

Sent: Thu, 21 Aug 2014 09:06:54 -0400
From: TIME » Time Sections » Politics <letters@time.com>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Top Posts on TIME's Swampland: Morning Must Reads: August 21

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Top Posts on TIME's Swampland: Morning Must Reads: August 21

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Morning Must Reads: August 21

Posted: 21 Aug 2014 05:55 AM PDT

Ferguson Protests Stay Peaceful

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A visit by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and a spell of bad weather produced a smaller, more subdued crowd on Wednesday, as nighttime protests remained peaceful for the first time in nearly a week

Ebola Patient to be Discharged

Dr. Kent Brantly, one of the two Americans infected with Ebola while in Liberia and sent to an Atlanta hospital, is set to be discharged Thursday

U.S. Attempted Hostage Rescue

The U.S. launched a rescue operation this summer to free hostages held by ISIS, including slain

American journalist James Foley, the Pentagon said

Israeli Air Strike Kills 3 Senior Hamas Leaders

An Israeli air strike in Gaza killed three senior leaders of the Hamas military wing on Thursday, the group said. The attack near the town of Rafah was one of 20 the Israeli military said it carried out after midnight on Wednesday

Get Ready, SoundCloud Users: Ads Are Coming

SoundCloud, the popular free music-sharing platform that's helped artists like Lorde skyrocket to fame, is introducing advertisements. The company said Thursday that select content creators will be able to play ads beside their tracks and collect some of the revenue

Record Fine Expected From Bank of America

Authorities are reportedly about to impose a \$16.65 billion fine to settle allegations that the bank knowingly sold toxic mortgages to investors, fueling the financial crisis. Since the crisis's end, the bank has been instructed to pay more than \$60 billion in fines and other claims

Blood Transfusions May Help Kids With Sickle-Cell Anemia

Regular blood transfusions could significantly reduce the risk of strokes in children who have sickle-cell anemia. A study of nearly 200 children with the condition found that monthly transfusions could reduce the chance of strokes by more than half

Instant Ramen Can Hurt Your Heart

A study showed that eating instant noodles at least twice a week was associated with 68% more cardiometabolic syndrome—a collection of risk factors for heart disease, type-2 diabetes and stroke—in women, regardless of what else they ate

Texas Gov. Rick Perry Digs in for a Fight

Perry pleaded not guilty on Wednesday in the abuse-of-power case against him, waiving a formal arraignment that had been scheduled for Friday and again signaling his readiness to fight a prosecution that he has decried as a "farce"

Study: Yoga Makes You a Quicker, Better Thinker

Practice hatha yoga consistently for eight weeks, and you're likely to think faster and better remember things, whereas just stretching and toning yielded no improvement, according to a new study of more than 100 adults with ages ranging from 55 to 79

Winona Ryder Will Join David Simon's *Show Me a Hero*

Winona Ryder will embark on her "largest TV commitment to date," starring alongside Oscar Issac, Catherine Keener, Alfred Molina and *The Walking Dead's* Jon Bernthal in the new HBO miniseries

Show Me a Hero, created by *The Wire*'s David Simon

UPS: Customer Data May Have Been Compromised

Malware may have affected customers' credit- and debit-card information at 51 franchises in 24 states, according to the United Parcel Service. UPS says the threat was eliminated as of Aug. 11 and that customers can shop safely at all locations

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Paul Ryan Explains What Happens When He Visits Urban Black Communities

Posted: 21 Aug 2014 05:51 AM PDT

Congressman Paul Ryan, who has been spending some time in the last 18 months visiting urban black neighborhoods, says that he's often the first Republican the people he talks to there have ever met. Ryan, who came to TIME's office to do an interview for the magazine's 10 Questions page about his book *The Way Forward*, says that folks are excited to see him mostly because he's listening to them.

When asked if his experiences in urban neighborhoods had given him any insight to what's happening in Ferguson, he sounded **a few words of caution** about rushing to judgment. "I think it's important to be respectful of what's happened," he says, "and try to get to the truth and let the investigation takes its hold." He also believes that when people think poverty is a problem the government takes care of, they don't get involved and it isolates poor communities. "And so the way I think we ought to approach this is, we'd better be thinking about how to fight poverty eye-to-eye, soul-to-soul, person-to-person and reintegrate our communities instead of isolating people in our communities," says Ryan.

Shifting gears, the former vice presidential candidate said that no further investigation of the President's attempts at health care reform is necessary. Ryan thinks the health care legislation will collapse under its own weight. "I do believe that we will ultimately repeal this law," he says of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. "And the reason I say that is not because I'm just some optimistic person who's naive. It's because I think this law will implode." Ryan takes particular issue with the IPAB (Independent Payment Advisory Board), the committee set up to manage Medicare costs. "I don't think people on Medicare will sit with the idea of 15 unelected bureaucrats determining how their care is going to be allocated."

