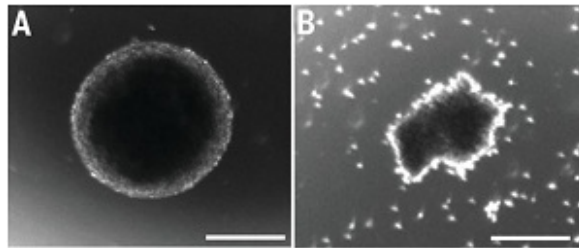


BRINGING OUT THE DEAD: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS EFFECT ON HUMAN TISSUE



[(A) Control neurosphere
(B) Zika-infected neurosphere

Source: Science, 13MAY2016

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/352/6287/816.full>]

Because unproven claims persist that chemical exposure – specifically the pyridine-based pesticide pyriproxyfen – causes the birth defects seen in children born to women exposed to Zika virus, I am bringing out the dead, laying out the bodies.

By ‘bodies’ I mean sharing here pictures of cells you see in the embedded photos from a peer-reviewed study published this May.

In these images you’ll see the damage done to human tissue in lab conditions.

No pyriproxyfen was present.

How Researchers Studied Zika

This is the methodology researchers used:

1) The researchers used human stem cells to create neurospheres – the kind of cells which turns into nerve and brain tissue in an actual embryo.

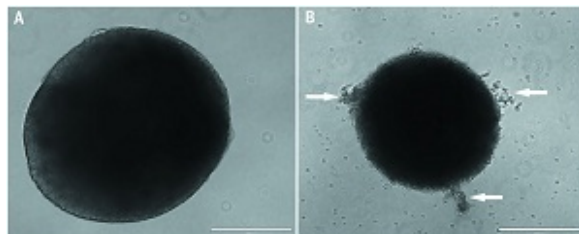
- 2) They set aside control samples of neurospheres which were not infected.
- 3) They infected test samples neurospheres with Brazilian Zika virus.
- 4) They observed the changes in the infected neurospheres.
- 5) They compared them to the uninfected control samples.
- 6) They wrote and published a report on their findings.

The image above is the best example from their report of the difference between Zika-infected cells and the uninfected test samples.

What Researchers Found in this Study

In short, Zika inhibits, damages, and kills infected neurospheres.

This is what we can expect to happen to a fetus' brain or nerve tissues when infected by Zika under the right conditions during early pregnancy.



[(A) Control mock-infected organoid
(B) Zika-infected organoid (damage noted at arrows)]

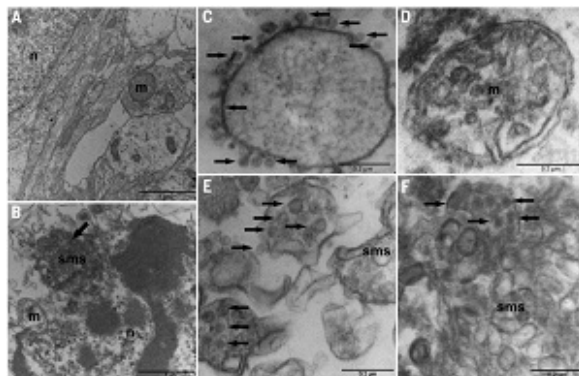
What Else Researchers Found in this Study

The researchers also conducted a very similar test on human brain organoids. These are not single neurospheres but neuro-tissue grown from stem cells so that they form a model like a tiny brain. Not a brain, a tissue-based model

of a brain.

They used the same six steps above using a mock-infected model, a Zika-infected model, and a dengue virus-infected model. (Dengue fever is caused by a flavivirus – the same family of viruses to which Zika and yellow fever belong.) Researchers found Zika virus caused similar destructive damage on these larger models while limiting their growth; they did not find the same damage or destruction in the dengue-infected models and none in the mock-infected control models. Zika alone damaged neurological tissue models.

Researchers also studied neural stem cells (NSCs) – the simplest neuro tissue model – and found similar results in which the Zika virus killed off NSCs. Studying NSCs, neurospheres, and organoids, the researchers observed Zika's actions on different stages of neuro tissue maturity. In each of these models, from the simplest (NSCs) to the most complex (organoids), Zika was destructive.



[ZIKV (Zika virus) induces death in human neurospheres. These micrographs show the ultrastructure of mock- and ZIKV-infected neurospheres after 6 days in vitro.

(A) Mock-infected neurosphere showing cell processes and organelles.

(B) ZIKV-infected neurosphere showing a pyknotic nucleus, swollen mitochondria, smooth membrane structures, and viral envelopes (arrow).

(C) Viral envelopes on the cell surface (arrows).

- (D) Swollen mitochondria.
- (E) Viral envelopes inside the endoplasmic reticulum (arrows).
- (F) Viral envelopes close to smooth membrane structures (arrows).]

Other Research on Zika Using Mouse Tissue

Three other studies published in May this year using mice or mouse tissues likewise showed evidences of neurological tissue and brain damage or growth suppression when infected by Zika virus. The studies came from research facilities in Brazil, China, and the U.S. – and in each study, *pyriproxyfen was not included*. The Zika-infected specimens showed damage and the control specimens did not.

