: The sun rises over the main protest encampment near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.



ERIK MCGREGOR

NY'S PIPELINE BATTLE

Spectra Energy continued with the installation of its Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM) pipeline this month. Critics warn the 42-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline, which will stretch from Pennsylvania to New England, poses a safety risk to surrounding communities, noting that it will pass within 105 feet of the aging Indian Point nuclear facility on the Hudson River just outside New York City.

The pipeline was originally expected to be fully operational by Nov. 1, but construction has been halted on numerous occasions due to a series of acts of civil disobedience by pipeline opponents.

On Dec. 9, 12 people arrested at a pipeline site in Cortlandt, N.Y., were charged with criminal trespassing and resisting arrest for impeding the pipeline's installation. The charges follow a guilty verdict handed down by Cortlandt Judge Daniel McCarthy on Dec. 2 to nine activists who blocked access to an AIM site in Montrose, N.Y., last year.

The "Montrose 9," as they called themselves, together with attorney Martin Stolar, used the necessity defense against charges of disorderly conduct. The immediate risk the pipeline poses of a "Fukushima on the Hudson," the activists asserted, as well as the threat posed by global

climate change, compelled them commit the offense. They also cited a lack of oversight on the part of the federal nuclear and energy regulatory commissions, which have dismissed safety concerns surrounding AIM.

Stolar said he is confident Judge McCarthy's decision will be overruled upon appeal. Meanwhile, workers continue to install the pipeline and efforts are under way by Sane Energy Project and allied environmental groups to raise \$60,000 in bail funds needed to secure the release of all 12 activists arrested on Dec. 9.

The contest over AIM is part of a broader effort on the part of environmentalists nationally to stop a new generation of pipelines from perpetuating America's reliance on fossil fuels. In an email to supporters, Sane Energy's Kim Fraczek (pictured above) described such infrastructure as part of a "multi-pronged war on our democracy, health and safety."

Pipeline opponents, drawing inspiration from successful efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline in Standing Rock, N.D., have pledged to continue impeding AIM.

— INDEPENDENT STAFF

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with Amy Goodman
and Juan González

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ALL PHOTOS: LUCAS ZHAO/FLICKE

its evangelical god. In so doing, it has presented an opening for progressives to conquer and replenish moral high ground long ago ceded to the Republicans who have desecrated it.

Veterans for years have been frequent pawns in the GOP's patriot games. "Hearing the word 'veteran,' the first thing that comes to my mind, and I think a lot of people's minds, is sacrifice, selflessness, giving to your country, fighting for freedom," says Halim Nurdin. But at Standing Rock, taking a cue from the camp's indigenous leadership, a new vanguard flipped the script. Veterans demonstrated a way in which the left can answer the GOP's "values" by reinterpreting them.

"Resistance at Standing Rock was primarily nonviolent and done in the spirit of prayer because they recognize that everything is sacred," says Tarak Kauff.

Kauff was arrested for blocking pipeline construction at Standing Rock in October and traveled there again for the mass veterans mobilization. In the wee hours of Dec. 5, the tent where he and around 30 other veterans were sleeping caved in during a snowstorm, exposing them to snow and gale-force winds. They sought shelter in a nearby medical tent. Later in the day, they were among the droves of protectors who took refuge from the storm in the nearby Standing Rock casino. There, a ceremony took place involving 500 former military personnel.

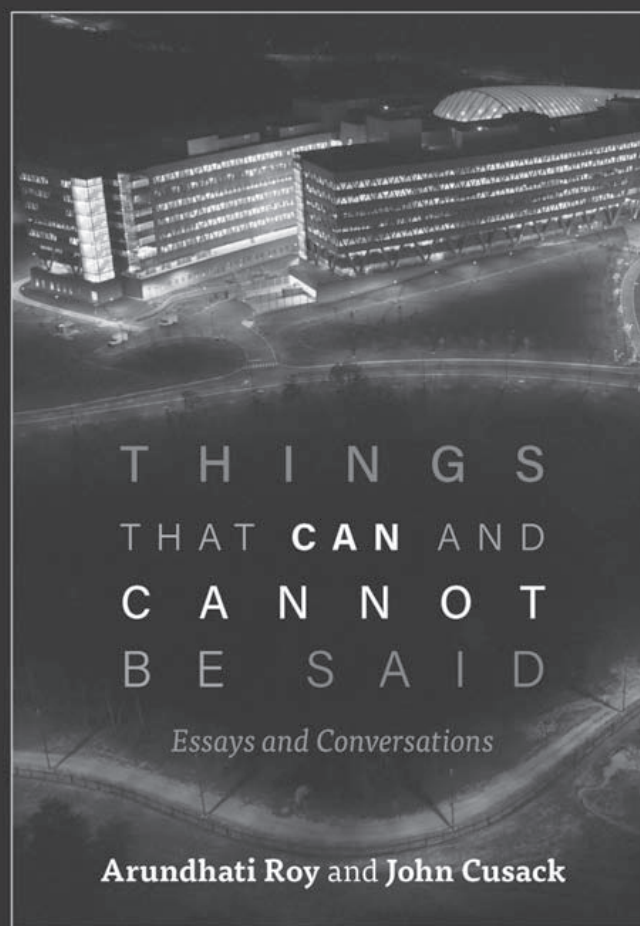
"At one point, all the Native veterans, there were about 80 to 100, they came around and were shaking our hands and hugging us in the spirit of oneness and brotherhood and sisterhood," Kauff said. "They realized that going forward, if they don't forgive, then bitterness and hatred will poison them. They're not going to forget the theft, the broken treaties, the genocide. They



BIG CHILL: Temperatures plummeted below zero at Standing Rock by early December.

RALLYING POINT: As many as 15,000 people have gathered at Standing Rock to demand that construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline be halted.

In this rich dialogue on surveillance, empire, and power, Arundhati Roy and John Cusack describe meeting NSA whistleblower Ed Snowden in Moscow.*



Arundhati Roy and John Cusack

* Roy and Cusack discuss the nature of the state, empire, and surveillance in an era of perpetual war, the meaning of flags and patriotism, the role of foundations and NGOs in limiting dissent, and the ways in which capital but not people can freely cross borders. Out now at haymarketbooks.org.

Continued on page 16

MEET TRUMP'S PUBLIC ED WRECKING BALL

BY LEONIE HAIMSON

Donald Trump's nomination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education could be a devastating blow for American public schools. "DeVos's agenda is to break the public education system, not educate kids, and replace it with a for-profit model," John Austin, president of the Michigan State Board of Education, told the *Detroit Free Press* after her appointment was announced Nov. 23. "It's like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse, and hand-feeding it schoolchildren."

DeVos is the daughter of a wealthy auto-parts manufacturer who funded Christian-right causes, and her brother Erik Prince founded the mercenary company Blackwater. She married Dick DeVos, the billionaire heir to the Amway fortune. The two, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., have used their personal wealth to encourage the expansion of charter schools, to prevent any government oversight of their use of public funds or regulation of the quality of education they provide and to aggressively promote the use of vouchers to let taxpayer funds pay for private and parochial schools.

She would be the first Secretary of Education who never attended a public school or sent her own children to one. She has never worked as a teacher, served on a school board, or held any position in government.

DeVos is an even more radical privatizer than either Arne Duncan or John King, President Barack Obama's education secretaries. Both Duncan and King favored expanding the charter sector, offering these publicly funded, privately run schools more than \$1.5 billion in federal grants between 2010 and 2015. The Department of Education's Race to the Top program offered states the chance of winning millions more if they let the number of charter schools expand. Many states, including New York, then raised their charter caps.

The DeVos family is among the leading donors to the Republican Party. According to an analysis by OpenSecrets.org, they have given at least \$20.2 million to GOP candidates, party committees, PACs, and super PACs. They also finance far-right groups that promote climate-change denial, oppose marriage equality, and want to cripple labor unions, such as Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Another group they support, the Acton Institute, argues for the abolition of child-labor laws.

"I have decided to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence," Betsy DeVos said in 1998. "Now I simply concede the point. They are right. We do expect something in return. We expect to foster a conservative governing philosophy consisting of limited government and respect for traditional American virtues. We expect a return on our investment."

The couple's primary education organization is the American Federation for Children, which PR Watch describes as a conservative 501(c)(4) dark-money group. Her 501(c)(3), which is not allowed to support political candidates, is the Alliance for School Choice. In 2006, the Ohio Elections Commission fined a DeVos-founded group called All Children Matter \$5.2 million — the largest election-violation fine in state history — for laundering \$870,000 through its national office to avoid the state's \$10,000 limit on individual contributions. The group did this even after the commission told them that was illegal — and then never paid the fine. According to the most

recent report from the American Federation for Children, they gave nearly \$5 million in 2016 to pro-privatization candidates in 12 states

Last spring, she and her husband used the influence of their money to bully Michigan legislators into voting against on a bill proposed by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder that would have provided modest government oversight for the explosion of unregulated, poor-quality and often corrupt for-profit charter schools in that state. Michigan gives nearly \$1 billion a year in aid to charters, many of which refuse to disclose their finances and channel contracts to their own officials. According to a *Detroit Free Press* investigation, 38 percent rank in the bottom quarter of Michigan schools academically.

Public-school supporters had some successes in some states in the November election. In Georgia and Massachusetts, multiracial coalitions of unions, parents and school-board members overwhelmingly defeated well-funded privatization efforts. In Washington state, Bill Gates and other technology magnates lost in their effort to unseat judges who had concluded that the public funding of charter schools was unconstitutional in that state

In New York, though, the Republicans who control the state Senate support expanding charter schools and giving parents tax credits for private and parochial-school tuition. Governor Andrew Cuomo has also promoted the expansion of the charter sector at the expense of public schools. The New York State United Teachers did not endorse Democratic challengers in several extremely close Senate races on Long Island, and parents and rank-and-file teachers who volunteered on their campaigns were disappointed. At the same time, pro-charter PACs such as StudentsFirstNY's New Yorkers for a Balanced Albany spent millions to keep the state Senate in GOP hands. These funds paid for attack ads against the challengers that never mentioned the words "charter schools"—because most Long Island voters do not favor charter schools.

Trump has proposed a \$20 billion federal voucher program that would most likely be financed with Title I funds, which since the mid-1960s have provided additional aid to public schools with large numbers of poor children. He has said that he would use these funds to give state incentives to contribute another \$110 billion of their

own money to vouchers.

With both houses in Congress in Republican hands, we will have a fierce battle on our hands to withstand the destructive impulses of Trump and DeVos. Aiding them will be a flood of money poured into lobbying campaigns by billionaires, Wall Street financiers, edu-entrepreneurs, and religious institutions, all eager to divert taxpayer funds into private hands and dismantle our public schools. Public school parents, teachers, and advocates must be smart and work together to withstand this assault.

Leonie Haimson is executive director of Class Size Matters and cochair of the Parent Coalition for Student Privacy.



GINO BARIZZA

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POST-ELECTION BRIEFS



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BY INDEPENDENT STAFF

ELECTORAL COLLEGE REVOLT

A Change.org petition that called on “conscientious” members of the Electoral College to reject Donald Trump had collected 4.7 million signatures as *The Indy* went to press this month. At least 20 red-state electors were reportedly considering ignoring their state’s support for Trump — more than half the 37 votes needed to force the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to decide the election (For more on the history of the electoral college, see page 9).

MASS PROTESTS SLATED FOR INAUGURAL WEEKEND

Organizers expect 200,000 people to attend a Jan. 21 march for women’s rights in Washington, D.C., during inaugural weekend. March organizers are urging “any person, regardless of gender or gender identity, who believes women’s rights are human rights” to join them. WomensMarch.com offers further information.

AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

President-elect Trump is assembling a cabinet composed of retired generals and business executives. With \$9.5 billion in financial assets among them, the total wealth of the 13 men and four women Trump has nominated thus far surpasses that of 43 million of America’s poor-

est households. In 2013, Senate Democrats lowered the number of votes needed to overcome a filibuster for cabinet-level appointees from 60 to 51. Republicans currently hold a 52-48 majority in the Senate.

