

WEDNESDAY: DUMB

DUMB [UPDATE]

Let's change the pace today with some K-pop – a little hyper-upbeat Korean pop music influenced by hip hop. You may already be familiar with K-pop if you are familiar with insanely popular tune Gagnam Style by the artist Psy, released in 2012. But K-pop isn't just male artists like GOT7, Shinhwa, and BIGBANG. There are quite a few all-female groups like Red Velvet featured here, Girls' Generation, Orange Caramel, and Girls' Day. Americans may find a retro feel to female K-pop artists' work, not only in content and performance, but production and presentation. They make hard work look like joy. For all the visual and audio effects, there are simple, unifying messages – love is everything, and girls just want to have fun.

So much that. We could really use some love and some fun.

THREE DAYS

head-desk Including today, that's all the House will spend in session this month. Flint's 8000 lead-poisoned kids still wait.

Carla Hayden, nominee for Librarian of Congress also waits. Some ~~chickenshit~~ anonymous Republican senator(s) have placed a hold on her confirmation. Why? Because she's black. Swear to gods the GOP wants to become an irrelevant footnote in history; they certainly won't win over minority voters this way, and they're pissing off the publishing industry at the same time. **UPDATE 5:00 P.M. EST – HAYDEN CONFIRMED** Huh. Wonder what clued in the ~~chickenshit~~ anonymous Republican senator(s) who'd placed her on hold? Whatever, now the GOP can go back to focusing their normal obstructive intransigence on SCOTUS' nominee Merrick Garland.

Don't forget about China

▪ The Hague ruled in

Philippines' favor yesterday on South China Sea territorial dispute (video, SCMP) – China said it will ignore the ruling (0:30 in video).

- Economic boycotts of Philippine products called for by Chinese social media (BBC) – Mangoes in particular could be affected.
- But anti-ruling protests haven't manifested in the streets (Bloomberg View) – Unlike 2012, China's leadership may be tamping down nationalism due to recent economic volatility.
- Taiwanese patrol ship sets sail for disputed territory (IndiaTVNews) – Taiwan isn't happy about the ruling, claiming its opinion wasn't solicited on the matter.
- US bank regulator says China hacked FDIC's computers, including chairwoman's (Reuters) – Digital territorial waters encroached upon in 2010, 2011, 2013 according to Congressional report. Odd how 2012 is missing. Equally odd the timing of this report. (*Hi blueba!*)

Civil rights wronged

- Cruel and unusual punishment continues on Rikers Island after four extensions granted for reforms (Village Voice) – Youths 18-21-years-old including some who are mentally ill remain locked up in solitary confinement. The glacial pace of reforms is repugnant, maintaining worse than third-world treatment. Fix this horror and quit dragging your feet, New York. You're making this entire country look bad and worse.
- Black ex-cop offers detailed analysis of race and policing (Vox) – One key problem is the propensity for 70% of police to cave into pressure from the 15% of cops who are outrageous racists – like the Milgram experiment run amok. Racists should be identified and removed from leadership positions; police departments must have open dialog about social pressure and expectations of ethical behavior in policing.

Breakit

- Theresa May now UK's prime minister (Press Association) – Kissed Hands and all, but without a true democratic mandate. Thank goodness we fought a revolution for a representative democracy (that's snark, son).
- May's new role greeted with muted welcome and skepticism (Reuters) – Like the response from Lithuania, something-something-lemons-lemonade.
- May names Boris Johnson UK's foreign secretary (Press Association) – Oh. My. God. What. The. Fudge. Skepticism was more than warranted.
- Lengthy wash list of topics to be negotiated should new PM trigger Article 50 to effect Brexit (OpenEurope) – And she'll have to allow immigrant negotiators to work through this list because the UK doesn't have enough of their own negotiators. Certainly can't leave it all to that chucklehead Boris Johnson.

Cyber-oddments

- Bird drone dropped out of the sky over Somalia (Atlas Obscura) – Probably not one of ours, more likely belongs

to Somalia's intelligence agency.

- FCC evaluating expansion of mobile phone service into weather service bandwidth (Nature) – This has awful written all over it. Read the article; telecom signal has already interfered with critical weather information. Just, no. Telecoms can either develop new technology to work around this, or they can buy bandwidth which won't conflict with the public's need for timely and accurate weather information.
- Self-driving feature will not be shut off on Tesla cars says Musk (InformationWeek) – In spite of several accidents known so far, self-driving application will remain on Tesla vehicles. The company will increase education outreach (which I think means teaching drivers, "Don't trust the robot driver all the damned time.")
- Sheep doing the heavy lifting for Google on Faroe Islands (Guardian) – The Faroese were unhappy with the lack of vehicle-based

scanning for Google Street View. They slapped the requisite equipment on sheep to fill the gap, proving where there's a wool, there's a way. Baaad joke.

Okay, that's quite enough self-abuse for one day. It's downhill from here, see you tomorrow!

TUESDAY: TRAUMA

A little neo soul, something to ease the day. If you like this bit by 20-year-old Doja Cat, check out more of her work at her YouTube channel.