The study from Brazil at the University of São Paulo also included research using human stem cells, comparing a Brazilian strain of Zika against an African strain:

Beltrão-Braga, Muotri, and their colleagues also grew brain organoids from human stem cells and infected these in vitro models with the Brazilian and African strains of the virus. In the human mini brains, both strains of the virus caused cell death, but the Brazilian strain appeared to also interfere with the formation of cortical layers. The virus didn't replicate in the brain organoids grown from chimpanzee stem cells, suggesting **it may have adapted to human tissue**, the researchers noted in their paper.

Emphasis mine. Research published earlier showed Zika has already mutated rapidly after arriving in Brazil, with at least nine variants found inside the last two years.

What's Next in Zika Research

What researchers don't yet know, for starters: How Zika works – how does it damage or kill cells? When exactly does the virus do the most damage? What mechanisms interfere with Zika's operations and can they be used in vaccines or drug therapy? What makes Zika different from dengue or other flavivirus? What does Zika do to adult neuro tissue to cause Guillain-Barre Syndrome? Which adults are most at risk? Will the different mutations in Brazil respond differently to vaccines? How long can humans carry live Zika virus? Has the virus mutated and become transmissible by bodily fluids or aerosol? These are just a few of the questions we still have about Zika.

There are some good guesses about Zika's mechanisms – like this hypothesis focusing on vitamin A storage in the liver, which also suggests Zika may negatively affect liver cells (yet another avenue of research needed). But will a vaccine targeting this activity work for other flavivirus, too? What if this guess is wrong; are there other approaches we've yet to hear about?

We won't have any of these answers in a reasonable period of time if we don't have adequate funding.

It's not just birth defects we are talking about here, either. Look at the damage in those images again; this virus not only damages fetal nerve and brain tissue, it kills fetuses. Infants born with Zika-related defects may be blind and may lead short, painful lives. And it may kill and maim adults, too, if they develop a serious case of Zika-related Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

Let's not bring out any more Zika dead.

(Note: Forgive me for the simplistic terms used in this post if you have a background in science. I had to make this as brief and succinct as possible for those who don't have that background.)

Source:

Zika virus impairs growth in human neurospheres and brain organoids

BY PATRICIA P. GARCEZ, ERICK CORREIA LOIOLA, RODRIGO MADEIRO DA COSTA, LUIZA M. HIGA, PABLO TRINDADE, RODRIGO DELVECCHIO, JULIANA MINARDI NASCIMENTO, RODRIGO BRINDEIRO, AMILCAR TANURI, STEVENS K. REHEN

SCIENCE13 MAY 2016 : 816-818

Zika virus infection in cell culture models damages human neural stem cells to limit growth and cause cell death.

URL:

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/352/6287/816.full>

Zika Studies Using Mice:

F. Cugola et al., "The Brazilian Zika virus strain causes birth defects in experimental models," Nature, doi:10.1038/nature18296, 2016.

C. Li et al., "Zika virus disrupts neural progenitor development and leads to microcephaly in mice," Cell Stem Cell, doi:10.1016/j.stem.2016.04.017, 2016.

J. Miner et al., "Zika virus infection during pregnancy in mice causes placental damage and fetal demise," Cell, doi:10.1016/j.cell.2016.05.008, 2016.

FRIDAY: THE END OF THE WORLD

*I wake up in the morning and I wonder
Why ev'rything is the same as it was
I can't understand, no, I can't
understand
How life goes on the way it does*

– excerpt, The End of the World, written
by Arthur Kent and Sylvia Dee

Jazz version of this song first released by Skeeter Davis in 1962 performed here by Postmodern Jukebox's Scott Bradlee and band with Niia's vocals.

A few people in my timeline have asked over the last several months, "Is this the end of the world, or does it just feel like like it?"

It's the end of *something*, that's for sure.

Z is for Zika

- New York City: First baby born with brain defect attributed to Zika (The Hill) – Infant delivered with microcephaly to a mother who contracted Zika outside NYC.
- Two cases of Zika in Florida may have been non-travel, non-sexual transmission (NBC News) – With one case identified in Miami-Dade and another in Broward county, Florida is checking for the possibility local mosquitoes may have been the vector of infection. They are also confirming sexual transmission is not a vector. So far there have been 15 recorded cases of infection by sexual transmission in the U.S. and one by lab accident.
- Brazilian researchers found signs of Zika in non-Aedes mosquitoes

(ScientificAmerican) – Researchers at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Brazil first reported in 1Q2016 that the common *Culex quinquefasciatus* ‘house mosquito’ species may have been responsible for some Zika infections. In general, *Culex* genus are hardier and bite at night. Members of that same mosquito genus are also found widely across the U.S., unlike the *Aedes* species.

- ‘This is no way to fight an epidemic,’ says CDC’s Director (NatGeo) – What he said. The epidemic is coming, it’s just a matter of time. It’s going to happen like West Nile virus, only the results will be worse than the +47,000 cases and +1,800 deaths from WNV over 16 years.

