

# Chomsky: Coup Attempt Hit Closer To Centers Of Power Than Hitler's 1923 Putsch



Noam Chomsky

Even as the Biden administration takes the reins of power, the fact remains that authoritarianism and a fascist strain of political thinking have taken firm root on U.S. soil among a large proportion of its citizens. This utterly disturbing development will, according to Noam Chomsky in this exclusive interview for *Truthout*, be hard to contain. A recent poll shows that the overwhelming majority of Republicans continues to give a thumbs up to Donald Trump, even after the storming of the Capitol. In the wake of the attempted coup, and on the cusp of a new administration, what do the current political currents mean for the future?

*C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, you had been warning all along of a potential coup in the event that Trump would lose the 2020 election. In this context, are you surprised at all by what took place on Capitol Hill on the Electoral College vote count?*

*Noam Chomsky: Surprised, yes. I'd expected a strong reaction from Trump's voting base, raised to a fever pitch by his latest antics. But hadn't expected the attempted coup to reach this level of violence, and I suspect most of the participants didn't either. Many seemed to have been caught up in the excitement of the moment when the leaders of the crowd surged into the hated Capitol to drive out the demons who were not just "stealing the election" but "stealing" their country from them: their white Christian country.*

That it was an attempted coup is not in question. It was openly and proudly proclaimed as just that. It was an attempt to overturn an elected government. That's a coup. True, what was attempted was not the kind of coup regularly backed by Washington in its dependencies, a military takeover with ample bloodshed, torture, "disappearance." But, nevertheless, it was an attempted coup. True, the perpetrators regarded themselves as defending the legitimate government, but that's the norm, even for the most vicious and murderous coups, like the U.S.-backed coup in Chile on the [first 9/11](#) - which was actually much worse in virtually every dimension than the second one, the one that we remember and commemorate. The first one is best forgotten on the principle of "wrong agents": Us, not some radical Islamic fundamentalists.

The emotions of those attempting the [Capitol] coup were apparent. Belief that the election was stolen was plainly held with real fervor. And it is understandable among people who live in passionately pro-Trump areas where he is revered as their savior, and for some, even chosen by God, [as he once declared](#). Many may scarcely have seen a Biden sign, or heard anything from *Fox News* or Rush Limbaugh to suggest some possible flaw in their beliefs.

In some respects, these beliefs are not as bizarre as they may look at first. A shift of tens of thousands of votes in a few counties might have swung the election the other way in a deeply undemocratic system such as ours, where 7 million votes can be swept aside along with an unknown number of others eliminated by purging, gerrymandering, and the many other devices that have been devised to steal the election from the "wrong people," effectively authorized by the Supreme Court in its shameful 2013 decision nullifying the Voting Rights Act ([Shelby County v Holder](#)).

As we've discussed before, the malevolent figure in charge deserves credit for his talent in tapping the poisonous streams that run not far below the surface of American society, with sources that are deep in U.S. history and culture.

I have to say that I was also surprised by the quick reaction of those who own the country and have a large share of responsibility for the malaise that broke forth on January 6. In no small part, it is a consequence of the neoliberal assault since Reagan, amplified by his successors, that has devastated the rural areas that are the homes of many who stormed the Capitol. Those who hold the levers of the

private power that dominates the society and political system never liked Trump's behavior, which harmed the image they project as humanists dedicated to the common good. But they were willing to tolerate the vulgar performance as long as Trump and his accomplices delivered the goods, lining their pockets by robbing the public.

And that they did. The "transfer of wealth" from the lower 90 percent to the ultra-rich since Reagan opened the doors for highway robbery reaches almost \$50 trillion, according to a [recent Rand corporation study](#). No one can place numbers on the vastly greater cost of environmental destruction that was a high priority of the Trump-McConnell years of service to the very rich and corporate sector.

But January 6 was apparently too much, and the marching orders were delivered swiftly by the Big Guns.

One has to have some sympathy for the legislators caught between powerful contending forces. On the one hand, they see the angry hordes whipped to a frenzy by Trump's performances, and still in his pocket, poised to wreak vengeance on those who betray their leader. And on the other hand, looking down on them from above, are the captains of finance and industry who fund their elections and dangle before them many other privileges to keep them in line. (How many members of Congress leave office to become truck drivers or secretaries?)