ELLISON’S DNC BID GAINS SUPPORT

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the first Muslim elected to Congress, continued his drive this month to head the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Ellison, an early supporter of Sen. Bernie Sanders’ presidential bid, advocates a grassroots-based approach to party organizing. He has backing from the AFL-CIO, the nation’s largest labor federation, as well as Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. The White House is lobbying for Labor Secretary Tom Perez to receive the post. The choice will be made in late February by 447 party insiders who serve on the DNC.

DSA MEMBERSHIPS SURGE

The Democrats aren’t the only game in town. The Democratic Socialists of America report registering 3,000 new dues-paying members since Nov. 8, six times more than in any previous one-month-period in the organization’s history.

SEATTLEITES FORM NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION COUNCILS TO OPPOSE TRUMP

Seattle residents have formed a citywide network of neighborhood action councils in anticipation of Trump’s presidency. The councils “are autonomous communities of resistance, formed to provide immediate services and protection for politically targeted communities,” according to the Neighborhood Action Coalition. The groups plan to be a line of defense against Trump’s plans for mass deportations.

MIKE PENCE: THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING

The women’s health care provider Planned Parenthood has received more than 315,000 donations since election day, 82,000 under the name Mike Pence. While in Congress in 2011, the vice president-elect led efforts to defund Planned Parenthood for providing abortions.

EFF THIS:

Demonstrators at an anti-Trump speakout in Baltimore, Nov. 10.

SIGNAL SIGN-UPS SOAR

Downloads of the encrypted instant messaging service Signal have shot up 400 percent in the wake of the election, according to the San Francisco-based nonprofit. Signal does not store users’ messages online and scrambles transmissions on the web in order to safeguard users’ privacy. For further information, see whispersystems.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD GRANTS

From **community** gardening and tenant organizing to school recycling drives and art projects, Citizens Committee for New York City awards grants of up to **\$3,000** to grassroots groups working on community-building projects across NYC.

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THE FUTURE OF WHITE SUPREMACY

CAN TRUMP UNITE THE ALT-RIGHT, THE KLAN, THE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISTS, THE ANARCHO-TRIBALISTS AND THE SUIT NAZIS?

BY LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF & JOSÉ MARTÍN

About a month before the election, I (Linda) gave a talk at Nassau Community College on the topic of white identity. During the reception afterward, I was approached by a serious-faced young man, who identified himself as the president of the college philosophy club. He asked if I would consider doing a public debate with leading white nationalist Jared Taylor. He turned out to be an avid consumer of so-called “alt-right” websites, and had formed the belief that African-Americans and Latinos were simply less intelligent than white people.

As an African-American student waited patiently nearby to ask a question, I found myself in a debate with a young white male college student about whether, as a Latina, I was intelligent enough to be invited to give a talk at his college.

What has come to be called the alt-right is younger and more tech-savvy than the more established ultra-conservative organizations, and more focused on developing its online presence than on building rural militias. The term alt-right itself is controversial, but it helpfully indicates the way in which white nationalism has been hipsterized. It has ingeniously characterized blatant racism and misogyny as edgy and courageous, as fighting the good fight against censorship, thought control, and “political correctness” — much like the “men’s rights” movements to which it is linked.

These differences with the older far right are superficial. The alt-right is another reactive and violent backlash to racial progress, just as the Ku Klux Klan was to Reconstruction and the civil rights movement. Like other far-right groups since the ’60s, it cloaks white-supremacist politics as “anarcho-tribalism” or “white pride” rather than race hatred. As Taylor recently explained to comedian John Fugelsang, they simply “prefer homogeneity.” Today’s European far right similarly spins its agenda as a defense of the West’s values and cosmopolitanism that they say are now under threat from Muslim migrants. Its anti-Semitism is veiled by support for Israel, though its repeated suggestions that local Jews should migrate to Israel reveal darker motives. But these are the sort of rhetorical moves that draw in some young people who might not otherwise be attracted to cross-burning rallies (such as philosophy majors).

Taylor, considered a thought leader for the alt-right, argues that only separatism can guarantee white survival. The assumption here is that mixed children will no longer be white, and mixed cultures will blot out white traditions and beliefs, so that without separatism white identity will disappear. (European white nationalists make similar claims about European culture, as if it were ever “pure.”) But Taylor’s claim reveals the white supremacy behind white nationalism. The reason it is so important for pure whites to survive is always given in comparative terms: Because European values are superior to Muslim values, and because eliminating whites would eliminate the most intelligent and productive race on earth.

Alt-right leader Richard Spencer, head of the National Policy Institute, makes this racial comparison clear. “We were not meant to beg for moral validation from some of the most despicable creatures to ever populate the planet,” he recently said. The alt-right’s assault on “political correctness” is a maneuver to ignore the viewpoints of other groups. Being

“PC” is most often associated with the use of names and terms that various denigrated groups have chosen for themselves: disabled rather than “retarded,” women rather than “girls,” African-American rather than “colored.” To reject political correctness is a way of saying that white straight men don’t need to “beg for validation” or even listen to the preferences or views of anyone else any longer, and that ignoring the critical analyses of U.S. history and foreign policy that have emerged since the public airwaves became more diverse is simply a way of championing individual freedom.

It’s impossible to know how influential the alt-right really is, since it’s so easy to inflate the numbers of clicks on a website. What we do know is that white-nationalist ultra-conservative movements are growing in many countries and come in multiple forms. What some call “suit Nazis,” such as France’s National Front and Hungary’s Jobbik parties, overlap with the alt-right, but they are generally wealthier and operate in mainstream venues, holding elected office in many European countries, as well as running think tanks, publishing houses, and large transnational businesses. There are also still old-school groups, like the Klan and its spinoffs, that focus on setting up armed militias. Many of them can be characterized as white Christian nationalists.

There are more than rhetorical or stylistic differences among these groups. There are differences over strategy and tactics, over the centrality of Christianity, over support for big capital, and over which group should get the honor of being the most hated “other.” Most important, some of these groups are in favor of strong states and some are not. The “anarcho-tribalists” would rather not have more repressive state apparatuses, in Althusser’s sense, and many others are Pinochet-style fascists who promote free enterprise over state intervention. Some focus more on their negative freedoms, or the freedom from regulations, surveillance, censorship, and any government interference — as the slogan “don’t tread on me” indicates — while others focus on their positive freedoms to separate and control other communities, or the power to marshal a larger and more militarized police force, more draconian border patrols, and more surveillance on potential enemies.

Donald Trump’s election will test the intensity of these differences. The question of state capture is no longer theoretical: It has been accomplished. It may still be unclear exactly how much influence the far right has in white working-class communities, but it is crystal clear how much influence they have in the White House. Steve Bannon, Trump’s chief strategist and second-ranking White House staffer, has been associated with far-right stances against Islam and same-sex

marriage, and a style of “pro-Western culture” politics similar to that of France’s National Front. He and Trump are busily pursuing what seems to be a two-pronged program of dismantling regulations of every sort while arming the repressive apparatuses aimed at domestic groups.

The alt-right influence can also be seen in the way Trump defined his candidacy as more of a movement than a traditional electoral campaign. He has continued holding campaign-style rallies after the election was over, to keep his mass base mobilized. Bannon’s task is to frame the public narrative that will keep that base mobilized against any opposition, whether from moderate Republicans, liberals, or the left, that tries to block Trump’s appointments or policies. The violence and threats we saw during the election are likely to get much worse.

Hence what we are up against is not only the normal state apparatus, but assorted non-state actors as well. This might create a situation similar to that of many countries in Latin America, where the government blames paramilitary groups for some of the worst atrocities. Non-state actors will sometimes act under official direction, sometimes not, but their effect will undoubtedly embolden human-rights violations by law enforcement, from the local police to immigration agents, who will also enjoy diminished oversight. There are already Nazi sympathizers on the inside of these organizations, and some of them are people of color: Latinos are not immune from harboring an anti-Latino, anti-immigrant racism. Oddly enough, it won’t be just whites, or “pure” white Anglos, who defend the forces of white nationalism.

The best-case scenario will be if the varied far-right groups continue to bicker. In this case, we may “only” be up against a slew of disconnected attacks, and we may be able to use the disagreements among right-wing forces to waylay some reactionary legislation. The worst case scenario would be if the alt-right, suit Nazis, old-school white nationalists, and other far-right forces coalesce, in which case it may no longer be hyperbole to say that we are fighting fascism.

So what is to be done? There is no question that the left must take up a people’s defense against both concrete harassment and the ideological vilification of targeted groups. Antifa (anti-fascist) organizing, which already exists across the country, as well as free legal services and legal defense for those facing deportation and incarceration, are going to be more important than ever. We will also need a massive effort to defend poor communities, white included, who will have less access to health care, education, affordable housing, and a living wage. It is estimated that states that refuse to increase their Medicaid rolls are going to cause 27,000

THE RACIST ROOTS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Although the United States is a relatively new nation, it actually follows the oldest existing constitution still in use today. While some take such a fact as evidence of the firm bedrock our democracy rests on, it also means we have to remind ourselves where certain procedures originate.

This is especially the case after the presidential election we just witnessed, in which a man who lost the popular vote by more than 2.8 million will become president.

Way back during the hot summer of 1787, the Constitutional Convention was under way in Philadelphia and the delegates from Virginia had a problem. It was the most populous state in the new nation but approximately 40 percent of its inhabit-

ants were enslaved.

Any democracy, this thing that tens of thousands of people had only just recently fought and died for, that relied on a popular vote alone to determine its leaders would subordinate the interests of slave-masters in Virginia and other southern states to those of free voters in the north. Enslaved persons, after all, were not considered human let alone citizens with voting privileges.

At the insistence of Virginia’s James Madison a compromise was worked out among the 55 delegates in Independence Hall. Each state would be granted two representatives in the Senate while in the lower House of Representatives, representation was slotted in proportion to each state’s population. Slaves would be counted as three-fifths of a person.

The Electoral College too, “was an integral part of the odious pro-slavery three-fifths compromise” as Yale constitutional law professor Akhil Reed Amar points out in his recent offering, The Constitution

Today. As in the House, slave-economy states were given disproportionate representation in the Electoral College.

This worked out well for Virginia as 12 of the 46 electoral votes originally needed to capture an electoral college majority went to the state, and its plantation aristocrats, Madison among them, held the presidency for 32 of America’s first 36 years.

Today, the Electoral College’s place in our democracy tends to be forgotten, an arcane formality from the days of yore. We’ve tended not to notice it unless it is in contradiction with the popular vote, as was the case in 1876, 1888, 2000 and now. In this respect, Trump’s victory is a kind of slave-masters’ revenge.

— INDYPENDENT STAFF



DAVID HOLLENBACH

unnecessary deaths per year. This is a life-and-death struggle.

But we also need to go on the offensive, to build the spheres of meaningful political and civic engagement, from labor unions to neighborhood organizations to progressive religious communities to national networks. Progressive political groups of all sorts can help build and protect civil society, but they will now have to take security culture very seriously in regard to membership lists and online activity. We should also work to force existing mainstream organizations to take a stand, to drop their apolitical alibis, and actively defend democracy.

We have to combat fatalism. Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter are two powerful recent social movements that were created by young people who rejected the idea that they were powerless, even in the face of the power of Wall Street and a racist state. Our situation is not hopeless.

Linda Martín Alcoff's most recent book is *The Future of Whiteness*, Polity Press, 2015. Here website is www.alcoff.com. José Martín is an anti fascist and copwatch organizer, researcher and media commentator. Follow him on twitter @sabokitty.

ANTI-RACIST ORGS

Here are some newly emerging radical groups doing broad-based organizing to check out.

SHOWING UP FOR RACIAL JUSTICE (SURJ)

showingupforracialjustice.org
Through community organizing, mobilizing, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for justice with passion and accountability.

COSECHA — ACTION NETWORK

actionnetwork.org/groups/cosecha
A new nonviolent movement fighting for the humane and permanent protection of immigrants in this country.

IF NOT NOW

ifnotnowmovement.org
Fighting for a vibrant, liberated Jewish community that supports freedom and dignity for all Israelis and Palestinians

THE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL AND BEYOND

pisab.org
Focuses on understanding what racism is, where it comes from, how it functions, why it persists and how it can be undone.

CATALYST PROJECT

collectiveliberation.org
Organizes, trains and mentors white people to take collective action to end racism, war and empire, and to support efforts to build power in working-class communities of color.