I can’t make this clear enough to Congress: you’re playing with lives here, and it’s going to be ugly. It will affect your families if anyone is of childbearing age. I haven’t seen anything in the material I’ve read to date that says definitively studies are underway to verify transmission from Brazil’s *Culex quinquefasciatus* to humans. There’s a study on the most common U.S.’ *Culex pipiens* species which showed weak transmission capabilities, but once it’s proven *quinquefasciatus* can transmit, it’s just a matter of time before more effective *pipiens* pick up and transmit the virus, and they

may already have done so based on the two cases in Florida. GET OFF YOUR BUTTS AND FUND ADEQUATE RESEARCH PRONTO – or risk paying for it in increased health care and other post-birth aid for decades.

Still Brexin' it

- Johnson: “mistake-prone former journalist twice exposed for committing adultery” (IBTimes) – Wow, I missed this last week about the diplomatic cables Wikileaks leaked. Amazing how much these descriptions of Boris sound like Donald Trump. And yet PM Theresa May appointed him Foreign Secretary.
- SNP's Angus Robertson: Scotland “on the brink of independence” (The Telegraph) – Robertson, Leader of the Scottish National Party in the House of Commons, is bucking for deputy slot to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon – consider the motive. Sturgeon has been laying groundwork for another independence referendum if there is no other way to keep Scotland in the EU.
- Mild recession forecast for UK post-Brexit (Bloomberg) – No surprise whatsoever. Especially since data

showing retraction in manufacturing and services spurred another drop in the pound; a potential rate decrease by Bank of England now possible to prevent further slide in growth.

Clean-up duty

- Looking for MH370 in all the wrong places – for two years (IBTimes) – Bad suppositions? Or misled? Who knows, but the debris found so far now suggests the plane may have glided across the ocean in its final moments rather than plummeting nose first.
- Enbridge settles \$177 million for 2010 oil pipeline rupture (ICTMN) – Seems light for the largest ever oil spill inside the continental U.S., and their subsequent half-assed attempts to clean up the mess. Check the photo in the story and imagine that happening under the Straits of Mackinac between Lakes Huron and Michigan. How did it take them so long not to know what had happened and where?
- Broadband companies now have a real competitive threat in

Google Fiber (USAToday) – It's beginning to make a dent in some large markets where Google Fiber's 1Gb service has already been installed. But it is slow going, don't expect it in your neighborhood soon. You're stuck with your existing slowpoke carriers for a while longer.

- Cable lobby counters FCC pressure on set-top boxes (Ars Technica) – Sure, they'll yield to the FCC on set-top boxes, but they won't offer DVR service and each cable provider with 1 million subscribers or more will be responsible for their own apps. Cable lobby claims copyright issues are a concern with the DVR service; is that a faint whiff of MPAA I smell?

Beach-bound longread

Check out this piece in WIRED: David Chang's Unified Theory of Deliciousness. I'm hungry after reading just a portion of it.

Hasta luego, mi amigas. Catch you Monday if the creek don't rise.

THURSDAY: HOTTER THAN HELL

Have a little indie synthpop if your day isn't hot enough. The artist Dua Lipa lives in London; she originally moved to the United Kingdom in the 1990s with her parents who are Kosovar-Albanian. Imagine a UK to which artists like Lipa cannot easily immigrate.

Money, money, money

- HSBC's global head of Forex trading in London arrested at JFK on Tuesday (Bloomberg) – Mark Johnson was picked up before his flight by the feds; his counterpart, Stuart Scott, HSBC's former head of currency trading in Europe, has also been charged with Johnson for conspiracy to manipulate currency based on insider information. The transaction on which the case is based took place in 2011, earning HSBC \$8 million on a \$3.1 billion deal. Gee, I wonder if these guys worked the pre- and post-Brexit fall of the pound.
- Mastercard snaps up UK's VocaLink for \$920M (Businesswire) – Should probably keep a tally of UK businesses bought while pound is still down from

pre-referendum highs. VocaLink gives Mastercard huge reach in payroll and household bill processing across UK and access to a substantive majority of UK consumer data.

- Subzero bond yields: who'd have predicted this? (Bloomberg) – Analysis of overall trends this year, including flights to safety and their effect on the market. Still trying to wrap my head around subzero bond yields; does this make sense to pay for safekeeping without expectation of increase in value at the end? What might this do to consumption and growth?

Daily dose of cyber

- Forbidden Research: fixing “leaky” cellphones (MIT Media Lab) – Electrical engineer/hacker Andrew “bunnie” Huang and NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden published a paper presented at today’s MIT’s Forbidden Research event, outlining their work countering surveillance abuse by law enforcement. Journalists in particular are targets for surveillance; their

cellphones “leak” all kinds of information about them and their location which airplane mode does not shield. Huang and Snowden propose a method for monitoring radio transmissions by a cellphone, including GPS, and a means for killing the transmissions. Abstract here, and the paper itself here. Very straightforward reads even for the non- to low-tech audience.