The dilemma is particularly harsh for senators, who are more reliant on the large donors. And their defection from the ranks of obsequious Trump loyalists has been somewhat greater.

*Apparently, D.C. Council members had been briefed by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia that Donald Trump might invoke the Insurrection Act to seize control of the city police, but did not expect an attack on the Capitol itself. In your own view, what explains the enormous security failures that led to the Capitol siege, and do the events of January 6, 2021, qualify as a putsch?*

An attempted putsch, though the connotations of the term putsch may be too strong. The events reminded many, including historians of fascism, of Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, which actually did not so easily penetrate the centers of power as the attempted coup of January 6.

The reasons for the security failures are being debated. I have no special insight. Black members of the Capitol police, who showed great courage along with many of their white colleagues, have charged for years that the force has been infiltrated with white supremacists. There may have been some collusion, and possibly serious corruption higher up the chain of command.

*If Trump incited an insurrection against elected officials of the U.S. government, is it enough that he has been impeached again? Shouldn't he be facing sedition charges since inciting an insurrection against the government is a criminal act under Title 18 of the U.S. Code?*

I presume the Joint Chiefs of Staff chose their words carefully in their [message on the "violent riot"](#) on January 6, "a direct assault on the U.S. Congress, the Capitol building, and our Constitutional process," an act of "violence, sedition and insurrection." They surely considered the fact that incitement to sedition and insurrection carries a heavy prison sentence. I presume that they also weighed the evidence that such incitement took place from the Oval Office.

Many questions arise about how to pursue such barely concealed charges, but we should be careful to avoid the Watergate trap. The Nixon impeachment procedures were initiated by [Massachusetts] Rep. Robert Drinan, S.J., charging him with the bombing of Cambodia, a truly monstrous crime, of Nuremberg Trial caliber. That charge was struck down by Congress. The prime charge against Nixon was that he organized thugs to invade one of two seats of political power in the country, the Democratic Party headquarters. This attack on the foundations of the Republic was overcome in a "stunning vindication of our constitutional system" (famed liberal historian Henry Steele Commager).

In short, the powerful can rise to their own defense. The victims of truly monstrous crimes can look elsewhere for recourse. Maybe history, with luck.

Incitement of an attempted coup is no laughing matter, but it scarcely weighs in the balance against a dedicated effort to destroy the environment that sustains life on earth or demolition of the arms control regime that mitigates the threat of nuclear war.

*Do you believe that Trump is finished as a political figure? Or, to put the question slightly differently, was the Washington putsch of January 6, 2021, the beginning of the end of the rise of Trumpism?*

Far from it. Whether Trump will survive the error of judgment that turned major power centers against him is unclear. He may well do so. The voting base of the Party seems to remain loyal, maybe with even greater fervor after this attack on their hero by the “deep state.” Local officials too. He was cheered on his visit to the Republican National Committee the day after the Capitol riot. He has other resources.

Whatever the fate of the individual, Trumpism will not be so easily contained. Its roots are deep. The anger and resentment raised to a frenzy by this talented con man is not limited to the U.S. The \$50 trillion robbery is only the icing on the cake of the neoliberal disaster, which itself is built on foundations of deep injustice and repression. We are not out of the woods, by far.

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## **White Freedom: An Interview With Tyler Stovall**



*Professor Tyler Stovall. Photo: UC Santa Cruz*

The idea of freedom has a contradictory legacy in the modern western world: it's all about whiteness mixed with practices of racial inequality and discrimination, argues Tyler Stovall, Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, at the University of California at Santa Cruz, in his newly published work [\*White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea\*](#) (Princeton University Press, 2021). In the interview that follows, Tyler Stovall discusses the main thesis of his book, highlights the difference in the way conservatives and progressives view freedom, and talks the return of white supremacy in American politics.