FOUR DAYS

That's all that's left of in-session days in U.S. House this month, and nothing done yesterday to help Flint. Yet another report on Flint water crisis, this one featuring VA-Tech's Dr. Marc Edwards on the lack of trust in water quality, governance and water science since the city's transition back to Detroit's water supply. But the necessity of filters means tap water is suspect; Flint residents never needed filters before the switch to Flint river water, and now much regularly take additional steps to check their filters and water quality. Just replace the damned lead pipes so they can take the filters off and they'll trust the water system. They need assistance with speeding up pipe replacement, stat.

Oh, and deal with the collapse of property values in Flint. Who wants to buy a house there, let alone offer financing as long as the water system remains under suspicion?

Oh no, Pokémon GO

My kid has been playing this augmented reality game with his friends, driving around after dark

to different 'gyms'. We've had a few discussions about the application's privacy problems as well as the game's requirements for collecting points. This is NOT a game for kids to play by themselves without parent or guardian engagement if they aren't old enough to drive. My son told me about running into creepy guys parked for hours late into the evening at key locations where Pokémon are found. Recipe for trouble, that.

- Check privacy settings (and read the fine print in the privacy policy) if you're playing Pokemon (BuzzFeed) – Pretty sure everybody's heard about the app's overbroad setting request. While you're at it, you should check the privacy settings on all your apps as well as your mobile device's operating system. Suggestion: Don't use your main Gmail account to log into Pokemon GO – use a secondary account.
- @arirubinstein of Slack's product security notes a problem with tokens (GitHub) – Looks like developers at Niantic have been notified and will fix this shortly. I'd still use with care.
- Goofy Pokemon stories abound already (Thrillist) – A dead body and a delivery room. What's next?

- PM David Cameron led his last cabinet meeting today (ITV) – You can actually get a ringtone for your phone based on the ditty Cameron was humming yesterday after he announced the new PM would take office on Wednesday. Must be happy with Theresa May taking over the dirty work.
- Cameron made a final plug for the Trident missile site (Guardian-UK) – May's got her work cut out selling this to the Scots if she shares Cameron's position. The Scots may agree to keeping Trident only if the UK's Parliament votes against proceeding with Brexit or if a second referendum is held.
- Letter from 1000 lawyers said referendum vote was only advisory (The Independent) – But their legal analysis is hardly an assessment of political viability. Interesting to note the lawyers insist primary legislation must be enacted first before Article 50 can be filed with the EU.
- House of Commons to debate second Brexit referendum (Evening Standard) – The

House took up the matter after a petition asking for a second vote was signed by four million voters following June 23 referendum. Buyer's remorse, that.

- Meanwhile, UK researchers cut from EU projects due to uncertainty of funding (Guardian-UK) – Can't blame the EU for this since continuity and consistency are critical in research, but holy crap, what this will do to UK's population of researchers. Massive brain drain must be under way.
- UK pressure influenced US on enforcement against HSBC (Sky News) – Interesting how this story looks from the other side of the pond. Wonder if the lead-up to Brexit also assured this outcome?

TL;BRTLA (too long, but read this later anyhow)

Especially today – now that Bernie Sanders has endorsed Hillary Clinton – read how women were included in the Civil Rights Act as a joke. Hah. Funny. But very sad that 51% of the population is still not accorded their creator-endowed equal rights in spite of shrewd, dogged work by Michigan's Rep. Martha Griffiths, and folks like Ida Phillips and attorney Reese Marshall.

Didn't have enough time to cover China. Guess you now what I'll tackle tomorrow, see you then.

MONDAY: GOTTA' CATCH 'EM ALL

[NB: Embedded video contains adult language
NSFW]

I had a very disturbing conversation with some 18-to-20-somethings this weekend about privacy and networked communications. I can't decide if I'm pissed off or terrified that these particular youngsters believed:

- Most young people their age don't care if their privacy has been compromised;
- If they care at all, they believe it's not a big deal, there's little danger because they can just shut off the GPS/location and voice features on their phones;
- This is the way it is with technology and there's no way to change the status quo.

I know for certain not all youngsters in this age group feel this way, but what set this particular group apart is their privilege. They are going to school in business and education at some of the best schools in the country. Their educations are paid for in full and they know they have jobs waiting for them. Their political heritage is conservative – anti-tax, pro-business, with a Christian fundamentalist spin. They are the next generation of elected officials because they can afford to run for office.

They are what a well-to-do public school district created, and what will come out of a top ten business school: people who don't give a shit about anybody else's needs for privacy, because they simply don't see any risks to their way of life.

The entire conversation began because they were questioning my opsec habit of covering my cellphone camera lenses. When I pushed back about their habit of waving their phones around without any respect for others' privacy, the topic rapidly went south. It didn't matter, nobody was following them, they didn't need to worry; whoever wanted to track them already had all their information anyhow. And still not a lick of concern about anybody else's privacy, safety and security, free speech, freedom from unwarranted seizure...