- Dead man’s prints brought back from the dead (Fusion)
 - Law enforcement approached a Michigan State University professor Anil Jain and his PhD student Sunpreet Arora and asked them to recreate a dead man’s fingerprints in order to unlock his phone. There are few details disclosed about the case – not even which law enforcement agency made the ask – but the phone belonged to a murder victim and may contain information about his murderer. Or so the story says.
- UK’s largest internet provider suffers two days of massive outages (TechRadar)
 - Outages have been blamed

on power failures, but no additional information offered on reasons for power loss. Coincidentally, a C1 solar flare which began on July 17 caused radio disruption and aurora over the last 15-24 hours – might have made the situation worse.

- France's National Data Protection Commission says Microsoft Windows 10 operating system gathers too much personal data (Libération + BetaNews) – Surprised *La Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés* (CNIL) haven't cuffed up Microsoft sooner given every version of Windows "phoned home" within information about its users and devices when patching and updating. Why is it Windows 10 in particular doesn't comply with their Data Protection Act – is it the sniffing of users' navigation data? Microsoft responded to CNIL's complaint, not denying the claim but only saying it will work with CNIL on a solution. Right, then.

Tonight's dinner and a movie: Jujubes and Ghostbusters. Yum. Stay cool, look after elderly neighbors and pets who need a reprieve from the heat.

WEDNESDAY: HEAT OF PASSION

Crazy stuff happens when there's a full moon like last night's. Crazier stuff happens under heat and pressure. Brace yourselves as the heat dome slides from the southwest to Midwest and east this week.

Hot wheels

- A look at the whys behind Volkswagen's Dieselgate scandal (DailyBeast) – Interesting read in which German and VW culture loom large as contributing factors behind the fraud that is 'Clean Diesel'.
- New York, Maryland, Massachusetts each file lawsuits against VW (Reuters) – Filings accuse VW of violating states' environmental laws. The suits claim VW's executives knew 'clean diesel' technology would not meet states' environmental standards, and that former VW CEO Martin Winterkorn knew about this

failure since 2006. The suits also claim VW employees willfully tampered with evidence after they were told an order to freeze documents was impending. A DOJ criminal investigation is still underway.

- VW set aside another \$2.4B (BBC) – In addition to the previous \$15.3B, the additional amount was set aside to address “further legal risks predominately arising in North America.” Hmm...was that about the states’ environmental lawsuits now popping up?
- And yet VW’s stock price popped up because profits (TheStreet) – Uh-huh. Short-term churn, unsustainable, because VW hasn’t yet seen half of its legal exposures given the number of states’ lawsuits so far, let alone other countries’ claims. VW expects sales to lag over last year, too, not to mention all the other factors increasing market instability.
- EU Competition Commission busts European truck cartel with \$3.2B fine (Bloomberg) – Interesting push-pull inside this story: Scania

AB, a Swedish truckmaker owned by Volkswagen, has been penalized after MAN SE, another Volkswagen subsidiary, squealed to the EU and got its \$1.2B fine waived. Wonder if VW execs did the math on that in advance? Another interesting tidbit is Volvo's reduction in production here in North America and abroad, blamed on stagnant market; this says something about consumption.

- Mercedes' self-driving buses pass 20-kilometer trip test (The Verge) – IMO, self-driving mass transport should have priority over passenger cars; there's not much difference between a semi-autonomous bus on a scheduled route and a streetcar on a track like those in New Orleans or San Francisco, and we know they are successful. This distance test could mean a lot to cities the size of Detroit; now will U.S. transportation companies meet Mercedes' challenge?

Miscellany

- Feds seizing assets related to Malaysian theft,

including *Wolf of Wall Street* (THR) – DOJ tracking down the \$1B stolen from Malaysia; destinations of cash may suffer asset forfeiture including rights to artworks like recent pop music and films. Background on the IMDb scandal here (not to be confused with Amazon's subsidiary IMDb.com).

- Oil bidness, part 1 – UK edition: Oil price crash plus Brexit accelerates capping of North Sea well heads (Bloomberg) – The uncertainty of UK's future plans makes the country a good opportunity especially when the pound is low to shut down wells. It'll only cost more to do the same when UK comes out of its funk, and the well heads must close eventually due to falling demand and a long-term glut expected. Oh, and Scotland. Don't forget the risk of costly transition between a UK pound, the euro, and a possible Scottish pound in the future.
- Oil bidness, part 2 – Russian edition: Oil price below \$40/BBL will help

Russia (Bloomberg) – Okay, this one made me laugh my butt off. Uh-huh, less cash is exactly what Putin wants in order to make Russia great again. Right. The real crux is and has been Russia's access to cash for their defense (offense?), and it's not Russia who wants less cash spent on that.