*C. J. Polychroniou: You have just published a new book, titled White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea, in which you argue that freedom has been defined in the western political tradition in racial terms. Can you elaborate a bit on this thesis?*

*Tyler Stovall:* I argue that in America, France, and other Western societies in the modern era freedom is central to white racial identity and that whiteness is an essential component of freedom. To be free is to be white, and to be white is to be free. The book explores how societies based on liberty, like the French and American republics, could without contradiction also practice racism against peoples of color because those who were not white by definition could not be free.

It also shows how the clarion call of liberty in these societies derived its force in part from its appeal to race.

*CJP: Didn't gender and class also play key roles in the social construction of freedom?*

*TS:* Since those are not the primary subjects of this book my answer to this question is necessarily limited, but class and gender certainly also played an important role. One need only consider the history of voting as a political right in the modern era. In many Western democracies the franchise was only gradually granted to people without property, and until the twentieth century it was almost universally reserved for men. The right to property, a key component of freedom in capitalist societies, was also highly gendered, and more generally if one did not have property (the case of most working people in the modern era) one could not truly be free.

*CJP:* *Isn't it also the case that freedom has always meant something different to conservatives and progressives?*

*TS:* To a certain extent, yes: conservatives have traditionally focused on individual liberty and negative ideas of freedom, freedom from, whereas progressives have tended to emphasize the freedom of groups from oppression based on class, race, gender, and other identities. I would say, however, that in many ways the conservative, individualistic interpretation of freedom has been dominant during the modern era, and that conservatives are more likely than progressives to foreground ideas of freedom in their politics. Many progressives give greater importance to equality than freedom, for example. Also, if you consider the very idea of liberal democracy, which I consider a kind of compromise between these two approaches, conservatives stress liberalism and progressives stress democracy.

*CJP:* Racism not only remains a major problem in American society, but race relations seem to have gotten worse over the last few years. In fact, we have seen the return of white supremacy in U.S. politics during Donald Trump's reign of rage and destruction. What's your explanation for this unsettling socio-political development which threatens the very fabric of American democracy?

*TS:* I'm not sure I agree with the basic premise of this question, because I don't think that white supremacy ever went anywhere, and I don't think it's necessarily worse now than in the past. For example, what strikes me most about the Black Lives Matter movement is how many whites support it, in a way that would have been hard to imagine ten years ago. That said, there certainly remains lots of racism in American society, and I think it is due to the combination of two

factors.

First, American society and culture are growing more multicultural and diverse, and second the living standards of many Americans, including working class whites, have declined significantly since the 1970s. Traditionally in American society lower class whites who had very little property or social status could take comfort in their whiteness and white privilege, but now that seems to many to be increasingly jeopardized. Those whites who invaded the Capitol building on January 6, 2001 felt that their communities and their futures were threatened by the new contours of American life, and as we have seen in such situations people react violently.

*CJP: Given the thesis of your book, namely, that racism and freedom are intertwined in the western political tradition, isn't there a need therefore to redefine freedom?*

TS: I would say rather that it is important to reinforce universal ideas of freedom that have also existed in the West, and bolster their rejection of white freedom. For example, in my book I discuss the ways in which the Statue of Liberty has been an icon of white freedom, symbolizing the ability of European immigrants to achieve white privilege in America. My preferred solution to that would not be to take down Lady Liberty, but rather to underscore other kinds of liberty. The Statue of Liberty and the myths around it tend to obscure the fact that New York was one of America's great slave ports, so why not have another statue in New York harbor that commemorates slave rebellions in New York as symbols of liberty? Many people in America and throughout the world have rejected white freedom and fought for liberty for all, and it's important to honor their struggles.

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# **Essay Essentials Forensic Expertise. About the Ideal of an NFI - Handbook on Forensic Expertise**



*“Alfa-Bèta-Circle”, Ills. Hans Jakobs, 2020*

## *Introduction*

This essay [1] is an unorthodox attempt to write a *handbook on forensic expertise* [2]. My intention is to bring about a real improvement of understanding for all criminal justice professionals, the “users of forensic expertise” in criminal procedure; in my opinion a timeless and very useful ideal.