And now comes Pokémon Go, the augmented reality mobile device game which this particular cohort had yet to play with on their cellphones. I'm sure they've since loaded on their phones without a second thought about the gross failure of Pokémon Go's privacy policy let alone its ridiculously broad request for device permissions.

Stay away from me, kids. Far, far away. Go ahead and give me a hard time again about protecting privacy rights. Treat me like an old lady yelling at you to stay off my lawn, and I'll find somebody to tell your super-conservative mother what kind of porn you've surfed while you claim you're at the library studying on her dime. I'm sure I can get somebody to do it for the price of a Pokéstop lure and a Clefairy water Pokémon.

Meanwhile, protesters documenting civil rights abuses by hyper-militarized police have risked their freedom and lives doing so. Like the protesters and reporters seen in the short video taken of Baton Rouge Police arresting protesters gathered peacefully on private property yesterday, forcing their way into a private home and pushing around its residents. Or Ramsey

Orta, who videoed the chokehold death of Eric Garner, harassed repeatedly by NYPD since then and jailed, or Chris LeDay's suspicious arrest after he posted video of Alton Sterling's murder by Baton Rouge police. These citizens and the journalists who covered them are surely concerned about their privacy and the chilling effect on their free speech a lack of privacy protections will cause for them as individuals and as activist groups and news outlets.

And it's these people those privileged 18-to-20-somethings I spoke with will never consider as they navigate their way through the rest of college and into the business world. It's no wonder they believe there's no way to change the status quo; they aren't taught to think outside the tight confines of their safe little world nor do they face any threats inside their narrow groove.

I grieve for the future.

FIVE DAYS

That's all that's left for in-session days on the U.S. House calendar for July. I see nothing in the remaining schedule directly related to the Flint Water Crisis. Only California's ongoing water shortage will have a hearing. While the House fiddles, Flint area nonprofits continue to raise money to buy bottled water for city residents. The city water system is allegedly safe, but we all know the entire city is riddled with damaged pipe causing one Boil Water Notice so far this summer. Lead pipes continue to service homes. The roughly 8000 children poisoned so far don't need even a smidgen more lead from those water lines. But All Lives Matter, right?

I hope every journalist covering an incumbent's House or Senate campaign will ask what the candidate has done while in office to address both Flint's ~~GOP-inflicted~~ man-made catastrophe and future crises of a similar nature given underfunded EPA mandates for clean drinking water and equally underfunded infrastructure replacement.

Don't even get me started on Congress' weak gestures on Zika, especially after the first Zika-related death in the U.S. this past week and ~1133 patients who've tested positive for Zika, including ~320 pregnant women. Zero effort to encourage birth control among at-risk population, let alone adequate warning to the public that unprotected sex as well as mosquitoes spread the disease.

Po po no no

- Suspect fires on Houston police during 7-hour showdown; SWAT team subdues him using gas (KTRK) – Look, ma, no deadly force! Gee, I wonder what the suspect's race/ethnicity is?
- Tiny study without peer review based on unreliable data claims whites shot as often as blacks by police (NYT) – Harvard researcher looked at 1,332 shootings by 10 police departments in Florida, Texas, and California across fifteen years to come up with this swagged conclusion. There was so much wrong with this I don't even know where to begin. Even the lead researcher's personal experience suggests there's a problem with the data. The New York Times simply regurgitates this without any push back. After all the video evidence we've seen

since Ferguson, should we really believe police-supplied data from such a small sample of nearly 18,000 police departments? We really need a mandatory collection of data from all police departments based on standardized methods combined with an audit. There's more accountability in banking than there is in police use of force – and we all know how that turned out after 2008's crash.

- Dallas shooter was 'changed' by military service (The Blaze) – Once interested in becoming a police officer, formerly happy extrovert Micah Johnson became withdrawn, disappointed during his military service. Wonder if he suffered from untreated PTSD and depression after leaving the military? Wonder how many law enforcement officers likewise were former military who sublimated their post-service frustrations? Are we doing enough to help former service persons ease back into civilian life?

Enough. I'm already wishing for Tuesday.

FRIDAY (SOMEWHERE): WHY

More stuff broken and worse than I expected.

Rather an understatement, that. This week has been a massive case of broken.

Other broken things

- Polarized Congress damaging oversight? (CSMonitor) – Hyper-partisanship at fault? Perhaps. But it's awfully weird when the current FBI Director, who served under a Republican president as Deputy Attorney General, doesn't give a GOP-dominated House what it wants. Maybe something else is broken, too?
- Android's user credentials and crypto keys storage system is broken (Threatpost) – Researchers say KeyStore's encryption is exploitable; hackers could store forged keys. Yikes.
- White male celebrity's sentence too light – in South Africa (Herald Sun) – U.S. is not the only place where sentencing is broken, as the case of Oscar Pistorius shows. Six years

is utterly ridiculous.