Elsewhere in the interview, the Wisconsin congressman declared that—despite putting out a book explaining his background and his policies in quite meticulous detail—he hasn't decided if he's going to make a run at the presidency and won't until 2015. In the meantime, he's offered up his proposals for

immigration reform: secure the border, offer trackable work visas and then give current illegal immigrants a probationary period to become legal, while working.

He also revealed that whenever there's a stressful meeting that John Boehner's leading, he tries to sit way on the other side of the room. Boehner's a stress-smoker and says Ryan, "I just hate getting that smell in my clothes." Good to know.

[Subscribers can read the full interview here.](#)

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10 Questions With Paul Ryan

Posted:

Your book is called *The Way Forward: Renewing the American Idea*. What exactly is the American idea?

The condition of your birth doesn't determine the outcome of your life. The job of government is to secure our rights so that we can make the most of our lives. My concern is that we're starting to lose a little bit of that.

It reads like you're running for President. Are you? I don't know what I'm going to do in 2016. It's a decision my family will make in 2015.

The economy is adding jobs, health care costs are declining, and the deficit is shrinking.

This appears in the September 1, 2014 issue of TIME.

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Governors Behaving Badly

Posted:

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Ending the War on Fat

“I’m here today because I believe in the rule of law,” Texas Governor Rick Perry told reporters on Aug. 19. “And I’m here today because I did the right thing.”

Really, Perry was at a Travis County courthouse in Austin because he had been indicted on two felony counts of abuse of power, so he needed to get booked, fingerprinted and photographed. And he was there because the line between playing politics and committing crimes has gotten increasingly fuzzy.

What did the Republican governor do to end up with one of history’s most impeccable mug shots? He threatened to veto state funding for Travis County’s Public Integrity Unit unless Democratic district attorney Rosemary Lehmborg resigned—and when she refused to quit, he followed through on his threat.

This appears in the September 1, 2014 issue of TIME.

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The Rescue That Wasn’t

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 06:06 PM PDT

The Pentagon spoiled Americans with its near-perfect grab of Osama bin Laden in May 2011. Save for a wrecked helicopter, Operation Neptune Spear went off without a hitch (assuming, as many Americans did, that taking bin Laden alive was never a top priority).

But the Navy SEALs drew to an inside straight that night in Abbottabad, Pakistan. All the practice in the world can’t trump bum intelligence. And the U.S. intelligence community’s estimates that bin Laden would be in the compound where he died **ranged** from 30 to 95%. If bin Laden hadn’t been there, the raid would have been deemed a failure, and would perhaps still be a secret.

The Pentagon only confirmed the failed July raid to rescue James Foley, whose murder was made public in a video released by Islamic militants on Tuesday, and several other U.S. hostages in Syria, after word began to leak out late Wednesday. “Unfortunately, the mission was not successful because the hostages were not present at the targeted location,” Rear Admiral John Kirby, the Pentagon’s top spokesman, said in a statement.

Such misses have happened before.

In 1970, 56 U.S. troops **raided** North Vietnam’s Son Tay prison camp to rescue the estimated 55 U.S. POWs believed to be there.

Technically, Operation Ivory Coast succeeded: the U.S., using more than 100 aircraft to support the operation, seized the camp. Unfortunately for the U.S., the North Vietnamese had moved the prisoners a day earlier due to North Vietnamese concerns that the camp was too close to a river that might flood. Two U.S. troops were injured during the mission.

Perhaps the most infamous rescue attempt since then was 1980's Operation Eagle Claw, the aborted mission to bring home the 52 U.S. hostages held in Tehran after Iran seized the U.S. embassy there. They had been held for six months when President Carter ordered eight choppers on a risky two-night mission to rescue them. But sandstorms and mechanical woes grounded three of them on the first day, forcing the military to scrub the mission. As they withdrew, one of the helicopters hit a refueling plane at the Desert One staging site in the Iranian desert, killing eight U.S. troops.

The fiasco doomed any chance Carter had of winning a second term—Iran released the hostages shortly after Ronald Reagan took office—and led Congress to create the U.S. Special Operations Command to coordinate such efforts in the future. It also led the Army to create the Night Stalkers of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the unit whose pilots flew the Navy SEALs to bin Laden's lair.

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U.S. Launched Operation to Rescue ISIS Hostages, Pentagon Says

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 04:04 PM PDT

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The Rescue That Wasn't

Obama Says 'Entire World Is Appalled' By ISIS Beheading of Journalist

Video Shows Beheading of American Journalist

Updated Aug. 20, 9 p.m. ET

The United States launched a rescue operation this summer to free American hostages held in Syria by the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS), the Department of Defense said Wednesday, but no hostages were found at the target location.