In the light of my recent attendance at trials of 24 Dutch criminal cases it has become clear to me that, in almost every criminal case, a greater understanding and clearer explanation is desirable of natural sciences as practiced in technical laboratory research and executed on traces within the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) in the truth-finding process in criminal law. The name for this kind of research into traces as part of the criminal process is Criminalistics.

*Criminalistics* is the natural scientific aspect of the forensic sciences. It focuses on natural scientific research on evidence on behalf of truth-finding in criminal law. And It is directed towards the significance of the results of such research for that truth-finding. [3]

The explanation of an expert in court (art. 339, paragraph 1, sub 4), and the expert's report, the written documents (art. 339, paragraph 1, sub 5 ) are the two different kinds of legal evidence, regarding the expert. Limited to these and combined with the judge's own observations, the declarations of the suspect, and the declarations of a witness (art.339, paragraph 1, sub 1, 2, and 3), these five constitute the - limited - means of legal evidence as recognized in the Dutch Code of Criminal Procedure.

Even though forensic research is also carried out by other authorities, such as the Police, (semi) private institutes, - laboratories, - individuals and Universities, I have decided to take the NFI as my starting-point, for two reasons:

1. In 2020 the lion's share of the forensic research concerning traces in connection with criminal offences in the Netherlands is still executed - on a high scientific level - by the NFI.

This research is commissioned by the Public Prosecution Office at the stage of investigation and prosecution, at the request of the examining magistrate / inquiry judge, the judge and, in some cases, also at the request of the defence.



2. In 1995 I had the privilege of being allowed to initiate and draw up a book of reference [4] about forensic expertise as practiced then by the predecessors of the NFI, called '*The Forensic Laboratories*'. I distinguished at the time 31 areas of expertise, and in close cooperation with 31 experts a powerful source of knowledge was created at the service of the sitting and standing magistracy, and recommended as literature for the Police Academy.

After 25 years, in my view, it is now the right time to redefine the current conditions for a better understanding of the forensic kinds of expertise in the shape of:

[A Blueprint, describing the essentials of background-knowledge, theory, practice and science, for each field of expertise.](#)

In order to illustrate the importance of a systematic composition of a reference book and a textbook about forensic expertise, I have arranged the arguments into four groups.

- A. Why? Finding reasons,
- B. What? Table of contents, strengthening the beta-sciences and techniques,
- C. How? Method, describing essentials in the connecting [Blueprint](#),
- D. What for? Improving the understanding of the target audiences and thus enlighten the criminal procedure.

*A. Why? Finding reasons.*

*Signals from the Dutch criminal trials 2014-2019*

From the end of 2014 to 2020 Ir. Huub Hardy [5] and myself were present at 24 heavy criminal cases in Dutch courts and tribunals [6] [[Appendix 1 Dutch Criminal Cases](#)]. We made an inventory, a close analysis and minutes of the cases. These criminal cases were selected on the basis of the role of the experts in the proceeding. In such trials, more often than not, the judicial experts were physically present and made declarations in court.

My focus in these cases was on the communication, i.e. the dialogues between experts and lawyers, as I heard them in court and saw them with my own eyes. I made notes from which lawyers' needs in practice were found and from which lawyers' wishes could be distilled.

In 9 of the 24 criminal trials (almost 38 %) judges, public prosecutors and barristers asked clearer literal explanations from the experts, specifically linguistic, such as: 'no jargon please', 'clearer terminology', 'layman language please', 'what is the meaning of', 'report is hard to read', 'what precisely do you mean', 'closer explanation please'.

In 17 of the 24 criminal trials (almost 71 %) experts turned up in court. Judges, public prosecutors and barristers asked them intensively, not only about their use of language, but also, at length, about the significance of working methods and skills, and about the professional background and experience of the expert.

The lawyers, usually alpha-trained, put many probing questions to the forensic experts (who had usually been trained in beta science or in technique) such as:

- \* what is the background-science of this expertise?
- \* how do the various methods of expertise / research operate?
- \* how do the underlying instruments and apparatus function in this expertise?
- \* can you explain the difference in research on the source-level [7] and on the activity-level [8] ?
- \* what is the meaning of contamination [9] and secondary transfer [10] ?
- \* what is the background-science of this expertise ?
- \* explanation new - recently developed- forensic techniques?
- \* explanation of Bayes Theorem [11] with the use of hypotheses, formulated in the conclusions of the forensic reports,
- \* what is the training, the experience, the background and the CV of the expert?