- Train derailment exposes critical flaw in inspection methodology (Oregon Local) – Because inspectors drive the tracks rather than walk them, broken bolts were missed. Federal Railroad Administration said Union Pacific is at fault for the derailment and explosion of a 94-car train carrying oil, caused by the broken bolts. And yet the FRA doesn't require walking track as part of mandatory inspection processes, nor does the FRA inspect track that rigorously. More than bolts were broken here.
- FOX's Roger Ailes wants Gretchen Carlson's sexual harassment suit to go to arbitration (LA Times) – Ailes claims Carlson's contract specifies arbitration. Hell, no. This isn't a contract dispute, bonehead. It's a violation of her civil rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and that's not subject to arbitration. I'd like to break my foot off on this one.

Wishing us all a better weekend. Be kind to each other and fix something broken.

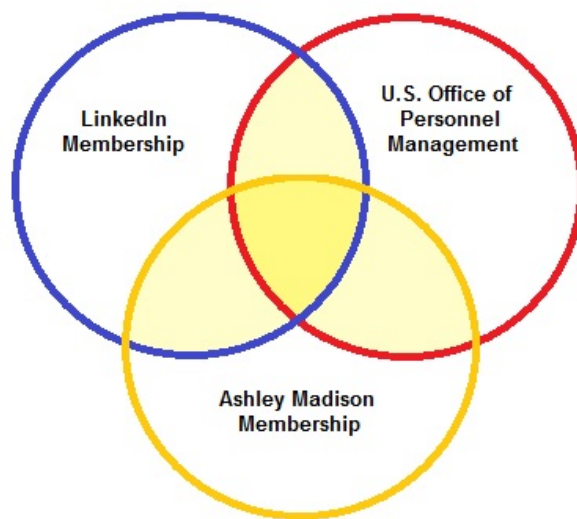
WEDNESDAY: MEND

Repair Day here, can't spend much time reading or writing as I'll be tied up mending things. Enjoy a little mellow Foo Fighters' tune – can't handle metal rock today or I'll end up HULK SMASHing things I'm supposed to fix.

Here's a range of topics which deserve more attention:

- UK's Chilcot report released today (Guardian-UK) – [*Insert lengthy string of epithets here, circa 2003*] I'm sure one of the other team members here at emptywheel will elaborate more effectively on the ugliness in the report and on former Prime Minister Tony Blair's continued lies rationalizations for military intervention in Iraq over alleged 9/11 terrorists and non-existent nuclear weapons. His self-flagellation and tepid mea culpa are pathetic, like watching a wee gnat flailing on an elephant's ass. Thirteen years later, Iraq has become a training ground for terrorists. Self-fulfilling prophecy, much?

The full Chilcot report can be found [here](#). The Guardian is working on a collaborative evaluation of the same.



- Hookup site Ashley Madison under investigation by FTC (Reuters) – Not

clear exactly what FTC's focus is, whether they are looking primarily at the data breach or if they are looking into the misleading use of "fembot" AI to chat up potential customers. Though the article's characterization of the business as a "discreet dating site" cracks me up, I'm still concerned about the potential risks involved with a breach, especially since other breached data make Ashley Madison's data more valuable. Like in this Venn diagram; if you were a foreign agent, which breached data would you mine most carefully?

- French Parliament released its inquiry into November terrorist attacks (20 Minutes) – Six months after the attack at the Bataclan and in the streets of Paris, representatives of the Parliamentary inquiry spoke yesterday about the inquiry's findings:

- Poor cooperation between intelligence functions – In spite of consolidation of General Intelligence and Directorate of Territorial Surveillance under the Central Directorate of Internal Intelligence in 2008 and then the Directorate General of

Internal Security (ISB) in 2014, there were gaps in hand-offs between functions.

- Ineffective collection and sharing of prison intelligence – The ISB did not have information from Justice (the prison service) about the relationships between incarcerated radical Islamists nor information about targets' release from custody.
- Poor cooperation between EU members and EU system gaps – Fake Syrian passports should have been caught by the EU's Frontex at external borders to EU, and Frontex has no access to data collected by police and intelligence services internal to the EU.
- Gaps in jurisdiction – Not all law enforcement was engaged as they should have been during the November attack, and when engaged, not where they should have been.
- Victims and families treated inadequately – Some families were told they were "ineligible" to be notified of their relatives' deaths. Forensic Institute was swamped by the volume of work. At least one victim

tried to call the police;
they hung up on the victim
because she whispered on the
phone.

It's not clear what steps the French will take next to fix these problems identified after looking at 2015's January and November terrorist attacks, though it is reassuring to see a relatively detailed evaluation. Some of the suspects involved in both the November attacks in Paris and in Brussels are still being rounded up and bound over for prosecution; two were handed over by Belgium to France just this week. The full Parliamentary inquiry report will be released next week.