- BEFORE meeting with UK's PM May, Scotland's FM Sturgeon suggested another indy ref vote next year (The Scotsman) – I think this is the match-up we'll want to watch, the volley of words between Sturgeon and May as they jockey for best position. Sturgeon has the upper hand, period; she'd already had a chat with the EU about remaining in the community before May was named PM, though Spain was a sticking point (because of their own potential breakaway state, Catalonia).
- Student researching WiFi brings center of Brussels to a screeching halt (Le Soir) – Good news, bad news story: Security took note of the young man wearing too long a coat for the day's heat and

halted traffic in the city's center as counterterror teams were dispatched. Turns out the guy was just studying the city's WiFi. Good that security wasn't goofing off, bad that even looking odd while researching can stop a major city.

Stay cool – I'm considering popcorn for dinner at the local cineplex this evening until the sun sets and the temperature drops outside. Dinner tomorrow and Friday might be Jujubes and Good-and-Plenty.

TUESDAY: CRAZY

*Come on now, who do you, who do you, who
do you, who do you think you are,
Ha ha ha bless your soul
You really think you're in control*

Well, I think you're crazy
I think you're crazy
I think you're crazy
Just like me

– excerpt, Crazy by Gnarl's Barkley

Why'd I pick this song today? Oh, no reason. Just kind of popped into my head while I was reading through my aggregators.

Ahem. Anyhow...not much time again today, lot of hurry-up-and-wait stuff demanding my time.

Turkey curry buffet

- Absolutely insane number of educators, ministry officials, police, more sacked by government (ConflictNews) – More than 45,500 people fired or ordered to resign, largest number of which are educators. You can call me crazy all you want, but this is the real coup underway. What the hell is Erdoğan planning to do with the people he's cleansing from their jobs across the entire country? Nothing more yet about Erdoğan on death penalty for putschists.
- RIPE Network Coordination Centre analyzed Turkey's internet traffic volume during coup attempt (RIPE) – Looks like telcos throttled traffic independently by roughly 50%, and not a single, centralized government function. Explains the hit-or-miss quality of access reported.
- Wikileaks announced they would release government emails today (Wikileaks) – However they are currently reporting attacks on their site.
- Tick-tock of the coup events (The Guardian) – “It was

incredibly well organised actually...It could have succeeded," said prime minister Binali Yıldırım's senior adviser, Cemalettin Haşimi. Sure. Right. There were so many damned holes – key being the F-16s which did not force Erdoğan's plane out of the air away from Turkey – there's no way it ever had a chance.

- Turkey's pressure on Kurds increasing (Guernica) – Observations by activists of the Kurdish movement struggling for self-determination under Turkey's increasing authoritarianism.

Quick lap around the track

- BREXIT: IMF cuts UK's growth forecast (The Guardian) – Really, what the hell did the Leavers expect? Put the brain trust and creative sector into a tailspin as so many are immigrants, and ask them to sustain or expand growth? Completely unrealistic.
- US-UK RELATIONS: Presser today with Johnson and Kerry (The Guardian) – You watch it. I can't even with that lying hack Johnson – he spun more crap right to journos's

faces. And nobody takes these two to task over most recent bombings in Syria or Yemen.

- ZIKA: CDC studying unusual case of UT caretaker infected by Zika (CDC.gov) – The elderly Utah man who died of Zika recently somehow infected his caretaker with the virus without sexual contact. Mosquitoes may have been involved, but UT isn't home to known carriers *Aedes aegypti* and *albopictus* species. The deceased, however, had a viral load 100,000 times greater than the average Zika patient. What?!
- EARTHQUAKES: Earthquake swarm continues in San Benito County, California (NBC Bay Area) – 24 quakes in 24 hours based on report published about two hours ago. The affected area is west of Silicon Valley and the San Andreas fault line.
- POLICE REFORMS: Hire more women: one of several known solutions to police racism and abuse (Yes! Magazine) – Take note of the gender of police accused and charged with abuse and killing of

unarmed civilians. Body cameras, greater diversity matching community, and openness to research also included in solutions.

That's all I have time for now. See you tomorrow!

MONDAY: MAGIC

You want some magic this Monday to start your week? Check this short film Vorticity by Mike Olbinski. If you can launch it in full screen or cast it to a television, even better, and I hope you have decent speakers for the sound. Mike's wife is a saint, a wholly different kind of magic off screen to support a guy who does this stuff.

Under the gun here today, too much real world stuff to check off my To Do List. Only a quick list of stuff worth looking at.

Kudos

Bravo to Michigan's Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Flint Township) who filed the Families of Flint Act last week to provide \$1.5 billion in relief funding for water system repairs, additional health care, monitoring and education, as well as economic development to support the struggling city. Co-sponsors include U.S. Reps. Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak), Debbie Dingell (D-Dearborn MI), Brenda Lawrence (D-Southfield MI), and John Conyers (D-Detroit), along with 167 other House Dems.

Lean on House GOP members to do the right thing and support this bill when they are next in session in August.