What it all comes down to, is that I personally observed a clear need of a more

intensive insight into the practice and the theory of forensic expertise within the courtrooms.

From this we may conclude that the classical “alfa-beta-gap” needs a better bridging and that this fascinating paradox - in 2020 - deserves closer attention than it is getting at the moment.

Since 2010 I have been developing a so-called Blueprint, which is intended to raise to a higher level the understanding between alpha and beta. This Blueprint will offer a chronological, systematic survey of the basic ideas that underpin each field of expertise.

This uniform will describe the essential characteristics of the expertise. Its contents is to be formulated in close cooperation with the forensic experts.

In this way, a structured explanation of matters which are often hard to understand, will be offered to the lawyer in criminal procedure; of forensic expertise, being a piece of evidence.

Truth-finding can be lifted to a higher level [12] if forensic expertise will be understood more closely and more critically. Improving the understanding of the forensic sciences and their applied forensic expertises on the lawyer’s side, will establish a positive impact on three crucial parts of the criminal trial:

1. The communication, the dialogue between lawyers and experts,
2. The interpretation of the forensic expertise by the lawyer,
3. The truth-finding.

*Signals of the ministerial improvement process regarding the future of the NFI, anno 2019*

In his vision of forensic research the Minister of Justice and Security [13] shares his view of the future for the NFI with the House of Commons [ Second Chamber ].

Some interesting points from this vision:

1. *A system of steady provision of information* is crucial if one is to come to a better and more efficient collaboration in the chain.
2. Contemporary investigation demands that forensic expertise will be available right at the start of the process; *a complete and prompt offer of forensic expertise* should be accelerated and enlarged.
3. *The NFI-Catalogue of available services* is not merely a static device. There

should be a *permanent recalibration of “sourcing” - who delivers what? -* by NFI, or by Police- and (semi) private labs, and this needs constant attention.

These three political recommendations all are relating to the delivery of the many types of forensic research of traces within the chain of criminal procedure, with the NFI as a main addressee. Next to them there are more available suppliers, depending on special experience and knowledge, also seen logistically [Police] and scientifically [Universities].

And this is exactly what the pivot of my plan is; to produce a forensic book of reference from all Dutch available forensic expertise, with all “knowledge and science held by the NFI” taken as a starting point. Together with all other Dutch available expertises, next to the NFI, be described in a uniform and carefully worded book, and - thus reinforced as insightful and dynamic information - will be put at the disposal of all the partners in the chain.

Viewed objectively the various NFI-expertises can be considered an essential link in the criminal chain of evidence, in which it serves as a scientific and supportive element.

A well-founded arrangement and selection [‘trriage’] of applicable forensic expertise, based on insight and understanding, must be found right in the beginning of the process- quick and playfully - by all chain partners. Together with the above mentioned personal and political signals, this objective circumstance is a sufficient reassuring reasoning on top, for the meaningfulness of a systematic way of editing a Handbook on Forensic Expertise.

*B. What? The table of Contents; strengthening of the beta-sciences*

*The intended forensic reference book will cover the following:*

1. All fields of forensic expertise practiced within the Netherlands Forensic Institute [14]; from forensic anthropology to wildlife forensics [[Appendix 2 Forensic Research Netherlands Forensic Institute](#)] will be the starting point of the content of the handbook to be edited.

The NFI laboratory research is based on a variety of beta knowledge, including technical sciences and biology, chemistry, medicine, mathematics and natural sciences. It will all be described - in collaboration with the experts - as completely, systematically and transparent as necessary to be essential.

All NFI-expertise - mostly beta-information, knowledge and science - are described carefully in essentials and thus serves, reinforced, all lawyers, mostly alpha-users. The constant dynamic factor is that scientific standards and norms keep growing together with the development of the fields of expertise [15] .

2. The forensic applications of expertise which are executed by the Police, (semi) private institutes and private individuals, must also be summarized.