In a statement released a day after the Sunni extremist group released a graphic video showing the

execution of American journalist James Foley, Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Adm. Kirby confirmed that American air and ground forces attempted a rescue to free a number of American hostages held by militants in Syria.

A U.S. government official confirmed Wednesday night that Foley was among the Americans the military attempted to rescue.

“This operation involved air and ground components and was focused on a particular captor network within [ISIS]. Unfortunately, the mission was not successful because the hostages were not present at the targeted location,” Kirby said. “As we have said repeatedly, the United States government is committed to the safety and well-being of its citizens, particularly those suffering in captivity. In this case, we put the best of the United States military in harms’ way to try and bring our citizens home.”

Lisa Monaco, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, said Obama authorized the operation “because it was the national security team’s assessment that these hostages were in danger with each passing day in [ISIS] custody.”

The ground portion of the operation was carried out by U.S. special forces operators. Monaco said the government wouldn’t go into detail on the operation to protect “operational capabilities.”

“The United States government uses the full breadth of our military, intelligence and diplomatic capabilities to bring people home whenever we can,” Kirby said. “The United States will not tolerate the abduction of our people, and will work tirelessly to secure the safety of our citizens and to hold their captors accountable.”

In a statement to reporters Wednesday, Obama referenced the Americans still being held by ISIS. “We keep in our prayers those other Americans who are separated from their families. We will do everything that we can to protect our people and the timeless values that we stand for. “

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Jay-Z and Beyonce Cleared Of Potential U.S. Sanction Violations

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 03:28 PM PDT

The Treasury Department said Wednesday that there was “no indication” that Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and her husband Jay-Z (Sean Carter) violated U.S. sanctions in Cuba in 2013.

The announcement Wednesday comes a year and four months after the famous couple took to a trip to the country to celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary.

The department's inspector general concluded that the Office of Foreign Assets Control, which issues licenses to organizations that sponsor educational exchange programs in Cuba, was "reasonable" for having passed on a formal investigation into the Carters' visit, despite speculation in the media implying suspicious motives.

In April 2013, three Cuban-American Republicans—Sen. Marco Rubio and Reps. **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario Diaz-Balart**—raised concerns that the Administration wasn't properly enforcing the travel regulations between the U.S. and Cuba. At the time, the Treasury Department countered that the Carters' trip was legal under a cultural exchange program.

Brushing off Republican speculation about his Cuban getaway, Jay-Z released "Open Letter," featuring the lyrics: "Obama said, 'Chill, you gonna get me impeached,'" he rapped. "You don't need this s— anyway, chill with me on the beach."

"Politicians never did s— for me except lie to me, distort history," he rapped. "They wanna give me jail time and a fine. Fine, let me commit a real crime."

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Rick Perry Digs in for a Fight

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 02:46 PM PDT

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See Governor Rick Perry's New Mugshot

Rick Perry Booked in Politically Charged Abuse of Power Case

Rick Perry Defiant in Face of Criminal Charges

Rick Perry isn't going quietly. In fact, he says he's not going anywhere at all.

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His 'Broken' Hometown With Holder NBC News

The Texas governor pleaded not guilty Wednesday in **the abuse-of-power case against him**, waiving a formal arraignment that had been scheduled for Friday and signaling again his readiness to fight a prosecution that he has decried as a “farce.” This after Perry, who just days ago was barnstorming Iowa as he weighs a 2016 presidential bid, strode up to the Austin courthouse here on Tuesday to be booked and fingerprinted—and looking every bit the congenial, confident, quintessentially-Texan politician he has played with success for 30 years.

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Ending the War on Fat

“I’m here today because I believe in the rule of law,” Perry said after **having his mugshot taken** Tuesday for booking.

“Like a true West Texan, in the face of adversity Rick Perry is doubling down and meeting his critics head on,” Rice University political scientist Mark Jones said. “Unlike most politicians facing indictments, Perry is reaching out to the media as opposed to running away from it.”

That approach led Perry’s lawyers to hold a briefing on Monday at an Austin hotel, unveiling a stellar team of star lawyers, and advising the media well in advance Tuesday that the governor would be turning himself in for the obligatory mugshot. After the booking, like the good Texan that he is, Perry made a point to thank the Travis County sheriff’s deputies who booked him—evoking a contrast with the torrent of abuse an intoxicated Travis County District Attorney Rosemary Lehmborg unleashed on deputies and jail guards when she was booked on a DUI charge in April, 2013.

Perry’s response to a video of Lehmborg’s tirade, which prompted calls for her resignation from both Democrats and Republicans, is at the heart of the indictment against him last week. Prosecutors say he abused his power by threatening to veto funds for the Public Integrity Unit she heads if she didn’t resign, an assertion that Perry and even some liberals have warned **constitutes prosecutorial overreach** into policing even the most basic posturing in modern politics. But Lehmborg is also at the center of Perry’s public relations strategy so far.