- NHTSA informed by Tesla of self-driving car accident 9 days later (Reuters) – The delay in reporting may have misled investors in advance of Tesla's offer for SolarCity suggest reports, including one by Fortune magazine. To be fair, I don't think all the details about the accident were fully known immediately. Look at the condition of the vehicle in the Reuters' report and the Florida Highway Patrol report; the FHP's sketch of the accident site doesn't automatically lead one to think the accident was induced by distracted driving or by auto-pilot. Can't find the report now, but a DVD player was found much later; it was this device which revealed the driver's last activities. How did the FHP's report make its way to Tesla? And as Tesla responded, with one million auto accidents a year, not every accident is reported to the NHTSA. Begs the question: should all self-driving car accidents be automatically reported to the NHTSA and their automakers, and why?

- 'Zero Days' documentary on Stuxnet out this Friday (Flavorwire) – If director Alex Gibney can make this subject exciting to the average non-technical schmoe, hats off. It's a challenge to make the tedium of coding exciting to non-coders, let alone fluff process control equipment. This is a really important story with

a very long tail; hope Gibney was able to do it justice.

EIGHT DAYS in session left in U.S. House of Representatives' July calendar. Hearing about EPA scheduled this morning, but I don't think it had anything to do whatsoever with Flint Water Crisis.

Okay, that's enough to get you over the hump, just don't break anything on the way down. I'm off to go fix stuff.

TUESDAY: RUBBISH

This won't be everybody's cup of matcha and may not offer an optimum listening experience for most business offices. Today's kick-in-the-seat to start the week is a Japanese rock genre at the intersection of glam rock and black metal. *Visual kei* rock combines glam's signature elements with black metal's dark, heaviness. Some say punk influences *visual kei* but I really don't see or hear it. Depending on the song, death metal is far more likely to leak through both in sound and appearance.

For a little lighter variant – more pure metal than glam or black – try this live performance from Vistlip. The relationship between *visual kei* and both anime and video games is quite obvious. Want a little estrogen-loaded *visual kei*? Try exist trace's Daybreak; it, too, is not as dark and heavy, though the band can still hammer really black tunes.

Now that the kick in the ass has been locked and loaded...

NINE DAYS

Including today, that's the total number of days booked as in session on the U.S. House of Representatives' business calendar for July, of which only six days have events scheduled.

Can't see anything farther out. And of the events booked so far, nothing appears for the benefit of the Flint Water Crisis. Roughly 8000 lead-poisoned kids completely forgotten.

Michigan's state house has a mess of stuff on the calendar, but none of it clearly marked in reference to Flint Water Crisis. I imagine that hack Rep. Pscholka may have something buried in the items labeled "zero budget."

Brexit buffoonery

Whenever I get really upset with the condition of our state and federal governance, I can just take a look across the pond. The back-stabbing drama surrounding the future leadership of the Conservative Party and the Prime Minister's office looks like a mashup of House of Cards and Game of Thrones minus dragons. I'll let Christoph Waltz speak for me about the resignation of Ukip's Nigel Farage this weekend. I fear, though, that U.S. politics will take the Brexit debacle as a prompt going into the general election.

- Pound fell to lowest level post-Brexit vote (France24)
 - The perceived inability for either the Conservatives or Labour parties to organize its leadership let alone steer out of Brexit weighs on business. Let's say Marcy's right and the Brits manage to put the brakes on this: when and how will that happen? The lack of direction and specificity between now and sometime after September's next UK election costs money.
- Apple stock could take a hit because of Brexit

(Bloomberg) – Folks may update their iPhones more slowly due to economic pressures, says Citigroup analyst. IMO, it's not the updates that will hurt Apple's income as much as currency fluctuations. Was Apple able to hedge its financial holdings adequately against the abrupt drop in GBP value?

- EU to spend \$2B on public+private cybersecurity efforts (The Register) – Will UK be omitted from this spending plan altogether, AND will the EU begin to treat the UK as a potential cybersecurity risk in whatever plans it develops?

Automotive Uh-oh

- German Federal Cartel Office raids six auto industry firms investigating steel price collusion (FAZ.net) – The largest automakers Volkswagen, Daimler and BMW as well as suppliers ZF and Bosch were targeted. German news reports only provide these five company names and not a sixth. Reuters reported GM's Opel division was not included in the raids. Volkswagen was

already smarting badly after the nearly \$15B settlement with the U.S. announced last week.

- Electric car maker Tesla hits a speedbump on output (Bloomberg) – Market should have seen this coming. There's no way to smoothly scale up the amount of output buyers want from where Tesla's been without a few hiccups. Stock price took a hit.

Cyberia

- Second “Fappening” hacker will plead guilty (NYMag) – Finally! It only took two years reach this point in prosecution of hacker who phished celebrities accounts for nude photos. But phishing corporations is a threat to the public's security, while phishing women's Gmail and iCloud accounts isn't a threat to anybody, right? Because women's bodies and personal information aren't valuable nor is systematically invading their privacy terrorizing. Ugh. Gender bias in law enforcement.
- Advocacy groups file rulemaking petition with FCC

on automakers' use of Direct Short Range Communication (DSRC) (PublicKnowledge.org)

– Automakers are standardizing AI systems around DSRC; two groups want the FCC to

- Limit DSRC to life and safety uses only. The auto industry plans to take spectrum allocated for safety of life and monetize it with advertising and mobile payments. This compromises cybersecurity and potentially violates the privacy of every driver and passenger.
- Require automakers to file a cybersecurity plan before activating DSRC systems. This plan should not only show that auto manufacturers have taken appropriate precautions today, but explain how they will update security over the life of the vehicle.
- Data transparency and breach notification. Auto manufacturers must inform purchasers of DSRC-equipped cars what personal information they collect and how they will use that information. In the event of a data breach, the manufacturer collecting the information must notify the customer.