3. The various Universities in our country who are offering possibilities, where solid and impartial forensic research is executed, must be summarized .

For example, The Maastricht Forensic Institute (TMFI) and the Forensic Leiden DNA-Research Institute (FLDO) [16] . They all play an important role within the development of forensic sciences - and are as such indispensable for the defence - as a second opinion of equal weight. Such counter-expertise will ensure a fair trial with equality of arms. [17]

4. Newly developed forensic techniques: recently discovered and often still being under construction, scientific techniques with promising forensic application, are important to mention. Many of them were presented at the University of Amsterdam [18] between 2014 and 2020. [[Appendix 3 New forensic techniques](#)].

A very recent example of this is the drastic reduction of the time scheme round the Post-Mortem Interval (PMI) [19]. In a case of a committed crime it is now reduced to an average of 45 minutes; this used to be a few hours.

The new method, which can reduce the circle of suspects considerably, is being developed by researchers of the Amsterdam-based University Medical Centre, the University of Amsterdam and the NFI. The new PMI-method works with a thermic camera or a censor taped on the body. More factors play a role, such as the question: was the body left behind fully dressed? Was it found lying in water?

This specialism is to be mentioned within the field of forensic pathology.

##### *5. Juridical background information.*

For each field of expertise a clear image should be sketched of the legal context in which the forensic research is situated, for the benefit of the forensic expert himself.

Forensic expertise takes place against the background of legislation, jurisprudence / case-law and against professional literature and magazines. Where possible, a linking-text with "Text and Comment" of the Code of Criminal Procedure must be realised. Also, for each field of expertise a worked-out legal

model of such a case should be presented.

In this way the whole range of specialized skills will give shape to an intensive inventory of the available forensic expertise in the Netherlands. At the same time it will all be a part of the table of contents of the on-line forensic book of reference to be created.

### *C. How? The Method; [the connecting Blueprint](#)*

The existing professional NFI-appendices are now very diverse and described in a non-homogeneous style. They differ in terms of description order, layout, photos, graphics, drawings, length, naming and design.

[In 2010 I made a start in developing a so-called Blueprint; a forensic “informative infra-structure” consisting of 12 sections. A description of background-knowledge and science, theory and practice per field of expertise, built up according to a fixed structure.](#)

Together with two forensic experts, who were practicing in 2010, I have written Two Concepts of Blueprints in English [20] :

1. With Professor George Maat (LUMC, NFI): ‘Forensic Anthropology’.
2. With Drs. Will Fagel (NFI): ‘ Forensic Handwriting Expertise’.

[From 2014 to 2020](#), by making notes of registered needs and wishes, I amassed a detailed knowledge of the lawyers’ demand-side. On realizing the diversity of the needs for these [I expanded further the existing Blueprint, under compassion with the lawyers’ wishes, and add some 9 items, to reach an amount of 21 sections, as a total in the Blueprint anno 2020, for the time being.](#)

[The “Blueprint 2020” aims at a transparent and uniform structure, a simple chronological lay-out, a differentiated survey and a scientific and scholarly insight into all practical, theoretical and legal aspects per field of expertise. To manufacture in an atmosphere of mutual coordination and close cooperation with the NFI-experts, the Blueprint will function as the constructive core of this Essay.](#)

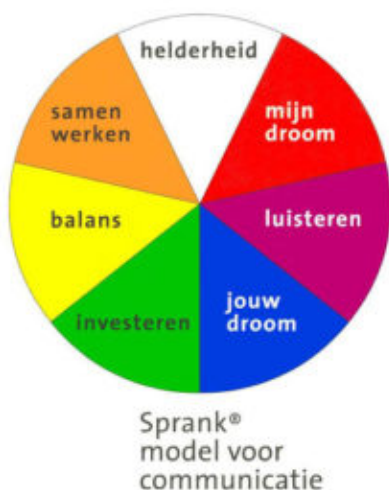
The [Blueprint](#) insight is provided into the practice of the forensic experts’ supply side of both the NFI-expertises possible and of its limitations. By means of a description that is permanently kept up to date, an all encompassing source of information and knowledge in each field of expertise will come into existence.