TORCH NETWORK

torchantifa.org
The Torch Network is a network of militant antifascists across (but not limited to) the United States.

Don't forget there are also many local groups doing important work too.

Recommended read: Rules for Revolutionaries: How Big Organizing Can Change Everything by Becky Bond and Zack Exley.

—LMA & JM



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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

TEACH-INS TURN IMMIGRANT ANXIETY INTO ACTION

BY RENÉE FELTZ

On a rainy night in early December, law students, lawyers, advocates and immigrants pack a lecture hall at Columbia Law School for an immigrant-rights teach-in. Next to a sign-up sheet at the door are three urns of coffee. None are decaf.

At the front of the room stands Professor Rose Cuisson Villazor, a seasoned legal advocate for immigrants and the first of many speakers from university and community-based legal services agencies.

“Let me begin by talking about president-elect Donald Trump,” she says, quieting everyone but a few interpreters.

The next three hours are a crash course on who Trump’s administration will likely target first for deportation, and how to protect and support their rights.

Similar gatherings have drawn crowds throughout New York City, where more than a third of residents are foreign-born. The week before, nearly 700 people attended a similar event at New York University School of Law.

“Right now there is a lot of fear,” says Alina Das, codirector of Columbia Law’s Immigrant Rights Clinic. “Our primary focus is educate those who will be directly affected, and turn their anxiety into action.”

On the same rainy night, another teach-in at the Community Church of New York in midtown Manhattan attracts mostly immigrant students, couples, and families, who sit in scattered clumps among the pews. A young Latina hands out cards on which they can write legal questions and pass them back to be answered from the pulpit/podium, allowing them to remain anonymous.

Tania Mattos, a Bolivian immigrant and education and outreach coordinator for the immigrant legal-services group UnLocal, notes that anyone with questions about their immigration status can schedule a free legal consultation with the city’s Action NYC program. Then she reads the first card: “If Trump revokes DACA, when will deportations begin?”

President Barack Obama’s executive order known as DACA, or Deferred Adjudication for Childhood Arrivals, has given work permits and a temporary reprieve from deportation to nearly 750,000 young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.

On the campaign trail, Trump vowed to repeal DACA in his first 100 days. It is unclear whether ending the program would immediately revoke recipients’ legal status, or just prevent them from renewing it when it expires. Those who have not yet submitted applications are now encouraged to hold on to them in order to avoid submitting their name and address to the federal government, as well as paying a \$465 fee to do so.

Many colleges say they will bar immigration agents from tracking down undocumented students on campus without a warrant, and will refuse to turn over their information without a court-ordered subpoena. Columbia University’s provost said the school may expand financial aid for those who lose their DACA status and can no longer legally work.

Later, Mattos reads another card that asked how she stayed positive. “I spent most of my life without DACA,” she responds. “I know I will survive, and I have faith in community organizing.”

Back at the law school teach-in, two participants volunteer for a role-playing exercise in which “Anna,” an undocumented immigrant, arrives in her apartment to discover she has been robbed, then debates with her friend whether to report it.

“You should feel safe reporting a crime in New York City,” advises Evelyn Garcia, a neighborhood organizer with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.

She clicks to the next slide in her PowerPoint presentation and reads Executive Order 41 on Confidentiality, which instructs city workers — other than law-enforcement officers — not to disclose a person’s immigration status unless they have been authorized to do so by that person, they are required by law to do so, the information is needed to determine eligibility for a public benefit or the person is suspected of

illegal activity.

When pressed, Garcia explains that even if police are not covered by the order, the New York Police Department says it does not report immigrants to federal authorities.

“New York is basically a sanctuary city,” someone comments, while others remain skeptical.

Since Trump’s election, Mayor Bill de Blasio has vowed not to cooperate with federal agents seeking data gathered from residents who are immigrants. This data includes names and addresses collected from those issued a municipal ID card.

At any teach-in now, as well as during the Obama administration, when deportations reached a record high, one group is always identified as the most likely to be deported: immigrants with criminal records, even if the offenses are decades old. While Trump estimates there are 2-3 million such people, the Migration Policy Institute counts about 820,000.

In New York City, many immigrants of color have been targeted by the NYPD’s stop-and-frisk and broken windows policies. They were arrested for minor offenses and advised to plead guilty, with damning consequences.

Conor Gleason, an immigration attorney with the Bronx Defenders, observes another role-playing exercise in which “Bob” has been a lawful permanent resident for many years. At age 20 he pled guilty to a crime, but did not serve time in jail. Concerned about what Trump will do, he is considering applying for citizenship.

“People should not apply for naturalization if they have a past offense,” Gleason advises, explaining that the citizenship-services arm of the Department of Homeland Security could

turn over his information to the “scary” part that handles enforcement and removal.

As the teach-in at the church winds down, the mood is both somber and defiant, as UnLocal executive director Michele Lampach draws attention to the bigger picture.

“Immigration has a big impact on people’s lives,” she says, “but it can’t control everything.”

She advises people who may face deportation to prepare by creating a safety plan: Gather all of your immigration-related documents, financial and medical records, and an emergency contact list. If you are a parent, make arrangements for who will care for your children. DACA recipients who may lose their work permit are encouraged to make financial plans.

Both gatherings also feature advice on how to respond

when police or federal agents come to your home. You have the right to refuse them entry without a warrant signed by a judge, with the correct address — including the apartment number. Ask them to slide the warrant under your door. If you are detained, you have the right to remain silent and can respond in several ways, such as, “I want to use my right to remain silent” or “I want to speak to a lawyer.”

Legal advocates say these workshops will be replicated and adjusted as Trump’s immigration-enforcement policies take shape, so that people have accurate information and resources.

“We are not hopeful about what is to come,” Lampach admits, “We want to be ready in case the worst-case scenario happens.”

A video of the NYU teach-in is on line at law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic/community-resources/videos.

HUNDREDS TURN OUT AT GATHERINGS THROUGHOUT NYC.

IMMIGRANT RESOURCES

ACTION NYC
800-354-0365
Multilingual hotline for general information and referrals to free immigration legal services.

IMMIGRANT DEFENSE PROJECT CRIMINAL-IMMIGRATION HELPLINE
212-725-6422
Offers advice on immigration consequences of criminal charges and convictions.

THE BRONX DEFENDERS
347-778-1266 (legal emergency hotline)
Walk-ins welcome 9am–6pm at client-reception office (360 East 161st St., Bronx).

THE BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES
713-254-0700
Offers free legal representation to low-income New York City residents in deportation proceedings via the New York Immigration Family Unity Project.

LEGAL AID SOCIETY IMMIGRATION UNIT
212-577-3300
212-577-3456 (detention hotline, Wed–Fri, 1–5pm)
Accepts collect calls from detention.)
Represents detained and non-detained before the New York Immigration Court.

UNLOCAL
646-216-8210
Offers free or low-cost legal consultations for immigrants.

— RENÉE FELTZ

BRONX PROFESSOR TARGETED FOR ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZING

BY ASTHA RAJVANSHI

Just days after the election, Mark Naison, Professor of African American Studies at Fordham University and Director of the Bronx African American History Project, met with his students of color on campus.

Many of them at the predominantly-white, Jesuit university in the Bronx were traumatized, frightened and outraged by Donald Trump's presidential win.

"It wasn't just the fear of what Trump might do, it was also people feeling ready to take things in their own hands and take things out on minorities," said Dr. Naison, a rare white professor in the field of African American studies who has taught at Fordham for 30 years and authored numerous books including an oral history of the Bronx.

The number of bias attacks and hate crimes has surged nationally since the election. Within the first 10 days following the Nov. 8 vote, the Southern Poverty Law Center counted 867 cases of hateful harassment or intimidation. In schools and on college campuses the growing list of incidents includes swastika signs blooming in public spaces, white students telling minority students to "go to the back of the bus," and chants of "build a wall!"

Inside Fordham, a white supremacy flier was found hanging on a wall in the schools economics department.

But incidents of bias are nothing new at the university, where just 5.3 percent of the school's 15,000 students are black, just 13.6 percent hispanic. Bias incidents have been increasing over time. In the 2015-2016 school year, there were three anti-Semitic bias crimes reported. One of them included a swastika carved into a door on the school's satellite campus at Lincoln Center in Manhattan.

In an attempt to address the fears of his students, Naison floated the idea of starting a 'Rapid Response Unit' (RRU) with current and former students.

"Knowing the history of the campus, I thought it was important to be a resource to people who are still on campus so they have someone to talk to," said Morenike Lambert, a 2008 graduate and a former student of Naison.

"In situations like these you need to be brave, problem solve and stand in solidarity with all students to create a safe space for everyone," said Ann

Leiberman, another of Dr. Naison's former pupils. She noted that her experience of racial bias on campus wasn't always overt but often occurred in the form of microaggressions. Frequently, events she and other minority students organized on campus were called "too political or we were asked to change the wording on fliers."

She and Lambert were among the 15 current and former students who came together at Dr. Naison's residence in November to discuss how to set up the RRU.

However, the Fordham administration intervened swiftly after Dr. Naison's efforts to organize the RRU began. Shortly after Thanksgiving, Naison received an email from the Vice President of Student Affairs containing screenshots of Naison's Facebook posts discussing the RRUs.

"The letter said, 'We're really disturbed to hear that you've started a Rapid Response Unit when there are official university channels,'" Naison recalled. "Why is Fordham telling me this when I'm trying to protect my students? Are they using my personal Facebook posts across professional communications? That crosses a line that I cannot accept, especially at a time of left-wing watch lists," he continued.

Lambert was equally alarmed. "He's not doing anything wrong so I don't see why there should be any input from Fordham about why he's doing something to make people feel safe," she said.

"If they're so concerned with our efforts, then they should take institutional racism on campus more seriously," Leiberman added.

Naison has handed responsibility for the Fordham RRU over to current and former students, but he continues to participate in their discussions.

Despite the university's attempts to stall their efforts, Lambert believes the RRU will equip minority students with the language to articulate why something is problematic, and enable them to respond to incidents of bias in the future.

"These are the kind of things we're going to see with Trump — what can they get away with? My view is let them get away with nothing," Naison said.



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MIGRANT DREAMS

TEXT & PHOTOS BY LEANNE TORY-MURPHY

PALERMO, Italy — The rescue ship is already there in the early morning.

So are the police, the Red Cross, the health department, Doctors Without Borders, Catholic Charities, the International Organization for Migration, Save the Children, the European border patrol agency Frontex, the Italian Coast Guard and immigration authorities — in uniforms of red, blue, white or orange — milling around or walking purposefully or setting up tents.

A long line of hearses enters the port and parks in a row. It's the beginning of another day in Sicily, a Mediterranean island that has been a cultural crossroads for millennia. In the last few years, hundreds of thousands of African migrants have arrived there, hoping to continue on to other destinations throughout a Europe that has become increasingly hostile to the presence of immigrants.

The first person to disembark comes off in a stretcher. He appears to be dead, but the stretcher rolls down to the line for provisions, not towards the hearses. The next one is in a wheelchair and has a bright white bandage around his head. A few more wheelchairs emerge, then a long procession of barefoot women and children with eyes that won't look. The first stop on the provision line contains boxes of Croc knockoffs, then they move on to water and snacks and waiting.

In a group of five teenage boys, two are from Burkina Faso, two from the Gambia, and the fifth from Somalia. One is wearing pants that are too big that keep falling down. He has no underwear on and tries to conceal himself with the orange plastic-covered blanket that everyone had been given on the ship. Some people find inventive ways to tie the blanket around them in a kind of shift.

They move through registration: name, date of birth, nationality, answering those basic questions in a hodgepodge of handwriting, languages and accents.

'WE HAVE A PRESIDENT THAT IS A DICTATOR'

Foday is a young radio presenter from the Gambia who made this journey about nine months ago. (He asked that his name be changed because he has a pending asylum case.) He describes the "culture of joking" that allows many different peoples to coexist peacefully in the small West African nation, which is almost entirely surrounded by Senegal, then talks about President Yahya Jammeh, who has ruled Gambia for 22 years. He says this is why so many Gambians are leaving.

"We have a president that is a dictator," Foday says. "Gambian keeps their mouth shut. Even if you were to name the President, you would have to use another name... but not the actual name, because if they even hear you talking about his name, you can be cautioned for that. Many people have been arrested, killed, tortured."