Leftovers

Couple of things screwed up or left

unfulfilled before Congress left town:

- Some of the most important federal highways in the country stiffed on federal transportation grants (PressTelegram) – Southern California's highways and railways include service to the two largest container ports in the U.S. at Los Angeles and Long Beach. Southern CA Dem representatives have asked Obama-appointee Anthony Foxx, secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, why he stiffed them. Well, us. All of us. So much of the imported products we use every day cam through those two ports, not to mention produce shipping from southern CA to the rest of the country. Come on, Foxx. Fix this, stat.
- Vaccines for Zika virus now ready for human testing (PRI) – Gee, it'd be awfully nice if GOP-led Congress had done something effective about funding for Zika research, let alone adequate funding to prevent its spread including birth control.

Quick List

- Chinese group's bid for Norway's browser company Opera falls through—but WAIT (Reuters) – The mobile and desktop browser were sold for \$600M, while the rest of the business including Mediaworks, apps and games, and Opera TV were not sold. Terms must be completed before a 3Q2016 deadline in order to close the deal.
- 62 bidders qualified for 600Mhz spectrum auction, including Comcast (Ars Technica) – AT&T, T-Mobile USA, US Cellular, Verizon Wireless, and Dish Network's wireless subsidiary are among the bidders.
- Japan's Softbank bid for UK-based chipmaker ARM (TechCrunch) – One of the first big deals after the Brexit crash of the pound, making the chipmaker a bargain. Wonder if Japan will keep the chipmaker where it is or move it abroad to consolidate with another tech industry holding.
- Enthusiasm at 'Women for Trump' event palpable

(@PennyRed via Twitter) – That is, if you go and shake the hand of the lone media intern in the nearly empty room, you'll feel the excitement. Okay, perhaps 'enthusiasm' is too strong a word...

- Erdogan continues removing elected officials as Istanbul's Sisli district deputy mayor shot in the head (The Independent) – Political cleansing, that's what this is, with roughly 7,000 persons now arrested or detained. That Erdogan had a list prepared of persons who would object to his unilateral enlargement of powers is obvious. Secretary of State John Kerry said Turkey's status in NATO is now at risk.
- Hostage standoff in Armenia enters second day (Twitter) – News about this situation remains extremely thin.
- Another beautiful SpaceX launch and landing overnight (SpaceX via YouTube) – You need a little mood boost? Watch the video at the link, especially at 25:14. Totally adore the youthful energy at mission control when the Falcon reusable rocket lands

sticks its landing again,
this time on land.

Catch you tomorrow, gotta' dash!

YOU, TOO, ARMENIA?

Come on, give us a break, will you? Most of us are still digging out of news on France's latest terror attack, the 28-pages released on Friday, and Turkey's so-called coup. Couldn't you wait until later this coming week?

Apparently not.

Reliable reports are even more scarce than for Turkey as Armenia is even more aggressive in its monitoring and policing of social media. What reports have emerged indicate an organized, armed hostage-taking event demanding the release of a political prisoner rather than a coup.

Persons identified as opposition sympathizers have been taken into custody; numbers taken by law enforcement or military are not available. Police snipers appear in photos.

Armenian media had not been reporting on the event and social media content is rather thin. Some Twitter accounts claim social media is not throttled, but these same accounts may be operated by government agents.

Latest reports indicate state forces are on standby, 'pending orders for action'.

Meanwhile, in Turkey...

The Turkish commander of Incirlik air base was taken into custody on charges of complicity with the insurgents – some reports say 'detained', others say 'arrested'.

Roughly 24 hours ago, power had been cut to the air base and flights in and out suspended. The

Turkish government suspected the base had been used for fueling so-called rebel aircraft. Flights for anti-ISIS efforts resumed a little over an hour ago.

Erdoğan's government has now rounded up approximately 6000 on suspicion of complicity with the so-called coup. President Erdoğan is calling for the return of the death penalty. Application of the death penalty could halt Turkey's accession to the EU as the death penalty is illegal under EU laws.

I won't even get in to the weirdness of Erdoğan's claims the coup was led by an ex-pat moderate cleric living in Pennsylvania's Poconos. Or the empty gestures of UK's new foreign secretary about the events in Turkey.

(Personally, I find it really hard to believe a conspiracy of ~6000 persons would be completely undetectable in advance.)

It's nearly 2:00 a.m. local time in Tokyo. The Nikkei 225 opens in seven hours. Watch oil and natural gas prices. Who might benefit from all this volatility?

STUFFING TURKEY

Watching events unfold in Turkey last night was surreal. It was difficult to tell the various players apart, let alone pick credible voices.

By midnight EDT I was skeptical – more than I usually am.

– President Tayyip Erdoğan was allegedly in the air at some point, allegedly asked for asylum in Germany which allegedly wasn't granted. He allegedly flew back into Istanbul airport. Did he not seek asylum anywhere else?

– Social media was throttled or shut off in some reports, but Erdoğan managed to Facetime to an

audience which is ostensibly throttled, in order to call them to defend him by rallying in the streets.

- Fighter jets and armed helicopters were flying overhead, but Erdoğan called civilians to rally in the streets? Some civilians were killed by aircraft firing on them after Erdoğan's call to rally.