▪ Conficker malware found widely in internet-enabled medical equipment (Threatpost) – Medical facilities still aren't

taking adequate measures to ensure internet-enabled equipment remains unattached from the internet, safe from other forms of injection (like USB ports), and free of malware. Devices like dialysis pumps and diagnostic equipment for MRIs and CT scans are infected. Same security gaps also led to leak of 655,000 patients' data over the internet two weeks ago.

Man, even in this heat this snowball just doesn't want to stop once it starts rolling down the hill. At least it's a short week. See you tomorrow!

MONDAY: HAPPY INCENDIARY DEVICE DAY!

I can't decide which is more crazy-stupid: the explosive incident in New York which removed a teenager's foot, or the folks who immediately worried there'd been a terrorist attack.

Unfortunately, this isn't the end of stupid-with-explosives this week. There will be many more trips to emergency rooms across the country today, inflating our health care costs simply because stupid.

A family member working in an ER one July 4th evening about fifteen years ago told me a story about a particular patient who arrived under his

family's care at the hospital. The patient was able to talk about his accident during triage; he explained while setting off fireworks in the backyard during his family's picnic, the rocket he'd lit exploded and impaled him through the eye. Within a couple hours after admittance he was dead. Sadly, this kind of accident happens every year.

Leave this stuff to the experts. You need all your digits and body parts. Attend a community-organized program with paid professionals handling the fireworks. Enjoy the holiday relaxing with your friends and loved ones.

If you have to burn something, stick to grilling meats and vegetables over open flames. Still risky but much less likely to cost you life or limb.

Me? I'll be making beef teriyaki kabobs and chicken shashlik skewers before the community fireworks program. Flame on!

FRIDAY: DEATH TO ALL THAT JAZZ

*My friend, you would not tell with such
high zest
To children ardent for some desperate
glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
Pro patria mori.*

— excerpt, Dulce et Decorum Est, by
Wilfred Owen

This week has been a long death march. Death to optimism, death to pre-existing notions of political parties, death to futures defined by progressive visions.

Ironically, the march led to today's 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme – the beginning of World War I and the bloodiest day in British military history. The battle lasted five months and cost a million soldiers' lives. The British suffered 60,000 casualties on the first day alone as they fought alongside the French against the Germans.

Among the British dead were black soldiers from Britain and British West Indies, and Indian Army Calvary who came from what is now India and Pakistan. The British recruited from South Africa, Egypt, China, and more to replace their losses as the Somme continued.

One hundred years later they have forgotten all of this shared pain and history, along with Winston Churchill's post-WWII vision of a unified European family, a Pan-European Union which the United Kingdom, United States, and Russia supported.

On that bright and cheery note, have a little Death to Jazz – music which never dies.

Democracy elsewhere

Australians went to the polls on July 2nd for this year's federal election. They didn't torture themselves with a year or more of campaign crap, thank goodness. I can't tell you much of anything about this election except that like the US and UK, there are two major parties running neck-and-neck – the Liberal/National coalition and the Labor party – while the world might hope for Greens to succeed. At least Aussies have more than two major parties to choose from even if they are more colorful than any of ours. Putting aside my flippant attitude, this election has serious consequences for the globe given the need for Australia's climate change research in spite of its excessive reliance on sales of coal as well as its creeping authoritarian approach toward the internet and surveillance. What policies will the next Aussie government pursue?

Wheels

- NHTSA launches investigation into fatal autopiloted Tesla crash (Tesla Motors) – OMG if you look at the Florida Highway Patrol report sketch of the accident you'll immediately grasp what fail this was. This was a really horrific accident. Tesla's post indicates the sensor read the gap below the semi-truck's trailer as open space. Jalopnik picks apart the accident; they may be right that the obstruction detection sensor is too low on the vehicle. Besides the fact the driver was completely distracted and watching a movie while on autopilot, something else doesn't sit right about this crash – like the truck failed to yield, or the car was traveling at too high a rate of speed? Truly a sad situation for the driver's family and the truck driver.
- Volkswagen thinks its 3.0L passenger diesel engines can be "fixed" to meet emissions standards (Reuters) – Wait, what? They used "undeclared auxiliary emissions-control devices" on this engine, and not the emissions controls defeat software used in the

2.0L engines, which somehow means they can fix the larger engines. I've missed something somewhere along the way because I don't recall reading about any "auxiliary devices" before now. Color me skeptical.

- June car sales remain on pace with May, except for Volkswagen (Business Insider) – Dieselgate has really done a number on VW brand here in the U.S.; sales are down 22% for the German automaker over last year. Other brands have picked up the slack, though; the biggest winner is Nissan.