In early December, Jammeh conceded that he had lost his bid for re-election, but then said he was "annulling the election."

Foday's friend Amas (whose name has also been changed) arrived in Italy separately, also about nine months ago. While Foday was able to collect enough

money to make the journey quickly, Amas, an actor and student who helped his mother with her small business selling telephones, worked in each country along his way, moving from Mali to Burkina Faso and north to Libya, where he worked for eight months to save the money for the boat. Before he could leave, he was arrested by immigration authorities and sent to prison.

TORTURED FOR RANSOM MONEY

Amas was sent to a prison near Tripoli, Libya's capital. He estimates about 1,000 people were held there: men, women and children, from Burkina Faso, Mali, Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Niger, Cameroon, Nigeria and other countries. He received water and a small piece of bread once a day. "Some people die there, every day you see people die sick," he says. He also shows his scars from being tortured.

"They beat us!" he said. "They, even me, look at my hand here, they take a knife, look here! Every morning they have to beat us, they take cold water and pour it on us... Every day they have to bring this big pipe, you make a queue, beating each one, each one, each one, every day, they are beating you, every day, yeah, every day."

The prison guards have them call their families while they are being beaten to ask for money.

"They say, 'call your people and let them send money for you,'" Amas explained. "And what they ask us, we can't pay that. Because what they ask us is too many, maybe 2,000 dinar [about \$1,400]. Where are we going to get this money? They tell us, you have to pay this money or you die here... So I don't even bother myself to call my people, because I know they don't have it. So I just bear it there."

Amas and the other prisoners often thought of escape. For weeks they worked on a tunnel through the wall of their cell, using whatever they could find to chip away at the concrete. One day the guard left to buy something, and the prisoners broke the cell door. About 75 people escaped, and each went their own way "to try to save their lives."

He considers himself one of the lucky ones. Usually the guards shoot anyone who tries to escape. The night he got out, he didn't see anyone until he got into Tripoli.

THE CROSSING

Amas went immediately to the house where he had been living to collect the money he had saved. He did not want to be caught again. But he also says that when looking for a boat, "you shouldn't rush, you have to take your time. There are people who, you pay them and they call the police, they catch you and turn you back so they can make more money. Some people, if you pay them, you are safe, you can trust them."

Both Foday and Amas crossed the Mediterranean in overcrowded rubber dinghies. Amas traveled on a boat meant to hold 125 people. The smuggler had loaded it with 145.

They both laugh when asked if the smugglers went with them. "No!" Foday says, "They give you a compass, or sometimes they direct you with a star. They show you how to drive, and you are going to drive towards that star." The smugglers make migrants drive the

boats against their will. On Amas's boat, a man from Senegal was driving, "They forced him. They said, 'You have to take the boat or we kill you.' He had to do it because he like his life."

They were given phones and directed to call international authorities once they were out on the sea. Foday's boat was picked up four hours after it left Libya, but he says it was still a harrowing experience.

"We all know how the Mediterranean Sea is. Even in calm waters it isn't safe," he says. "It is a boat pumped full of air, it can burst any time, it can break anytime, it can capsize anytime... it's a kind of sacrifice, because you are seeing death coming. You say, 'Let me go.' Maybe death will catch me and maybe death won't catch me."

On Amas's boat, the moment they saw a Norwegian rescue ship, everyone started to stand up and yell. Water started to pour in. "Some people are crying, 'We will die, we will die,'" he recounts. "Even me, I was crying... In my mind I saw my mother again, I thought 'I am going to die today,' so I didn't think my mother was going to see me again."

The rescue ship was able to get them all in time. But the U.N. High Commission on Refugees reports that 1 in 47 migrants die on the central Mediterranean route between Libya and Italy, and that as of late October, 3,740 had died on all Mediterranean crossings this year. In 2015, almost 4,000 died.

Neither Foday nor Amas know how to swim. Amas says that when they were rescued, everyone was celebrating and "they even played music, so we are dancing in the boat." The rescue ship collected people from several other boats until it reached its capacity of about 1,000 passengers. It returned to Palermo the next day.

ARRIVAL

Disembarking in Palermo is only the beginning of a long immigration process. After registering, being fingerprinted, and receiving emergency medical assistance, the new arrivals are sent by bus to "reception centers" throughout Italy.

There are different centers for unaccompanied minors, single adults, and families. Many young men who are over 18 will say they are younger because they believe that the treatment at the youth centers is better. Some who are under 18 might say they are older so they can stay with people they know or because they will have more freedom to come and go. Very few people carry documents during their crossing.

People are not supposed to live in what are called "extraordinary reception centers" for more than three months, but Amas was just recently moved to more permanent housing. Foday was transferred to a regular camp, but was then sent back to an extraordinary reception center. He believes it was in retaliation for his repeatedly demanding that he receive his documents. The two were reunited at an extraordinary reception center in Palermo in July.

They are fortunate to be in Palermo. Many of the centers are in remote areas and have become known for human trafficking and other abuses. Northern Italy is also significantly more hostile to immigrants than the south. The Northern League, a virulently anti-immigrant and anti-European political party, has often argued that Northern Italy should secede from the poorer South, but



in recent years has been seeking to make common cause with Southerners against immigrants. That has not gone over well with many Sicilians, who have historically moved to the north to look for work and were often the target of the party's ire.

Dario, a 24-year-old former hairdresser in Palermo, says that despite high rates of youth unemployment, he doesn't believe immigrants are making the situation worse.

"Immigrants do what inhabitants here don't want to — cleaning windows of cars, collecting rubbish, etc.," he says. "Young people here want to find a good job. They want a good contract and good working conditions." The immigrants "are very brave to do what they did," he adds.

He earned 500 euros (about \$530) a month when he was a hairdresser working 60 hours a week. He blames lawlessness and corruption for the unemployment crisis.

"Here the owners are strong, because everyone breaks the law, so they think that if you don't accept the conditions, there will be another one who will," he says. He believes the European Union should do more to help, because immigration affects all of Europe and "Palermo can't do anything, even for its own inhabitants."

DEMANDING THEIR RIGHTS

In mid-November, a group of migrants living at several reception centers in the province of Palermo issued an open letter, published on the online news site Live Sicilia, that decried the conditions they were enduring, from the long wait for documents to the lack of heat and hot water in the centers. "We have left our countries fleeing from suffering, but in this country we have only found it yet again," it said. Many immigrants who want to move to other countries in Europe are stuck in Italy because they have not received their documents, it added.

There is overwhelming frustration with Italian bureaucracy, which many Italian citizens also find extraordinarily difficult to navigate. "Many people have not even been told what asylum is: That you may have been persecuted for political or religious reasons, or for being gay, and that each case will be treated with the appropriate attention," the letter said. "The incredibly slow pace in receiving documents leaves us extremely worried and unclear about our future. We simply want to know the truth, and for someone to tell us what's going on, instead of avoiding us and always telling us to wait till tomorrow."

The waiting period for asylum applications can last up to two years, longer if the request is denied. During it, the migrants cannot legally work, travel or find independent housing.

The letter also said that the running water in one of the centers is only turned on for one hour in the morning and one at night, and is "always

cold." When it's not on, the only source is a cistern where the water is "putrid" and "not even good enough for animals." As winter neared, they said, they asked for the heat to be turned on during a police check of the building, and were told that they "don't have heating in Africa."

Earlier this year, immigrants at a reception center in Palermo blocked the street every month to force the police to come and deal with their issues. (The police in Italy are partially responsible for immigration matters.) After several months of such demonstrations, Amas and Foday say, the immigrants are now collaborating smoothly with the police, and things have started moving much faster.

"Some people are there for 11 months, and they don't do anything for them, just eating and sleeping, not even going to school," Amas says. "So we close the street. It's not because we want to fight the people, we want to fight for our rights. We wait for one month, two months, they don't do nothing again. Again we close the street, again they come. Now they are doing what we want, there is no problem now. Everything is okay now."

THE FUTURE

"I'm waiting to see my life after documents," Foday says. "If there's a way for me to do something in Italy to earn my living, then I would stay. But if I've got no job, I would have to look for another living." Both young men hope to be actors and participate regularly in theater programs for migrant youth.

Amas also wants to help other arriving immigrants. "There must be a translator," he says. "If you can speak the language, then maybe I can translate between the Italian guys and the African guys. I want that job also."

"I don't think a normal human being would risk your life in the Mediterranean Sea if your life is not in danger," Foday says. "But most don't understand this. Africa is hard. If human rights are observed in Africa like in the U.S. and Europe, I think migration would be very limited. But it's also very important that people can migrate, so people can go wherever they want to go to experience new things, new lands. So I think it's a fact that immigration should be, but with the right way. The reason people are using the wrong way is because they are left with no other choice."

Leanne Tory-Murphy is a freelance reporter currently living in Palermo, Sicily, pursuing research on migration issues as a Fulbright scholar.



DEMANDING RESPECT: A woman holds aloft a picture at a 2011 protest in Palermo against police harassment of immigrants.

REJECTED: Anti-Northern League graffiti. The historically anti-southern political party has been trying to soften its image with Sicilians in recent years in the hopes of uniting Italians against immigrants.

THINKING OF HOME: A young man performs at the Gambian Assembly held in Palermo the evening before their country's election. The country has been ruled by dictator Yahya Jammeh for the past 22 years.

HOW TO TOPPLE A WALL WITH A HEARTBEAT

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

“He won with a metaphor.” I pressed my hands against the air as if touching a surface. “He won with the image of a wall.” They looked at me, waiting for words to strike like a flint on reality, to spark a flash and make everything briefly visible.

“We’re scared.” I walked to the stage’s edge. The audience was sparse but a classic New York crowd. A mix of everyone. A trio of Indian friends sat behind a Latino family. On the other side, a Caribbean couple cuddled next to Muslim women. Students sat side by side with tourists. They came to the Nuyorican Café for a poetry slam. Its high brick walls and theater lights cast us in an otherworldly glow, as if we held service in a grungy art temple.

“A year ago he was a joke,” I said. “But as he rose, he upended what we took for granted as basic human decency. And now this creature from the Black Lagoon of Capitalism is our fucking president.” Grunting like a movie monster, I reached for the young man in the front row. He laughed while ducking my hands.

I stood back up and repeated, “We’re scared.” Lowering my voice, I reached for the fear coiled in their guts, to pull it out into open air. “A man who told the nation, we are criminals, rapists and terrorists has been given the power to destroy us. He was given this power by our neighbors. He sold them an image of a wall. A wall against us.”

THE VANISHING GAME

“Are you scared about Trump?” I asked Abdah. He smirked, put my coffee and egg roll in a bag, then stopped to think. The bodega bell rang, neighbors came in, waved hi. Everyone knew Abdah and the Yemeni crew who worked the store. But did they care that he could be deported? Or put on a Muslim registry?

“I don’t think about him much,” he shrugged. “I know I should but ... politics ... it’s another world. I just am here.” He tapped the counter. “I work, go home, sleep, maybe girlfriend, come to work, go home, sleep.”

“The Muslim registry?” I asked. “Deportation?”

He shook his head and looked from my questions to the next customer. I said goodbye and walked to the train station. If another terrorist attack happens, will a roundup begin? How deadly will Trump’s scapegoating become? Who will disappear from our lives? Will it be my neighbors? Will it be my students or friends?

Since the election, I think about the undocumented workers in my life. I know their names. I trade jokes with them in the morning. I see them wake up early for work. I ask them for coffee and breakfast. I get out of their way as they haul concrete into construction sites, working themselves raw for a dream.

I imagine ICE teams showing up to handcuff the men, faces tight with rage and shame and fear. How would we feel as the police arrested them? Would we silently wonder, who will they come for next?

I think about the Muslims in my life. I say hi to the North African men spilling out of the mosque on Bedford and Fulton. I banter with Muhammad at the internet café as he prints my poems. I teach and read the pa-

pers by young women who wear hijabs and write about straddling two worlds.

What if a Muslim registry is instituted? What if they received a phone call, an email, a letter telling them to report to a station? Would we be ashamed as they were branded with this public mark? Would we express our regret even as we wonder, who will they come for next?

