

# THURSDAY: ANOTHER GRUNGEY ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED

In this roundup: Recalling 25 years of Nirvana's Nevermind, petro-pipeline-economic challenges, lead poisoning, anthrax, and cops gone wild.

Hard to believe it was 25 years ago this past weekend when Seattle grunge band Nirvana released its second and best-selling album Nevermind. This particular collection of songs continues to have deep impact on rock, in no small part because it gave voice to social alienation and frustrations of its decade.

Grunge as a genre petered out by the late 1990s, perhaps in response to the impact of Cobain's suicide, the aging of its audience, and the bursting of the dot com bubble. I've wondered, though, if its overwhelmingly white male angst merely went underground, disrupted by 9/11 and redirected toward the war on terror. The grunge generation was the first to be wholly free of the draft, born toward the end of or after the Vietnam War. It had no common goal, no shared sacrifice, at a time when technology became incredibly powerful and a key driver behind economic growth.

Then the dot com bomb, the towers fell, and the grunge generation was forced to look away from its navel, but not toward a positive aim with measurable success defined by concrete benchmarks. It was offered an identity defined by negatives: not 'radical Muslim', not 'Old Europe', not anything apart from with-Bush/Cheney because it wasn't popular to be against them for the sub-40-year-old crowd.

Now that +20 years have passed, how are the grunge generation defined?

**UPDATE 9:30 AM EDT** – News worth updating and inserting higher in post: Congress avoided a government shutdown while simultaneously funding

Flint, Michigan's water system aid as well as Zika virus response. The amount allocated for Flint will be somewhere between \$170 million (House) and \$220 (Senate). It's not anywhere near the amount needed for complete removal of damaged water mains and lead piping, but it's a good start. Snappy synopsis here.

See also this particularly offensive POS from a hotel and tourism advocate in Puerto Rico, published before the deal. Too bad Mr. Miguel Vega will never have to actually carry a Zika infected fetus; his hand wringing over Zika fear is a perfect example of male privilege, applied on behalf of his employers. The real problem with Zika response has always been a lack of knowledge about the virus as well as inadequate concern for the welfare of citizens – not fear.  
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#### **Fossil Feud**

All related to oil, all equally distressing.

- OPEC to cut oil output (Bloomberg) – The move supports the Saudis' need for more cash. Russia will tweak its output levels after OPEC has finished setting a firmer level, though it pumped a record amount in September, tripling August's daily output.
- Iran's oil minister described as 'happy' (Bloomberg via Twitter) – Bijan Zanganeh's reaction as the OPEC conference in Algiers ended Wednesday.
- Congress overrode Obama's veto of 9/11 bill (Insurance

Journal) – In spite of the White House's effort to kill The Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), the bill will become law after today's rare override. The bill allows 9/11 victims and their families to sue Saudi Arabia for damages. Passage of the bill may cause the Saudis to delay sales of \$10 billion of an international 'megabond' as investors could be put off by risks to RSA from lawsuits. But if oil prices go up due to production cuts, the bonds may not be as critical to RSA's plans.

- Reps. Grijalva and Ruiz say Dakota Access Pipeline approvals did not comply with law (Indian Country) – After a meeting between Democratic Reps. Raúl Grijalva and Raul Ruiz and representatives of Standing Rock Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux, Lakota, Apache tribes late last week, the representatives called for the Army Corps of Engineers' permits to be revoked. Full assessments for environmental and historical impact had not been completed before the permits

were issued; ACOE may have acted under the influence of pipeline and oil companies. Grijalva and Ruiz are members of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs. It's not clear what will happen next given the anticipated rise in oil prices and the impending general election.

- Monbiot op-ed: Fossil fuels must remain in the ground to meet Paris Agreement (Guardian-UK) – Fossil fuel industry's own data shows that current extraction rates and plans will push global temperatures above 1.5C-2C, undermining the Paris agreement on climate change. The only sure way to comply with the temperature goals is to stop extracting fossil fuels.

Use the anticipated increase in oil prices as incentive to reduce its use. Put on the big person's panties and say no to pipelines and more extraction. Push for incentives to conserve while developing alternative energy. It's long past time.

#### **Miscellany**

- Police across U.S. misusing databases for personal reasons (AP via Salt Lake

Tribune) – After conducting illegal searches of confidential information including addresses and Social Security numbers, police have been punished hundreds of times over the last three years. The article says the number of unauthorized database searches identified during reporting are “unquestionably an undercount.” It’s not clear from this report if these databases also include information gathered from surveillance including Stingray use

- CDC’s flawed report left East Chicago IN children exposed to lead (Reuters) – Not clear how or why CDC’s 5-year-old report claimed “nearly 100 percent” of children’s blood lead levels had been tested in an area once home to a lead refinery. In reality, only 5 percent to 20 percent had been tested, and 22 percent of children around the West Calumet housing development area tested positive for elevated blood lead. This situation is so fishy; in my opinion, the Department of

Justice should look more deeply into this case and not merely assist with obtaining settlement funding. Somebody inside the CDC did more than omit data or misstate conclusions.

- Mystery of USSR anthrax outbreak uncovered (Twitter) – Lifehacker's science and health writer Beth Skwarecki tweeted a brief story about a Soviet-era anthrax epidemic. It's a quick and fascinating read (unrelated to the recent anthrax outbreak, to the best of my knowledge).

Quite enough without adding a longer read or listen, huh? Catch you later!