Don't forget about China

Fourth largest by area, second largest by GDP, and first largest by population, let's not forget about China!

- ICYMI: Insurance company to CIA employees bought by Chinese company (Newsweek) – You might want to read Marcy's piece if you haven't already. The U.S. really needs to improve the CFIUS review process given this egregious example. It only takes some big iron computing to crunch a match between Wright USA's

business database and other breached databases out there in the cyber-wilds to identify...well, you're smart. Figure it out.

- Taiwanese missile mistakenly fired, kills fishing boat captain (IBT) – No words for this, which could have been very ugly. Somebody kept a cool head.
- Taylor Swift's love life no longer the subject of Chinese bettors (Billboard) – Chinese government banned the sale of insurance instruments which paid off when celebrity singer/songwriter Swift broke off her romance. Good move, this one, because Swift changes partners like some women change purses and shoes. Don't waste your money betting on what is surely a PR-driven romance between Swift and the flavor of the month, British film star Tom Hiddleston. (Better off betting on who will be the next James Bond – Hiddleston? Doubtful.)

Party Plans

It's a long holiday weekend here in the U.S. If you don't have plans, here's a few tips.

- The party moved, dudes; new

sandbar this year (Mlive) – Court tossed the monster party held on one of Michigan's inland lakes because it was monster. This year it's being held at Wixom Lake instead of Torch Lake. Poor Wixomites; brace yourselves for 1000-plus partiers.

- Non-Terrible Songs about America (BitchMedia) – This week's BitchTapes playlist is estrogen driven, a nice even-handed, clear-eyed change of pace for a mellow Fourth of July. Kind of like a hug from your mom or sister who love you in spite of the fact they know only too well you're a bonehead.
- Baking cookies for holiday snacking? Don't eat the raw dough! (Yahoo News) – We've always been told raw dough is risky to eat because of uncooked eggs in the batter. But unless you've checked yours against the FDA's recall list, it's the flour that's the potential threat. E coli-tainted flour is still in the food system and could be in uncooked dough products. Cook them well, don't eat them raw.

Holiday mode commences in three, two, one –
boom! Because nothing says freedom like
incendiary devices at close range!

THURSDAY: REPETITION

A little Prince to make the painful repetition a
little easier to take.

By repetition I mean what's happening in Puerto
Rico compared to what has already happened in
Michigan.

Some of Michigan's most financially distressed
cities were forced to accept emergency managers,
supplanting the cities' democratically elected
officials. Under state law, EMs were the sole
point of power and authority for administration
until the cities were deemed financially viable.
We all know how that turned out; in Flint's
case, ten people died from Legionnaire's disease
and roughly 8000 kids will pay for the
incompetence of the emergency management scheme
for the rest of their lives due to the permanent
effects of lead poisoning. The incompetence is
further magnified by governmental bodies'
failure to do the right thing to completion,
while continuing to milk the city and state of
more money to no effect.

Witness the state attorney general Bill Schuette
now asking for \$3.4 million to investigate what
can already be easily seen in records released
to date. The assessments made so far have been
equally wrong – like Schuette's office suing two
consulting firms when documentation clearly
shows outright stupidity in contract management
or malfeasance on the part of government was the
real problem. And none of Flint's water problems
would have happened had not the city been forced
off Detroit's water by the state treasurer's
office, which rejected a last-minute offer far
cheaper than construction of the new Karegnondi

water line. Seeing this doesn't need millions of dollars, only ethics.

Puerto Rico – with a population smaller than Los Angeles in an area a little smaller than Connecticut – is now undergoing a similar loss of democracy for similar reasons of financial distress. The territory is \$73 billion in debt caused in no small part by suffocating federal policies. The U.S. Senate just voted to supplant Puerto Rico's elected officials' authority with a team of managers. They had too little democracy as it was before this schema, not having the same kind of representation that the fifty states have; many of the financial limitations Puerto Rico faces have been directly related to the territory's inability to regulate commerce.

The economic hitmen have won. Now the vultures descend.

The galling part is this approach is called *PROMESA* (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act) – a promise. Brace yourselves, Puerto Ricans, at least they've warned you. *Que Dios tenga misericordia porque los buitres no lo hará.*

Odd lots

I've got a bunch of stray cats and dogs here that didn't fit under any theme so far this week. In other words, there wasn't much repetition. Make of them what you will.

- Russian harassment of diplomats spurs Kerry to talk with Putin (Reuters) – This was two days ago; yesterday there was a report that a diplomat was roughed up enough to require airlifting for medical treatment. Are we seeing an escalation in tension?