“If I had to do so, I would veto funding for the public integrity unit again,” Perry told a cheering crowd of supporters Tuesday. “I’m going to fight this injustice with every fiber of my being. And we will prevail.”

For Perry, this is a black hat-white hat YouTube range war, with a vodka-guzzling, out-of-control, drunken Democratic prosecutor on one side and a self-styled champion of the people and the rule of law on the other. Perry’s political action committee, RickPAC, unveiled a new ad Tuesday featuring, of course, the Lehmberg video.

“Governor Perry’s public relations strategy is to present this indictment as one blow, low and foul, in an ongoing fight between a disgraced, partisan, Democratic, district attorney and a Republican governor fighting for common decency, the rule of law, and the sanctity of the Texas Constitution,” said Cal Jillson, a political scientist at Southern Methodist University and longtime observer of Texas politics. “This framing is working pretty well, especially among Republican leaders and activists, but it is at best a short term strategy that will be of no use at all if the case goes to trial.”

Perry’s only hope of remaining a viable presidential candidate for 2016 is to get the charges dismissed before trial, Jillson said. “But if he goes to trial, there will be weeks of testimony from Austin insiders describing in most unappetizing terms precisely how the political sausage was made,” Jillson said. “If that happens, it will make **Chris Christie’s ‘Bridggate’ troubles** look like a walk in the park.”

Some Democrats have pressed the argument that Perry’s attempt to dethrone Lehmberg was aimed at derailing an investigation into connections between Perry campaign contributors and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). But other Democrats see the indictment as baseless, including David Botsford, a prominent Travis County Democrat and a member of Perry’s legal team. He was the first to greet Perry at the podium with a handshake and an embrace Tuesday.

Perry’s legal team is a mix of colorful, political, heavyweight and well-connected lawyers. Botsford is regarded as a top criminal lawyer in Texas, but also someone who knows the inner workings and politics of the Travis County courthouse. Lead lawyer Tony Buzbee, who said the Perry prosecution is an example of “banana republic politics,” is a charismatic Houston plaintiff’s attorney. Also on the team are two star Washington attorneys—Ben Ginsberg, who represented President George W. Bush in the 2000 Florida recount, and Bobby Burchfield who has led the Republican National Committee’s successful legal fight against a key campaign finance law. The goal is likely to get the indictment thrown out as quickly as possible, and to get the case moved out of Travis County, where the judges and the majority of jurors are Democrats

While Perry’s stellar legal team plots the maneuvers ahead, Perry needs to focus on a different jury, political analysts say. “The principal problem for Perry is not so much how the indictment is being viewed by Republican caucus and primary voters in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and

elsewhere, but rather the doubts it is creating about Perry's political future among major donors as well as political elites whose endorsements Perry needs to be viable, especially in the early caucus and primary states," Jones said.

"Both the donors and elites are thinking far more about the long game of winning not only the GOP primary, but especially the general election, and are quite likely to view the indictment, regardless of merit, as a significant political liability," Jones said. "If Perry cannot get the charged dismissed, the indictment will be a dark cloud following any Perry 2016 presidential campaign."

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Supreme Court Puts Hold on Virginia Same-Sex Marriages

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 02:01 PM PDT

The Supreme Court effectively barred same-sex couples from marrying in Virginia Wednesday after it delayed a lower court decision that would have lifted the state's gay marriage ban. The appeals court ruling demanded that Virginia recognize out of state same-sex marriages and would have allowed same sex-couples to marry as early as Thursday morning.

Same-sex couples in Virginia must now wait until the Supreme Court decides to either decline to hear the appeal, under which the stay would be waived, or to reach a verdict of its own.

The Supreme Court did not provide an explanation for the order, which was requested by a Virginia court clerk, but it didn't come as a surprise after it put same sex-unions on hold in Utah earlier this year.

The top plaintiff in the case, Tim Bostic, told **USA Today** that he preferred to hear a verdict from the Supreme Court.

"While we are disappointed that marriages will have to wait, this was not unexpected," he said. "We feel that this case deserves to be heard by the Supreme Court and be finally decided for all Americans."

Virginia voted in 2006 to ban gay marriage, but both of Virginia's Democratic senators—**Tim Kaine and Mark Warner**—endorsed the practice last year.

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See Governor Rick Perry's New Mugshot

Posted: 20 Aug 2014 01:40 PM PDT

Texas Governor Rick Perry indictment over charges of alleged abuse of power left him required to something not common of a sitting governor: take a mugshot.

Perry turned himself in to have his mugshot taken on Tuesday at the Travis County Courthouse in Austin, Texas.

Perry ardently objects to charges laid out against him by the Travis County District Attorney. He stated on Tuesday that he remained confident because of his belief that “the rule of law would prevail.”

Perry followed up his trip to the courthouse with **a trip to an ice cream shop.**

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