These questions circled me as I arrived at my department. The secretary motioned me over to her desk. “Did you see this?” She held out a leaflet. I took it and read on one side a Conservative manifesto. On the other side in big, bold letters: “Trump has won! America is Great Again! We are watching you, professor!”

“He found it on his desk before class.” She lowered her voice. “He hasn’t told anyone yet. He’s going to ask the dean what to do.”

“Can I copy it?” I held the leaflet so tight, it nearly ripped. She said yes. I took it to the machine, put it on the glass screen, watched the light flash underneath. Walking to my office, I turned it over and over in my hands like the script to a horror movie. I read it slowly, carefully — *We are watching you!*

THE LIBERAL ELITE

My office is lined with articles, my college degree and Ph.D. On the shelf are books and class hand-outs. All of it useless. All of it like a wall of privilege that left me cut off from the real world.

“We are the most incompetent, liberal elite ever,” I said to no one, said to the world, said as if to apologize. I had taught college for a decade and was used to the prestige. But I was just a token minority in the academy, who jumped at the chance for status and security. Now I felt stupid, empty and small.

“Liberal comedians could not stop Trump,” I plucked the degree off the wall and threw it.

“Liberal journalists could not stop Trump,” I ripped an article off the wall and tossed it.

“Liberal professors. . .” I heard a knock on the door. It was Vick, my student advisee doing his thesis on Orwell’s novel *1984*.

“Oh, I thought you were talking to someone.”

“Just myself.”

“Must’ve been an intelligent conversation,” he said with a smile. He had shaggy hair, a long nose and deep perceptive eyes. He’d drop random Bill Maher lines in class and the other students would turn and look around as if to say what-are-you-talking-about? We went over his thesis draft. I told him it was heavy on political analysis. I asked how *1984* fit with dystopian literature, how it repeated or revised the genre’s tropes.

“The elimination of critical thinking by eliminating language is one,” he said. “To force the human into a cog role in the social machine. But the other theme is romance, how people can express themselves outside the rule of the one party state. Expression is how the self grows and when they express their love for each other, they grow beyond the party’s control. My main critique is that Orwell doesn’t balance it out with the party’s appeal. Like why would anyone vote for, join or support a techno-fascist state? My thesis is that when people are scared, they turn to anyone who can offer them a sem-

blance of order, even if it is at the price of their freedom or well, you know, other people’s freedom. We can see that today with the election of Trump.”

I blinked, began to say something and then just looked at him, as if to say what-are-you-talking about? He smiled and bobbed his head in a happy, goofy way, then looked curiously at the floor, reached down and handed me back my degree.

HUMAN WRITES DAY

Walk. Run. Walk. Run. The Nuyorican Café was a block away. Start time for the poetry slam was in a few minutes. I dashed through the door into a near empty hall. The staff had sheepish smiles, as if to say sorry, no one showed up.

The few people there smiled faintly as they looked for a polite way out. I was going to cancel the event when a trio of Indian friends and a Latino family came in. I told them, “Let’s huddle in the front like around a campfire.”

Did they want a quick poetry workshop, like quick-quick? They said sure. They were curious about what could happen. I was too. So I told them, I felt lost since the election. The world I thought existed, didn’t. And how did they feel?

“I don’t like this talk of walls,” the Latino father said. “How they don’t let the refugees in.” His daughter looked at him as if seeing him for the first time. We were all seeing something. I walked away from the microphone and said, “Our new president. He won with a metaphor. He won with an image of a wall.”

In the back, the door opened and latecomers ambled in. It was a group of young men, stylish hair, stylish clothes, who looked around at the hushed crowd and then at me, weirded out by the intensity.

“We’re in a group therapy session,” I said. People in the rows laughed. “We’re talking about walls. You have any walls you want to break down?” I rubbed my chest. “In here, bro, in here.”

He smiled, shook his head. “I like my walls.” Everyone laughed hard.

“Yes we do,” I teased. “I have mine. I have my ideology. It’s like a religion for me. It protects me. I don’t know what it’s like to live without politics. It’s a good wall that became bad because I’m beginning to hate people I’ve never met because of who they voted for.”

I waited a second, wondering how I could put all this back in. “Who knows someone who could get deported?” I asked. Nearly, half of the crowd raised their hands.

“Okay,” I blew out a long sigh. “Who knows someone who’s Muslim?” More raised their hands. The door opened and again more people came in. I waved them over to the empty seats up front.

I made a stacking motion with my hands. “America was told it needed a wall to keep itself safe. So let’s write a poem about walls. They are a consistent theme in art from the wall of Troy in the *Iliad* to Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*. They play one of two roles. A good one, keeps what’s sacred safe. It protects the family, keeps the raging flood at bay. A bad one imprisons us, blocks us from doing something or becoming someone.”

More people came in and I pointed at empty seats. “So write about what are the walls, good and bad in your



BRIAN PONTTO

life.” They pulled out notepads, opening them like a chain of dominoes through their laps.

The two Muslim women finished. I pointed to them and the one who wore the hijab touched it and said, “This is a good wall. I feel protected by it. Even when people stare, it protects me.”

Her friend looked around and touched her cheek. “My makeup is a good wall. I don’t want people to see me without it.”

The Caribbean lady, who sat with her boyfriend, leaned over to high-five, mouthing, “Neither do I.”

Her boyfriend said, “My bad wall is my self-image. It blocks me, I think, from being more, from growing ... I don’t know what I’m saying.” His girlfriend put her arm around him. I let him know it was okay and pointed to the Indian man in the back. “When I go home,” he said, “I like that my language is my wall, I feel good inside it. But when I am outside of it, I speak outside myself, if that makes sense.”

More people came in and felt the intense openness and quietly sat down. One after the other, the workshop group talked about the walls they needed, the walls they hated, the walls they were given as children and that seemed to grow up with them, always too high to scale. Their voices shone in the air.

The girl who wore the hijab asked to read her poem. I invited her to the stage. She faced the audience, now a fully packed hall, mesmerized by the alchemy of art. She touched her hijab and looked at me. “It’s about ... how a good wall can become bad.”

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GABRIELLA SZPUNT

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

I mourn Fidel Castro because the Cuban revolution he led demonstrated that people could overthrow the tyranny of the rich, even in a small country dominated by a much more powerful one.

I mourn Fidel Castro, who died on Nov. 25 at the age of 90, despite the authoritarian side of his almost 50 years as Cuban leader after the revolution of 1959. He imprisoned numerous political dissidents, as well as gay men in the 1960s and 1970s before the laws liberalized. Writers were censored.

The sad paradox of revolution is that the harsher the struggle, the more hardline the government that emerges is likely to be. Castro's authoritarian side has to be kept in context: Cuba was the only leftist government in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 20th century that was not violently overthrown by the United States for daring to defy the dominion of the dollar.

That wasn't for lack of trying. Aside from the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the CIA's repeated attempts to assassinate Castro through means like trying to slip him poisoned cigars, the U.S. government also backed a terrorist campaign that murdered more than 40 student teachers in Cuba's countryside. The reason Che Guevara looks so angry in the photograph seen on millions of T-shirts is that it was taken at the memorial for the more than 70 people killed when a French freighter exploded in Havana harbor in 1960, believed to be sabotage.

Castro's revolutionary regime survived when all of the region's elected democratic-socialist and left-liberal governments were deposed. The U.S. backed military coups in Guatemala in 1954, Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973, and Haiti in 1991; invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983; funneled guns to

gangsters in Jamaica in the late 1970s, and armed rebels in Nicaragua in the 1980s. The overthrow of Guatemala's left-liberal government imposed more than three decades of military rule in which more than 200,000 people were slaughtered. The coup against Chilean democratic socialist Salvador Allende imposed a dictatorship that massacred several thousand people in its first month, including Victor Jara, the singer-songwriter who was Latin America's parallel to Bob Dylan.

"Nos imponen militares para sojuzgar los pueblos, dictadores, asesinos, gorilas, y generales," Jara sang in memory of Che Guevara. They imposed the military on us to subjugate the people; dictators, murderers, thugs, and generals. But the Cuban revolution followed the path of "liberar a nuestro pueblo del dominio explotador." Liberating our people from the dominion of the exploiter.

The revolution transformed a racially segregated society where, despite one of the most solid middle classes in Latin America, five-sixths of the people lived without running water or electricity and up to 40 percent were illiterate. Despite Cuba's relative poverty, its average life expectancy, less than 60 years in 1959, is now on a par with the United States, and a higher percentage of U.S. children die before they turn 5. Just before I visited Ecuador in 1988, my relatives' neighbors' 3-year-old daughter was critically burned. If the little girl had lived long enough to make the flight, her parents would have sent her to Cuba: It had the best burn unit in Latin America.

Cuba has also moved to develop green energy and agriculture, with nearly 10,000 working windmills and a dramatic increase in organic farming since the end of Soviet aid in 1991.

Government control of the means of cultural produc-

tion had mixed results. Cuban science-fiction writer Yoss, speaking in Brooklyn last September, noted that one of his novels, a thinly disguised allegory about the sleazy effects of Havana's reliance on the tourist trade called *A Planet for Rent*, has never been published in his country. The censors, Yoss said, were smarter than he thought.

On the other hand, the EGREM national record label put out hundreds of records, including the acoustic "nueva trova" of Silvio Rodriguez, the Latin jazz of Irakere, and the African-inflected dance grooves of Pello El Afrokan.

A less hardline Cuba might have wound up resembling South Africa, where Nelson Mandela, seeking to avoid the middle-class flight and capitalist-world hostility that plagued Cuba after it expropriated plantations and U.S.-owned businesses, avoided major wealth redistribution. Apartheid is gone, but South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world, with some people enjoying European-level living standards while half try to survive on less than \$4 a day.

Donald Trump's triumph will likely make the United States even more ruthlessly ruled by the Mammonite gods of venal crony capitalism and wrathful free-market fundamentalism. I mourn Fidel Castro because he was one of the world's most enduring figures who consistently resisted the dominion of the dollar. Because he was the last remaining revolutionary leader from an era in which millions of people dreamed a different kind of society was possible.

STANDING ROCK

Continued from page 5

don't want anyone to forget. But they realize if you carry animosity in your heart, it eats you up. We have to do what's necessary even if it's at the cost of our lives, but we don't need to do it with hatred.

"We're fueled by love, compassion, community. We're not going to win this battle intellectually. We're going to win it on heart-power."

HOW LOVE ACTUALLY TRUMPS HATE

Remember "love trumps hate"? The slogan made its rounds during the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia last summer, popping up on placards as if strategically placed there so that Hillary Clinton could use it in her acceptance speech and echo the masses. Trump supporters cynically folded the signs to read "love trump."

Love, after all, is a four-letter word. Actions give it substance.

In October, when tribal leaders sent Clinton a letter urging her to speak out against the violence at Standing Rock, she called

for "all of the parties involved ... to find a path forward that serves the broadest public interest." It was a statement that signified nothing. Now, as she put it in her concession speech, Clinton is keeping "an open mind" about a Trump presidency. Likewise, President Barack Obama, in his own words, is "rooting" for Trump.

What politicians greasing the levers for a smooth transition of power miss is that Trump is not just another politician. When we talk about Trump, we're discussing a man who incites racism and xenophobia for political gain; who surrounds himself with segregationists, Nazi sympathizers, climate deniers and vulture capitalists; a man who, in one month, will be the most powerful person in the most powerful country in the world.

Conversely, we're also talking about the complete failure of American liberalism to offer an inspiring alternative to Trumpism.

As our political leaders falter, the left's ability to muster strength from outside the corridors of power will become more important than ever. Movements long siloed — feminism, Black Lives Matter, immigrant rights, climate justice — are converging, rightly seeing in Trump a threat to their very existence. And yet we must avoid the

tendency to see protest as an end in itself, rather than a means of achieving power.

A lack of organization rendered Occupy Wall Street incapable of sustaining itself against repression, notes Nancy Romer: "There would be 10-hour meetings that didn't serve anyone except people who could sit for 10-hour meetings."

At Standing Rock, by contrast, all activities were oriented toward achieving the protectors' political goals. "The camps were highly structured," Romer says. "There were very clear orders when you entered the camps. Security told you, 'No drugs, no alcohol, no violence.'" Infiltrators were surrounded by security and forced to leave the camp.