- Lots of loaded oil tankers just sitting around (BBC) – Looks like price of oil was still too low for oil delivery. Wonder how many tankers moved immediately after the Brexit referendum?
- China launched a space junk collector, but is that all it will do? (SCMP) – Article suggests the equipment launched could be used as an anti-satellite weapon. Time to brush up on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.
- Milling machine for DIY AR-15 is a hot item (Bloomberg) – Backorders piling up for machines from same young guy who posted plans for 3D printed guns on the internet. Just an aside: perhaps this is why gunmakers are flooding the market – their competition can't be tracked easily once they are printing them at home, so they flood them out. Which of course will end so well. Meanwhile, Congress remains in thrall to NRA money and refuses to regulate guns in anyway.
- Leash let off commercial drones with new regulations (Naked Security) – Great. Can hardly wait for our

skies to be filled with drones surveying everything, thanks to a lack of privacy restrictions and a rather broad requirement that the drones don't fly directly over people not controlling them. Bad enough private drones are out of control (like the one some jackass flew to window-peep at my kid's university-adjacent apartment complex).

- Nonprofit Mozilla re-branding itself as an open source 'change maker' and 'internet freedom fighter' (Creative Review) – Company is eating its own dogfood by performing this rebrand out in the open.

Thank goodness tomorrow is Friday and I can indulge in a little jazz. See you then.

WEDNESDAY: WANDERING

*All that is gold does not glitter; not
all those who wander are lost.*

– excerpt, The Lord of the Rings by J.
R. R. Tolkien

It's a lovely summer day here, cool and dry.

Perfect to go walkabout, which I will do straight away after this post.

Hackety-hack-hack, Jack

- Spearphishing method used on HRC and DNC revealed by security firm (SecureWorks) – Here's their report, but read this Twitter thread if you don't think you can handle the more detailed version. In short, best practice: DON'T CLICK ON SHORTENED LINKS using services like Bitly, which mask the underlying URL.
- Researchers show speakerless computers can be hacked by listening to fans (arXiv.org) – Air-gapping a computer may not be enough if hackers can listen to fan operation to obtain information. I'll have to check, but this may be the second such study.
- Another massive U.S. voter database breached (Naked Security) – This time 154 million voters' data exposed, revealing all manner of details. 154M is larger than the number of voters in the 2012 general election, though smaller than the 191M voters' records breached in

December. At least this time the database owner slammed the breach shut once they were notified of the hole by researcher Chris Vickery. Nobody's fessed up to owning the database involved in the the December breach yet.

- Speaking of Vickery: Terrorism databased leaked (Reddit) – Thomson-Reuters' database used by governments and banks to identify and monitor terrorism suspects was leaked (left open?) by a third party. Vickery contacted Thomson-Reuters which responded promptly and closed the leak. Maybe some folks need to put Vickery on retainer...
- Different kind of hack: Trump campaign hitting up overseas MPs for cash? Or is he? (Scotsman) – There are reports that Trump's campaign sent fundraising emails received by elected representatives in the UK and Iceland. Based on what we know now about the spearphishing of HRC and DNC, has anybody thought to do forensics on these emails, especially since government officials are so willing to share them

widely? Using these kinds of emails would be a particularly productive method to spearfish government and media at the same time, as well as map relationships. Oh, and sow dissension inside the Trump family, urm, campaign. On the other hand, lack of response from Trump and team suggests it's all Trump.

Makers making, takers taking

- Apple granted a patent to block photo-taking (9to5Mac)
 - The technology relies on detecting infrared signals emitted when cameras are used. There's another use for the technology: content can be triggered to play when infrared signal is detected.
- Government suppressing inventions as military secrets (Bloomberg) – There's merit to this, preventing development of products which may undermine national security. But like bug bounties, it might be worth paying folks who identify methods to breach security; it's a lot cheaper than an actual breach, and a bargain compared to research

detecting the same.

- Google wants to make its own smartphone (Telegraph-UK) – This is an effort apart from development of the modular Ara device, and an odd move after ditching Motorola. Some tech industry folks say this doesn't make sense. IMO, there's one big reason why it'd be worth building a new smartphone from the ground up: security. Google can't buy an existing manufacturer without a security risk.
- Phonemaker ZTE's spanking for Iran sanction violations deferred (Reuters) – This seems kind of odd; U.S. Commerce department agreed to a reprieve if ZTE cooperated with the government. But then think about the issue of security in phone manufacturing and it makes some sense.

A-brisket, a Brexit

- EU health commissioner Andriukaitis' response to Nigel Farage's insulting remarks (European Commission) – Farage prefaced his speech to European Commissioners yesterday by saying "Most of

you have never done a proper day's work in your life." Nice way to win friends and influence people, huh? Dr. Vytenis Andriukaitis is kinder than racist wanker Farage deserves.

- Analysis of next couple years post-Brexit (Twitter) – Alex White, Director of Country Analysis at the Economist Intelligence Unit, offers what he says is “a moderate/constructive call” with “Risks definitely to the downside not to the upside.” It's very ugly, hate to see what a more extreme view would look like. A pity so many Leave voters will never read him.

Follow-up: Facebook effery

Looks like Facebook's thrown in the towel on users' privacy altogether, opening personal profiles in a way that precludes anonymous browsing. Makes the flip-flop on users' location look even moresketchy. (I can't tell you anymore about this from personal experience because I gave up on Facebook several years ago.)

Happy hump day!