- No political party claimed responsibility for the relatively small number of "insurgents" conducting the coup. For some reason, the military members responsible for the coup undressed and disarmed on the Bosphorus bridge.

- Earlier today, Erdoğan removed 2,745 prosecutor and judges from duty.

- Reports claim U.S. intelligence was taken by surprise by the coup.

- Electricity has been cut to the U.S. Incirlik air force base, where a number of nuclear gravity bombs are kept. The bombs are not an immediate threat (read the thread at that link), but who knows this?

Let's not forget the recent attack on the Istanbul airport, responsibility for which has only been assigned by Turkish officials.

The whole thing stinks, like a Thanksgiving Day bird left out of the fridge a couple days too long.

FRIDAY: TEH STOOPID, STILL BURNS [UPDATE-2]

Teh stoopid. So much, a bumper crop today. Put on your hip waders while we listen to a little ska-jazz from The Specials. *[Go to bottom of*

post for update.]

LAST DAY OF THE MONTH

Don't stand in front of the exit doors today at the House of Representatives. You've been warned.

Toobz filled with stoopid

- Bankster boss canned employee with 'soccer injury' otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's Disease (Bloomberg) – Classy. Super chill. Tells you how close this boss was with his staff.
- Sure, I read the TOS, he said as he signs away his firstborn (Naked Security) – Come on now, confess. You've just checked the box, right? Especially on bloody Adobe updates.
- Lamar sez fraud investigations squelch free speech (Ars Technica) – Sure, if you believe lying to investors for decades isn't fraud and is protected speech. As if we needed more proof Texas' Rep. Lamar Smith's in the bag for Exxon. Such a damned shame he's leading the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. Be sure to wave as he runs out the door today.

- UK's PM May met today with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to preserve the Kingdom's unity (Bloomberg) – Yeah, this must have been a bunch of malarkey; how can May promise what the Scots want, which is to remain in the EU? Does May think the Scots are stupid or what? Wish I knew the Scots' Gaelic word for bullshit.
- Old sperm more prone to genetic defects (The Guardian) – Oh gross. Reading this I learned old dude Mick Jagger is the poster boy for old sperm. Yuck. Brain bleach, stat.
- Donald Trump and Mike Pence, governor of the state where a woman can be prosecuted and incarcerated for a miscarriage. Do I need to say more or even provide a link? I think not. Okay, maybe this one.

Hélas, Nice

I've not forgotten Nice. I can't go there.

Picking my way through French language news to read in detail about the deaths of children and teenagers is a hard limit for me.

With children's blood on its hands from wars to drone killings, the U.S. has no moral authority here. It has doubled down on its authoritarian, racist, kill-its-way-out-of-trouble approach to foreign policy. What can I write here which

isn't utter hypocrisy?

The only observations I can make are that the attackers may be ramping up, as the numbers and methodology testify. 84 dead including 10 children and teens, 52 injured and 25 on life support, all hurt or killed by a driver who was not a known terror suspect. A civilian stopped the attacker by grabbing his hands as he aimed a gun at human targets. *Que Dieu soit miséricordieux sur Nice.*

Smarter, kinder finish

And now to purge the taste of stupid before I start my weekend...

- Look! Low wage workers can actually have a 401K and paid vacation (FastCompany) – Nail salon chains have increasingly become cesspools of borderline slave labor, mostly because clients were in the dark about the real cost of getting their manicures. 'Starbucking' personal service by increasing the price and improving workers' conditions could put an end to the ugliness of getting nails done. What other service industries could benefit from such an approach?
- Big food companies paying for farmers to switch to organic production (NYT) – It's about time; the bottleneck to getting more organic foods to the market

has been the risky time and expense farmers must invest before their first certified harvest. (Keep in mind that labeling organic products as such is paramount to realizing returns.)

- Who knew? Jimmy Carter saved the Space Shuttle (Ars Technica) – Got a quote straight from Carter on this, too. Dig the photo of the original Star Trek cast visiting NASA.
- Pet cat saves woman and family from house fire (The Guardian) – Aw. Hope little Tink gets all the fresh fish she could ever want.

That's a wrap, have a safe and restful weekend, including all you peeps at #NN16. Back at it on Monday.

UPDATE – 2:50 p.m. EDT –

The previously-classified pages of the 9/11 report have been released, conveniently during the afternoon on a Friday smack in the middle of the summer during a general election year. Can you say 'news dump'? Here's a link to the document at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's site (pdf). Knock yourselves out with this beach read. Note the bit about the alleged Saudi intelligence officers, too.

UPDATE – 5:15 p.m. EDT –

An apparent coup is underway in Turkey; it began with reports of militarized road blocks about two hours ago. Social media platforms have had spotty service though landlines appear to be working. The Erdogan government initially denied

a coup was in progress; media outlets in Turkey may not be accurately reporting events. Many European news outlets are still focused on Nice, France. Airports have been closed and a curfew declared. U.S. Embassy has asked U.S. citizens to shelter in place and stay indoors.