Amid the constant threat of state violence, clear leadership on the part of tribal elders helped maintain discipline and decorum — two more values the left must reclaim from the right to steel itself for the days ahead.

Short-lived autonomous zones aren't going to be enough against the multiple threats of Trumpism. Shortly after the Army Corps of Engineers denied Energy Transfer Partners permission to transgress on Sioux grounds, members of Trump's "Native American Affairs Coalition" announced plans to privatize 56 million acres of Native lands for oil

and gas exploration. While the land held by the Bureau of Indian Affairs amounts to just 2 percent of the U.S., it contains one-fifth of the nation's estimated oil reserves, an amount valued at \$1.5 trillion. Furthermore, Trump has vowed to put the Dakota Access Pipeline back on the path to completion once he's in office.

It will take a Standing Rock nation to hold him back.

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THE RADICAL ACT OF COOKING

BY PETER RUGH

There are few things I find sadder than watching someone eat fast food alone. It's a lonesome, melancholy sight. Don't get me wrong; I too have been that sorry SOB on the Q train, chomping a greasy slice of pizza under the Transit Authority poster reminding riders they're not in a dining car. I've been that soft-

bellied, long-faced man you've spied through the windows of a McDonald's at 11 p.m., working an apple pie into his mouth through a single-serve box.

I'm not sure whether it's a family that prays or one that eats together that stays together. My mom used both expressions interchangeably. Growing up, my folks always tried to make sure we were all seated at the same table in the evening.

Shrimp scampi, stuffed peppers, apple pie and, like

many Irish-Americans of a bygone era, ham and cabbage are among the recipes my mom mastered. Much of what she fed us she picked up either from her mother or the copy of the *Joy of Cooking* she received as a wedding present three-and-a-half decades ago that still sits, stained and tattered, on top of her refrigerator. My dad specializes in steak. He also bakes bread.

My parents shared the kitchen labor as best they could, with my little sister and me begrudgingly

RECIPES FOR RADICALS

SUNCHOKES STEW

Brewing up a pot of sunchoke stew is one way to honor of the original inhabitants of the Northeastern United States. Sunchoke, also known as Jerusalem Artichoke, are perennial plants native to this region. They rise six to eight feet into the air, with bright yellow flowers at the ends of their stems and an edible tuber that grows in the earth. Sunchoke was a staple of Native American tribes before the introduction of the potato. The tubers possess a luscious creamy-yet-firm texture when cooked, with an added nutty undertone. My favorite way to prepare them is in a "no-beef beef stew" in which the sunchoke replace the beef medallions. It's perfect for the holiday season. Plus, it doesn't hurt that this is a one-pot meal.

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound sunchoke, scrubbed clean and chopped into one inch morsels
1 onion, chopped
8 garlic cloves, roughly diced
1 cup each of chopped celery, carrot, mushroom
2 tbsp dried herbs — sage, thyme, parsley, rosemary, oregano or a combination
1 bay leaf
1 tbsp paprika
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ cup cooking wine or red wine vinegar
¼ cup tomato paste
1 ½ cups vegetable stock
cooking oil
Salt and pepper to taste

STEPS:

Bring a few tablespoons cooking oil to medium heat in a heavy soup pot. Add onion, garlic, herbs and bay leaf. When the onions are transparent, add sunchoke and other vegetables. Season the whole mixture with paprika and nutmeg. Add salt and pepper to your taste. Sauté for a few minutes longer.

Turn the heat up to high. Add wine and bring it to a boil to deglaze the bottom of the pot. Reduce heat back to medium. Add tomato paste and flour and simmer a few more minutes to thicken. Next

add vegetable stock and let simmer until vegetables are tender. Add more stock to thin or cook longer to reduce to desired thickness. Serve with noodles, rice, or crusty bread and butter!

— FRANK CETERA

Frank Cetera lives in Syracuse, New York where he is active in Green Party politics, the Community Development Credit Union and permaculture landscaping the city. Frank's a foodie with a love for cooking at home using ingredients from the backyard garden at Bitternut Homestead Collective on Otisco Street.

MY ABUELA'S COQUITO

I make this recipe every year around the holidays. It's my version of the coquito (Puerto Rican eggnog) my abuela makes. My abuela is the woman who politicized me early on. Not because she knew of Franz Fanon or Ella Baker, she doesn't, but because she knew her name, shared her struggle and built a life based on love and self-determination. She survived devastating emotional and physical violence at the hands of an alcoholic who forced her to flee with her children from Puerto Rico to the United States. She had nothing and built everything. She taught me to survive. She taught me to love myself and to love and see others. She affirmed that doing so authentically, even when it was hard, would give me strength. That it affirms our power. She taught me there are people who would try to take that power and that I would have to fight to maintain it. She loved my brown skin and also understood the struggles it would bring. She prepared me for it with love. Her name is Rita, my abuela, and I love her eternally.

My memories of my abuela's coquito are dear to me. In the same way it gave her a piece of her beloved Puerto Rico, it gives me a piece of the love and support she had always given me.

INGREDIENTS:

2 cans coconut cream or, for a lighter version, coconut milk
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1 can evaporated milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 to 2 cups white rum
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground cloves

STEPS:

Add rum as desired or not at all
Blend for 3-5 minutes, chill in the refrigerator and serve.

— BEATRIZ BECKFORD

Beatriz Beckford is a radical momma, a campaign director at MomsRising and founder of the National Black Food & Justice Alliance. Learn more at BlackFoodJustice.org.

CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

My mom learned to make this pie when she was a girl. She taught my sisters and me to make it when we were kids. Every year on the night before Christmas, our family has "Pie Night" and everyone staffs a station in the pie-making process. This one has three basic steps: crust, filling, and a meringue for the top.

PIE CRUST

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup all-purpose flour
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
⅓ cup shortening
water

STEPS:

Preheat oven to 425°
Blend flour, salt and sugar
Blend in shortening
When very crumbly, add 2 tbsp. of water
Knead the mixture with your hands, and shape into a disc
Roll out to an even thickness, a few inches larger than a basic 9" x 1-¼" pie pan
Place into pan and flute edges
Use a fork to poke holes in the crust, so it does not bubble while baking
Bake for 12-15 minutes and let rest
Turn oven to 375° for browning the meringue later

FILLING

INGREDIENTS:

2 ½ cups milk
1 cup sugar
8 tbsp all-purpose flour
3 egg yolks (save whites for the meringue)
2 slightly rounded tbsp of unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp vanilla
salt

STEPS:

Bring 2 cups of milk to just short of a boil
While milk is scalding combine sugar, flour, remaining milk, egg yolks, cocoa and a dash of salt
Add mixture to a double boiler*
Add scalded milk
Cook in double boiler until mixture reaches a pudding like consistency
Stir in vanilla
Pour into pre-baked pie crust

*Note: If you don't have a double-boiler around the house you can jury-rig one by placing a metal mixing bowl just above water simmering in a saucepan.

MERINGUE TOPPING

INGREDIENTS:

Remaining egg whites
6 tbsp sugar

STEPS:

Beat egg whites until thick (you should be able to form "peaks")
Add sugar and beat again until mixture stands on its own and has a glossy shine
Spread meringue over pie, out to the crust
Using a spoon, form decorative "peaks" in the meringue
Place in oven for 8 minutes or until meringue is slightly browned

— MOLLY KIICK

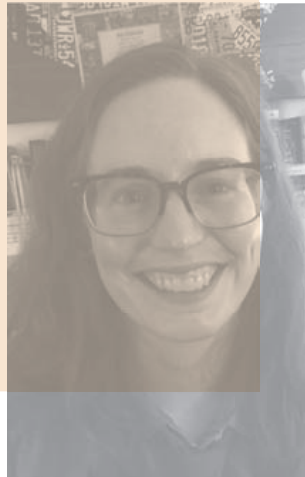
Molly Kiick grew up on a farm in Austin Township, Ill., and now lives in Brooklyn. Her proudest achievements are winning \$300 in a dance contest and parallel parking a U-Haul truck.



FRANK CETERA



BEATRIZ BECKFORD



MOLLY KIICK

SOME PLACES YOU CAN FIND

THE INDEPENDENT

lending a hand. I don't want to give the impression that either were master home cooks, making every meal from scratch. The smell of Old El Paso brand taco seasoning and those crunchy corn shells heating in the oven still makes my stomach growl with sentimental hunger.

As much as I envied friends whose parents allowed them to eat microwave ramen in front of the television, I now understand that those meals we shared were crucial in helping us tough it through the hardships that came our way from beyond the dining table. If I was suspended from school or my dad lost his job or we were in the midst of packing our bags to move to another city, pausing, having a conversation and sharing sustenance kept us both sane and together as a family, which amounted to the same thing.

The dinners we each contributed to were the most rewarding. I learned meals can be a labor of love, cooked collaboratively and shared equally; that mashed potatoes taste best when those Idaho spuds are salted with a couple drops of sweat.

These days my parents are divorced but all of us still get together over the winter holidays and for a few days during the summer. We argue. We grate on each other's nerves. We eat in peace.

Today in our busy-busy lives, cooking and eating with others is a radical act.

"Satisfy your craving for zero human contact," read ads for the restaurant delivery service Seamless, attempting to appeal to the cynical side of New Yorkers. "Cook when you're dead or living in Westchester," reads another.

As Matt Phillips reported in *Quartz* in June, Americans are spending more money annually dining out, \$54.857 billion, than they are at grocery stores, \$52.503 billion. Ironically, television is awash with cooking programs. The Food Network and the Cooking Channel have stretched the culinary arts to the limits of absurdity, serving up a 24-hour barrage of competitions where judges force participants to prepare three-course meals with ingredients like candy corn.

Not that there aren't thought provoking food programs out there, but it's one of the great contradictions of our time that we are flooded with food entertainment even as we cook less and less.

Ingredients too are hyper-fetishized. Boutique grocery stores aren't just for Manhattanites anymore. Most of the cornfields where my family lives in Northwestern Illinois have been replaced by big box stores, but there are at least two Whole Foods markets within a 20-minute drive that offer exotic items like flax milk and vegan sugar — yuck!

During the Great Depression, eating for many Americans wasn't so much about taste as it was vitamins. Milk was thought to be a super-

protein and we put it in everything. Canned food wasn't looked down upon. Rather it was considered a miracle of modern science.

In the Atomic Age, our meals highlighted our mastery over nature. We were fond of trapping our meat in gelatin. "Jellied Chicken Salad," for instance, was a "men's favorite," according to a recipe card from Betty Crocker, circa 1971. We went on a tear for dinner and dessert blends too. "Chicken Liver Mousse" with cognac and hard-boiled egg, "Prune and Marshmallow Coupes" — exotic dishes that emphasized American ingenuity over the drab cuisine of Soviet Russia.

"There is nothing in this world more political than food," as Anthony Bourdain is fond of pointing out, "what people are eating and what they are not eating." Or even more to the point, "Who is eating and who is not."

"Food is the first thing, morals follow on," as Bertolt Brecht put it.

Those of us fortunate enough to have access to food can put our morals where our mouths are. We can support local, sustainable farms and fisheries. Sure it can sometimes be a little bit costlier than eating flavorless Monsanto grub, but maybe we can try eating a little less in return for ingredients that are healthier and tastier. Most important, we can cook with and share with others. The flavors on our tongues will act as a balm against alienation.

A cousin of mine is an executive chef renowned for his scallops. I asked him once what makes his so special. "Nothing," he said. "I just fry 'em." For \$10 you can purchase a pound of scallops fresh from Montauk. Fry them in butter with a little thyme for about four minutes on each side and you and a loved one can share a meal that would cost \$40 a head — if you are lucky — in one of Manhattan's fine dining establishments. My point is, some of the best food is often simple and you deserve it. Why should the rich be the only ones who eat well?

Here at *The Indy*, we're going to continue to cover struggles for communities to have access to healthy food, for farm workers to achieve justice, for a healthy environment and economic equality; in short, all the politics that revolve around our plates. But we also want to write about food itself, as a corporal extension of our politics. I would be wary of activists who don't care much for a good meal if I were you. Same as I'd be wary of activists who don't care much for literature or sex. It's a sign they don't care much for life, and that's what we're fighting for.

SYD WACHS/UNSPASH

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RAINBOW'S GRAVITY

Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
THROUGH FEBRUARY 26
SUGGESTED ADMISSION: \$14

By Gena Hymowech

Gay Gotham, the new retrospective at the Museum of the City of New York, provides a good overview of queer art in the last century, but is far from comprehensive. Let's not assign complete blame to the museum, however. Obviously, there isn't enough room for everyone, or everyone who matters. But certain omissions are galling. Keith Haring and Nan Goldin, so much a part of the queer 1980s New York art scene, are barely included. Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, legendary artists who were also romantic partners, do not get their own spaces. Meanwhile, Harmony Hammond, an artist whose work is far less important and far less interesting (lesbians represented by ovals, anyone?), gets a wall.

I could go on. A queer theater compilation without the two Charleses (Ludlam and Busch)? Without *The Normal Heart*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Boys in the Band*? A clip from the PBS reality show *An American Family* is delightful to look at — Lance Loud being a joy to behold forever and ever — but is essentially one big tease, cutting off before we get to see *Vain Victory*, featuring Warhol superstars Jackie Curtis and Candy Darling.

And then there is the exhibition's title. Whoever came up with it has forgotten that there are a couple of other letters in LGBTQ besides G.

Not to say the exhibit isn't worth seeing. It's entertaining, highlights criminally underrated artists and showcases amazing power couples, like Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, Greer Lankton and Paul Monroe, Larry Rivers and Frank O'Hara, and Robert Mapplethorpe and Sam Wagstaff.

There was no LinkedIn, OkCupid or Patreon back then — artists created their own communities and romantic pairings without the internet, in a time when their very existence was frowned upon by the majority. Many likely don't understand how much of mainstream culture was made by these outsiders. *West Side Story* is but one example. That tribute to heterosexual

love was created by four queer men, Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim. Yes, it was based on *Romeo and Juliet*, but there are other interpretations that can be made.

The exhibit also examines theater, with clips from Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* and *Voyage to Lesbos* by The Five Lesbian Brothers, featuring a pre-*Fun Home* Lisa Kron. The *Lesbos* clip, about a gay woman marrying a guy to be "cured" of homosexuality, is a loving kiss-off to the 1960s, while *Angels* is one of the best examples of AIDS art ever, though the clip chosen could be confusing to those unfamiliar with the work.

The museum features helpful guides to places and neighborhoods. Something that might surprise the viewer is that Greenwich Village's Julius bar was not always a gay bar, and in 1966 there was actually a "sip-in" to gain the right for queer people to be served. Another revelation, because so much of queer history is whitewashed, is the role Harlem played: The Gumbo Book Studio was a vital destination; lesbian Gladys Bentley a well-known star.

You would not expect to find queerness in a 1932 movie, but *Call Her Savage* slipped some shout-outs in there, with talk of Greenwich Village and a scene with two pansies, characters that epitomized effeminacy. Vito Russo called the scene "possibly the first representation of a gay bar in a commercial American film." There's also Harry Rose singing about frankfurter sandwiches, so interpret that as you will.

George Platt Lynes' work, especially *John Leaphart and R.X. McCarthy #375*, his 1952 photo of a nude black man posing erotically with a nude white man, is the very definition of groundbreaking. Greer Lankton is probably better known, though also a cult figure. The trans artist succumbed to an overdose, but not before creating dolls of Andy Warhol and *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland. Lankton's recreation of Warhol can be read as either a tribute or a joke, seeing as how he is sitting on top of a pile of money.

As you enter the exhibition, you are greeted with Max Ewing's *Gallery of Extraordinary Portraits*. A 1928 precursor to Instagram, the installation features pictures of his friends and celebrities in a facsimile of a walk-in closet. I am shocked that such

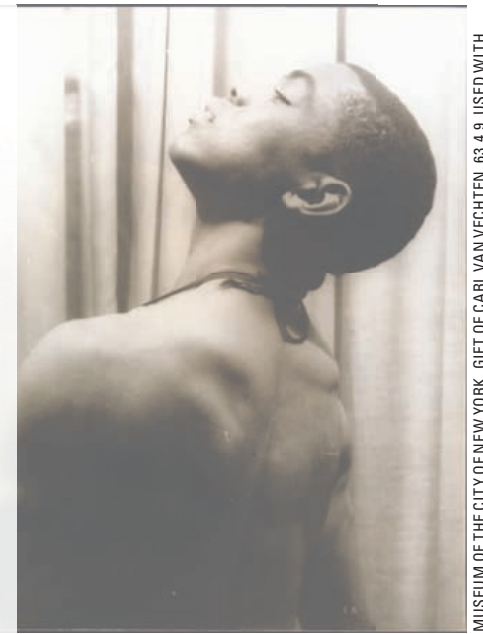
an important relic has never before gotten the attention it deserves. It would have been nice to know the subjects of these pictures, but maybe that is lost to history.

Gay Gotham is showing at an interesting — some would say terrible — time for queer culture. In the last couple of years, there has been a loss of important, purely queer spaces and publications — lesbian bars Cattyshack in Brooklyn and Meow Mix in the East Village; the websites AfterEllen (which I wrote for), TechnoDyke and PrideParenting (which I was an editor for); bookstores A Different Light and Oscar Wilde Books; and print mags *Girlfriends*, *On Our Backs*, *HX*, *HX for Her* and *The New York Blade*.

One might conclude that if queer spaces and publications are not succeeding it might simply mean they are not needed, but I believe we will always want to communicate with each other, to see ourselves reflected, to have spaces that are only ours, to take part in connections that will inform our art. "Gay Gotham" shows not only how important these kinds of spaces once were, but why they must be preserved for future generations at any cost.



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MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK. GIFT OF CARL VAN VECHTEN, 63.4.9. USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE VAN VECHTEN TRUST.



MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK. GIFT OF CARL VAN VECHTEN, 42.316.231. USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE VAN VECHTEN TRUST.

Andy Warhol and Candy Darling, New York, photo by Cecil Beaton

Alvin Ailey, photo by Carl Van Vechten

Anna May Wong, photo by Carl Van Vechten

SHINING NEW LIGHT ON BLACK MASCULINITY

Moonlight

DIRECTED BY BARRY JENKINS
111 MINUTES, RATED R
THEATERS CITYWIDE

By Mark Read

Barry Jenkins is certainly not the first filmmaker to take on the subjects of urban poverty, drug violence and black masculinity. There is a long and illustrious history of films that have examined the bleak realities of life under the humiliating and emasculating condition of multi-generational poverty, of black lives cut short or permanently scarred by unending cycles of gang violence, of the stubborn dignity of the women and men who struggle through seemingly insurmountable odds. My personal favorite among these is *Menace II Society*, by Allen and Albert Hughes, which still rings true more than 20 years later. Many others — John Singleton's *Boyz in the Hood*, Spike Lee's *Clockers*, and F. Gary Gray's *Straight Outta Compton* — have spoken truthfully to the ongoing racist violence of poverty and its violent consequences, particularly for young black men.

Barry Jenkins' film *Moonlight* is unlike any of these films.

The film looks and feels entirely and utterly new, not even vaguely referencing those previous films in whose tradition it sits. While the milieu of *Moonlight* shares some things in common with these treatments — we know that this world is perilous and violent — there are no shootouts, no blood on the street, no fatal confrontation between friends or rivals and, most importantly, no clear resolution or message. Structurally and tonally, it holds more in common with Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* than *Boyz in the Hood*.

The film's surprising and unconventional aesthetic likely has something to do with its genesis. It is adapted from a play, *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*, by Jenkins' fellow Miamian Tarell Alvin McCraney. Without the ability to

overwhelm an audience through spectacle, a play must often convey its meaning and power through an economy of language and gesture. The pause can be as important as the word. Structure is all. The best plays frequently have the feel of music or poetry, and as one watches this masterpiece unfold, at times it feels like listening to a symphony or a deeply soulful jazz concert. Jenkins' film adaptation loses none of the play's musical, poetic or theatrical qualities, and adds to them the intimacy and visual refinement of the finest filmmaking.

The drama unfolds in three acts, following the characters of Chiron and his friend Kevin as they grow up, grow apart, then come back together again. Each act is strong enough to stand on its own as a short film, but in combination, they form a powerful and unsentimental story about masculinity, sexuality, survival and friendship.

In the first act we meet a young Chiron (played by Alex R. Hibbert) who suffers at the hands of bullies for reasons that he doesn't yet understand, but which he has begun to suspect are rooted in his difference. He finds refuge with a drug dealer, Juan (Mahershala Ali), and his girlfriend Teresa (Janelle Monáe), who defy stereotype in their unconditional acceptance of Chiron's nascent homosexuality. Chiron's mother (Naomie Harris) has begun the downward trajectory of drug addiction. In one of the more powerful scenes of the film, the young and very introverted Chiron asks Juan: "Does my mama do drugs? Do you sell drugs?" Juan's affirmative answers are not treated as a horror revealed or a betrayal of trust, as they might be in other films. It is the stark, harsh and inevitable reality of their two lives. It is neither melodramatic nor trivial. It is painful.

Juan's absence from the second act is treated in a similarly unsentimental manner. When the teenage Chiron (Ashton Sanders) needs a place to crash due to his mother's now-severe drug problems, he takes refuge with Teresa at the home that she shared earlier with Juan, who is now gone. He might be in prison; he might have been killed. It doesn't come up. In the intervening years, Chiron's mother's addiction isn't

the only thing that's gotten worse. His difference is more evident now. To the alpha boys at his high school he is a sissified "faggot," for which he is mercilessly bullied. He is sullen and withdrawn within a world that is hostile to his very existence. His only friend is Kevin (Jharrel Jerome), who has adjusted into his own social role — the jokester/clown — more easily than Chiron. Their intimate encounter in the film is treated in much the same way as other important moments: unsentimental and emotionally true. The ensuing betrayal and Chiron's violent response, which lands him in prison, is the central tragedy of the film.

The consequences of Chiron's adolescent violence are a stark reminder of what the school-to-prison pipeline looks like, the foreclosing of possibility that marks the lives of black men in this society. The film's third act finds Chiron (now played by Trevante Rhodes) in Atlanta, nearly unrecognizable as a drug dealer not so different from Juan, but without a lover of his own. Ten years have passed, and we can only guess at what Chiron has been through. His affect is absolutely flat, emotionless, dead. He goes about his business with the calm assurance of someone accustomed to violence. But a phone call from Kevin (now played by André Holland), seemingly out of the blue, unsettles all this.

The harrowing emotional power of this third act stems from how true the film remains to the specificity of its characters and their stories. It is an unflinching look at black men whose lives are profoundly shaped by external forces that simply and brutally limit their agency. I felt sadness, shame and outrage as the film came to its tender conclusion, but more than any of these, I felt a kind of gratitude for being invited to bear witness to these lives.

PERSONAL JOURNEY:

Mahershala Ali and Alex R. Hibbert in *Moonlight*.



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SUN. DEC 25 • 2-4PM

MEETING: NYC Black and Pink together with the Queer Detainee Empowerment Project invite you to our afternoon letter writing session. What can you bring? Writing materials, stamps if you want. We can always use more postage. Help us alleviate the isolation of prison!

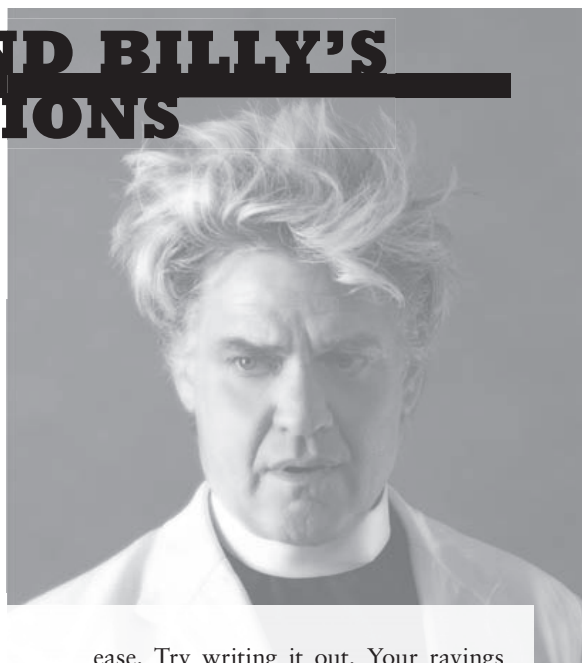
WED. JAN 11 • 7-9:30PM

READING: Dr. Hiva Panahi, a lifelong advocate for rights and opponent of human trafficking, writes eloquently about global struggles for freedom and dignity. Her poetry reflects the lives of women in Iran, as well as her experience as a refugee seeking shelter in a foreign land.