For more information about events in Turkey, here's a selection of active Twitter feeds:

Tweets by YourAnonNews

Tweets by efekerem

Tweets by zeynep

Tweets by WashingtonPoint

Tweets by Boutaina

Recent report at Aid works about Turkey's treatment of refugees at [this link](#).

If you have friends and family in Turkey, recommend they use Tor browser to follow news – [this link](#) in case Tor is blocked. See also [this tweet](#) from Tor about accessing social media.

THURSDAY: BAD GIRLS

One thing before I go any further...look just above these words, below this post's title and to the right of the date of publication. See the name 'Rayne'? That's me, that's my byline. Please note there are multiple contributors here at emptywheel. The entire site is eponymously named for its owner, Marcy Wheeler, whose online name and byline is the same as this blog. Check the byline on our posts if you haven't done so in the past. You'll note we have different voices and opinions, different writing styles. I tend to be the most open about my dislike for what the Republican Party has become since 1978, when I last toyed with being Republican. Marcy and the rest of the crew tend to be more generous or less open in their vituperation. Take note of the byline when you read and comment, thanks.

Still indulging in female artist K-pop, choosing this video for a very specific reason...

TWO DAYS

That's it, what's left of today and all day tomorrow – that's all the U.S. House will be in session for July. Outstanding job this week trashing the EPA with bullshit riders, GOP members. Way to fucking go with extending your run serving corporations ahead of the people.

Tick-tock.

BAD GIRL (UK edition)

After today's wash list of badness, I can hardly wait to hear what comes of May's visit on Friday to Scotland.

- New UK PM Theresa May doubles down on the stupid naming Priti Patel to Dept of International Development (The Independent) – In spite (or because) of Priti Patel's 2013 opinion that the DofID should be eliminated and focus aimed solely on trade. Patel's been referred to as a "Tory 'robot'."
- David Davis, named 'Brexit Czar', already beating drums for trade negotiations now () – taking an offensive stance on Article 50, wanting deals BEFORE executing the article, in essence extending the two-year period for negotiations. That's not what the Lisbon Treaty

specifies, though. And European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has already warned the UK the EU won't negotiate at all before Article 50 has been filed.

- May abolished the Department for Energy and Climate Change, absorbing it into the new Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (The Independent) – Wow. Pure climate denialism combined with fascism. Stunning level of stupidity.
- Anna Leadsom, new Environment Secretary, advocates burning everything down (The Independent) – Not really, but bloody close to that given her support for fox hunting, selling national forests, and climate change denialism.

BAD GIRL (domestic edition)

- Michigan Gov. Snyder appoints former BP external affairs pro to Environmental Quality (Detroit Free Press) – In a move mimicking UK PM Theresa May's oppositional defiance and idiocy on the environment and climate change, Snyder does the

exact opposite of what's needed to save the environment and picks someone with background in environmental damage. Keep in mind there's an ongoing conflict about an ~~ruptured~~ Enbridge Energy oil pipeline* running beneath the Mackinaw Straits between two of the largest bodies of fresh water in the world. [** not ruptured but at risk of rupture, and very little accountability on its operation in spite of its age and sensitivity of the water and land it travels. Enbridge is responsible for the largest inland oil leak in the U.S., near Kalamazoo MI.*]

PokéGone

The list of accidents resulting from distraction by Pokémon GO grows by leaps and bounds. These are among the worst so far. Just a matter of time before a fatality occurs.

- Two guys fall over a 90-foot oceanfront bluff chasing Pokémon characters (LAT) – How do you miss a cliff that high, let alone the roar of the ocean below?
- Guy glances at his phone to check for Pokémon, wraps his car around a tree (Consumerist) – Wakes up in

hospital, lucky to be alive.
Just look at the car.

- Guy falls into Prospect Park pond while chasing a Pokémon (Cosmopolitan) – Hey, do you see a pattern here, besides Pokémon?

Wheels

- California regulator nixes Volkswagen's 3.0L passenger diesel fix (Ars Technica) – No surprise to me whatsoever. I've said repeatedly there's no clean diesel technology. Still isn't. Just buy the cars back and tell consumers to buy a hybrid instead if they want clean passenger transportation.
- Consumers Reports tells Tesla to eliminate "Autopilot" label on self-driving technology (Phys.org) – Too confusing to so-called drivers in spite of warnings they should pay attention to driving at all times.
- New bug bounty offered by Fiat Chrysler (Naked Security) – First of its kind offered by any Detroit automakers, the bounty comes after Chrysler vehicles featuring the wireless

UConnect entertainment system were hacked by white hats last year.

Keep an eye on this topic

- U.S. SDNY's Judge William Pauley ruled evidence collected by DEA using Stingrays is inadmissible (New York Law Journal) – Pauley wrote,

Absent a search warrant, the Government may not turn a citizen's cell phone into a tracking device. Perhaps recognizing this, the Department of Justice changed its internal policies, and now requires government agents to obtain a warrant before utilizing a cellsite simulator.

I'm sure there will be more on this case in the near future.

Catch you tomorrow for the last in-session day in U.S. House.