SUN. JAN 15 • 4-6PM

TALK: Katherine Arnoldi will discuss her new book, *The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom*. The book details Arnoldi's struggle to go to college. In 2000, Arnoldi started a class action lawsuit with New York Civil Liberties Union against the NYC Board of Education for coercing her and other teen moms to leave high school.

REVEREND BILLY'S REVELATIONS



JOHN GUILTY

Dear Reverend Billy, I'm a gay man. I've always felt that my queerness was the very foundation of my politics. But since the election, some progressives have claimed that the Democrats' defeat was the result of focusing on identity politics, that going forward we have to focus solely on economic issues and dial down on "lesser" issues. I feel as if these folks want me to closet my identity politics. I find this attitude very upsetting — and a bit of a betrayal.

— BRU IN HELL'S KITCHEN

Dear Bru, We're working through a time of confusion, when some of best strategists are flummoxed. If there is a return to sexual fear spreading across the land. Be defiant by being proud and sexy and yourself. Moderate your exposure to people that hold reactionary opinions about "identity politics." Work with people who honor who you are.

Meanwhile, be cautious of fallacious identity politics. You know, the kind that says, "No matter who you are you too can travel to Davos. You too get a spin at the roulette wheel called Meritocracy." Beware of false prophets who don't give a crap about people; be they gay, straight, white, yellow, red, black or brown and cover up their contempt for humanity by appealing to us as a collection of special interests.

• • •

Dear Reverend Billy, as the days are getting shorter I'm finding it harder to stay motivated. How do you suggest I keep this seasonal disaffective disorder, or whatever it is, from infecting my brain?

— DARIA FROM MOTT HAVEN

Dear Daria, I lived in California for a long time and I suffered a seasonal disaffective disorder for 71 straight seasons. In the almost mockingly wonderful sunshine I found myself seated with crossed legs at a sidewalk café, sipping a cappuccino at 2 in the afternoon, having done nothing up to that point except suffer mild existential discomfort, which actually felt fashionable. The French have a word for it.

How do you keep "whatever it is" from infecting your brain? This season is something. What I mean to say is, it is material, physical — a thing. That is your opening. Follow the path of this infection — out of your malaise.

Dramatize the symptoms of your dis-

ease. Try writing it out. Your ravings might read like a Mayo Clinic doc-blog or resemble Phillip K. Dick. The point is, dark things are not necessarily paralyzing. Kafka's protagonist woke up as a cockroach. You can too. Play with your angst, embrace it. Let your disease entertain you.

• • •

Dear Reverend Billy, I know you are not much for shopping. Neither am I. But there is so much pressure this time of year to give gifts. How do I show the people in my life I care without buying into the commercialism in the air this time of year?

— JEN FROM FiDi

Giving has nothing at all to do with big retail. Santa is a Macy's invention from the 1800's and has absolutely nothing to do with giving.

You owe nothing at all to the guilt-tripping "Black Friday" myth. It is not unpatriotic to walk away from the whole violent mess of American commercial Christmas. It is, in fact, your gift to the Earth. The holidays cause not only

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS WHO APPEAL TO US AS A COLLECTION OF SPECIAL INTERESTS.

mind-altering boredom, but also climate change and habitat devastation. Cast all those sweatshop tchotchkes into the LAKE OF HELLFIRE!

Start laughing until you cannot stop laughing. Clear the giving palate. You don't have to buy a gift to give a gift! Hah! Hah! Hah! (not ho ho ho) . . .

This year we are beginning to heal from evil giving. We start slowly and thoughtfully with a caress. Keep nothing — NOTHING — in your home from commercial Christmas. . . except the mistletoe. Beneath those spiky leaves give the gift that keeps on giving — grow that caress into sexual abandon. It's good for the climate.

Reverend Billy is an activist and political shouter, a post-religious preacher of the streets and bank lobbies. Got a question for Reverend Billy? Just email RevBilly@Indypendent.org and unburden your soul.

'TIS THE SEASON

YOUR TRUMP CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE

BY INDY STAFF
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY MARTIN



TRUMP MESSAGE CHAIR

Feel what it's like to have Trump's hands all over you. (Pussy guard not included).



TRUMP TACO BOWLS

Make dinner grande again. Prove to the Mexicans who live next door that just because you strongly suspect they are murders and rapists that doesn't mean you don't have mucho respect for their cuisine. Each Trump Taco Bowl kit comes with packets of Trump-brand sour cream for putting the white on top.



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Block out "facts" from the dishonest, lying media while receiving a soothing, full frontal dose of ultraviolet radiation. It'll leave your face orange and your mind smug and satisfied. For just \$29.99 more, we'll include a bottle of stupendous Trump bleach. Now your hair will scream Aryan! (Trump Tanning Helmet not safe to wear while driving or operating voting machine.)



MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN SEPTIC TANK

If you are anything like Trump, you've

got so much racist bile piled up inside you that you don't know what to do with it. This pure, 24-karat gold septic tank is the thing for you. For the Trumpaphile on the go, check out our portable Make America Great Again colostomy bag. Now you can spew bile at the water cooler or while flying the friendly skies.



TRUMP WIND-UP DOLL

No strings attached. Just ask Trump what he thinks of Rosie O'Donnell and listen to him go.



TRUMP-PENCE HOME ABORTION KIT

Trump and Mike Pence plan to make sure women won't have access to birth control. But the special ladies in your life can always perform abortions at home. Each kit comes with a plumbing snake, blood bucket and a shovel for burying the unborn.



TRUMP ON A CROSS

Take a stand against white genocide and string this gorgeous diamond encrusted crucifix around your neck. It features our Lord and savior Donald Trump on the cross. Everyone said his political career was dead but he resurrected prejudices we thought were buried back in the Sixties and ascended to the White House.

START SPREADING THE NEWS

BY JOHN TARLETON

Thanks to foundation support we received this fall, *The Independent* is in the process of doubling its print circulation. We are placing outdoor news boxes around the city. We are also putting wire news racks at public libraries and other venues.

None of this would be possible without the help of volunteers who maintain the boxes and find new venues where the paper can be shared. Here are the firsthand stories of several of the unsung heroes who are helping build a grassroots media revolution.

Arun Aguiar

CANARSIE, BROOKLYN

Canarsie is a working-class, mostly Caribbean and African-American neighborhood out here at the end of the L train. Last spring, I organized a Bernie Sanders field office when I realized there would not otherwise be one in Canarsie. We connected with 200 people and built a core group of 20 who did phone banking and block-by-block canvassing.

I began distributing *The Independent* after I saw a call for help in last month's issue. I began by approaching the three public libraries here in Canarsie about carrying *The Indy*. One of the libraries now accepts a stack of papers while the other two are going through the process of reviewing the paper. We also have a number of senior centers and community centers in Canarsie that I am reaching out to.

I recently attended a holiday party at a senior center where I personally placed about 60 copies of the paper into the hands of individual people. Only a couple copies were thrown in the trash or left on the table. The rest were taken home.

One person I met at the party is a retired mailman. I told him I would bring back copies of the next issue and he could be the one to go around and hand the paper out to each person. And he said, "Great, - I love that - I'll do that!"

Placing one of the outdoor boxes by the Canarsie-Rockaway Parkway subway station might be a good idea. Most people travel to and from Canarsie by train. There are also five bus lines that drop off at that station so there's a constant stream of people.

My goal is to achieve saturation coverage in my neighborhood. *The Indy* is a great educational tool for an already aware community. For those who end up reading it, I think it will add to their level of sophistication and understanding of the multitude of issues confronting them.

Pam & Chris Brown

SOUTH SLOPE, BROOKLYN

We run Align Brooklyn, a wellness studio that offers yoga, pilates and chiropractic services. Earlier this fall we placed one of *The Independent's* wire racks on the sidewalk in front of our business at Fifth Avenue and 16th Street. It holds several hundred papers and I'm amazed at how quickly the papers are taken. The people coming through our business care a lot about politics and the world. They understand wellness is more than individual. It's societal as well.

To maintain the rack, it's just a matter of the last person working at night putting it inside the door and then we put it back out in the morning. It's really important to expand the circulation of *The Indy*, especially now that we're entering the Age of Trump. Having voices outside of corporate media may be one of the only things that can save our democracy. It's also important for the Left to get

on the same page and have a space like *The Indy* where a variety of left opinions can be discussed.

Any business where community is important shouldn't hesitate to carry the paper. For us, it's good marketing. It says who we are and what we're about. We're proud to be associated with *The Indy* and with the Left and with independent media.

Bill Koehnlein

EAST VILLAGE

I have been politically active since I joined the civil rights and peace movements as a teen-ager in the early 1960s. For many years I worked with The Brecht Forum/New York Marxist School and also work with The Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory which was founded in 1990. I think *The Independent* is a really fine paper. There's a lot of New York City-oriented coverage — something the city definitely needs from left media. It's in the tradition of independent, non-sectarian left media like the old *Guardian* weekly newspaper based here in New York whose demise was a big loss for the Left and left media when it collapsed in 1992.

I maintain a couple of *Indy* boxes along Second Avenue near where I live. It's a very busy pedestrian area. The box located at Second Avenue and Fourth Street is located right in the middle of a number of theaters and restaurants as well as the Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association. It's positioned right next to a box for *AM New York* and another box for the *Village Voice*. It's gratifying to see the *Indy* box there because it's our media. And judging by the speed by which the box gets depleted you know people appreciate it.

Lew Friedman

PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN

I am a retired New York City public school teacher. Back in the late '60s, I used to deliver an underground newspaper called *The Rat* to shops and stores in Brooklyn. It did a lot of coverage of the Vietnam War and the resistance to it.

These days, I'm helping *The Independent*. I monitor a couple of their new outdoor boxes on Seventh Avenue near where I live. I keep track of how the papers are moving make sure the boxes remain clean and that there's always a display copy in the window.

Besides the boxes, I try to get *The Indy* out on Facebook and email. I have almost 700 friends on Facebook and a big list of names, a lot of them local, who are interested on email. When I go away for several weeks this winter, I have a friend in the neighborhood who will help with watching the boxes.

The Indy is covering so much great news—real news, as opposed to all that fake news we've been getting, including from *The New York Times*. There's a lot of good anti-racist coverage in *The Indy*, which is crucial, as well as articles on climate change and the environment. Recently *The Indy* had an issue on the impact of Trump's election and what he can do to us. This is important news and analysis to get into the hands of more people.

Want to get involved in helping build *The Indy's* circulation? Email us at contact@independent.org, or call 212-904-1282. For more about how to contribute financially to our continued growth, turn the page.



MARIE-CLAIRE PICHET



ALI GALANTE



COURTESY OF LEW FRIEDMAN



COURTESY OF PAM BROWN

THE INDYPENDENT



We're growing like never before — doubling our print circulation as we roll out outdoor news boxes across New York City and prepare to launch a beautiful new website early next year that will be fully mobile compatible.

With Donald Trump soon to become the next president, *The Indy* is stepping up in a big way. But will this growth be sustainable?

To continue expanding in 2017 and beyond, the support of our readers is more important than ever. We still have to cover all our regular expenses, and we have to print more papers than ever before. To stay on track heading into 2017, we have to raise \$40,000 in our year-end fund drive. Will you help?

When you give to *The Independent*, you are supporting:

- *Original, on-the-ground coverage of grassroots social movements here in New York and around the world.*
- *Critical writing and analysis for a broad public audience on issues of race, gender and class; war and peace; the environment, and much more.*
- *The continued growth of our arts and culture section.*
- *Our long tradition of training and nurturing the next generation of radical journalists.*

If you like what you see in *the Indy*, please give today! Whether you can give \$27, \$50, \$100, \$200, \$500 or \$1,000, it makes a big difference.

Thank you for your support,

***The Independent staff
& volunteers***

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