It informs the reader of the actual state of the background and the limits in each field of expertise. Also, it provides insight into instruments and apparatus used, it explains research analyses and methods and how conclusions [21] are drawn. And it gives insight into professional literature as well as into legal and scientific background and available laws and case-law for each field of expertise.

Thus the practical needs are met for 'detailed knowledge of, on the one hand, the diversity of the demand-side and, on the other, of the possibilities and the restrictions of the (forensic) supply-side' [22] . All these elements are deemed necessary in the discussion of a more equitable division between the demand and the supply of forensic expertise.

It is the ideal of the Blueprint to bring about an optimal bridge-connection between the beta's supply of forensic expertise (NFI) and the alpha-lawyers' demand of forensic expertise, to be used in the chain of evidence.



### *Note 23 - Spank Model for Communication*

In the final [Blueprint](#) the actual needs and proposals of the NFI-experts will have to be incorporated, so that the final contents will be an all-encompassing clear source of shared information and knowledge.

Within this framework my [Blueprint-proposal](#) will have to be discussed with the NFI, by listening to the NFI-needs and -wishes of the experts, investing time in this process and thereafter to take stock and work together towards the aimed essential clearness as the final purpose of the [Blueprint](#).

As science, technique, and insights move forward continuously a paper version of a book will be soon out of date, and an on-line version of a Blueprint-bundling of all practised fields of expertise within the NFI might be the preferred format. The future of each [Blueprint](#) will be a dynamic process, in which forensic applications will be deleted, replaced and added on a regular basis. [A uniform explanation of the essentials of the various expertises will be realised under the slogan ‘unity in diversity’.](#)

The famous Dutch pathologist-anatomist Dr. Jan Zeldenrust [24] pointed out already in the twentieth-century, that great value should be attached to the fact that a physician as expert ‘should be a speaker of Dutch so that the medical layman will understand what he has to say.’ This is a valid point when it comes to the medical expert, but it is still equally relevant for all other kinds of forensic experts.

[Written in lay-language on an academic level, the Blueprint is meant for all lawyers and everyone else involved professionally with forensic expertise. It will be edited in a way to reach clearness in every field of expertise so that the “difficult stuff” will be understood optimally.](#)

[\[Appendix 4 Blueprint Per Area of Expertise.\]](#) .

#### *D. What for? Improving the understanding of the target audiences*

A book of reference will be a collection of all Blueprints together, filled with information on all different sorts of forensic expertise. It is intended to provide a uniform insight into the practice of all forensic expertise and will create the possibility of equitable communication between the partners in the chain of custody.

Thus a Handbook of Forensic Expertise may function as a strategic instrument to optimize the connection between the several chain-partners within the criminal procedure.

[In this way in future also the bond between the lawyers themselves may improve. By creating a better understanding of forensic expertise, a clearer and more critical dialogue between the lawyers themselves will be possible. Future assignments of research, including wishes, directed to the NFI \[25\] , will have to be shared by the public prosecutor with the defence, as actually prescribed by the](#)

New Code of Criminal Procedure. A greater understanding - prior to the application - will result in a sharper joint formulation of the investigation assignment to the NFI.

The existence of a current "state-of-the-art" survey of forensic expertise, may possibly serve as the solution of cold cases [26] [27] [28] and possible judicial errors [29] within criminal law and may even be suitable to avoid these errors.

A different category of individuals who would be interested in a forensic book of reference are the NFI-experts themselves. They too ought to be well informed of both the level of the expertise of their colleagues - related to the Inter Disciplinary Forensic Research [IDFO] [30] - but also of the legal background of the criminal trial, in which context their expertise will serve.

A Handbook of Forensic Expertise will give insight into the complete range of multidisciplinary forensic research; this runs from Crime Scene to the final verdict.

This covers the demand of the Council of the Judiciary, which means that the level of forensic knowledge of the judges must be high enough for them to be able to approach contributions of the experts critically. This requires all judges to be familiar with the most important methods of research. [31]

A Handbook of Forensic Expertise in a Dutch and in an English version, can serve the following purposes;

1. It will be a book of reference for all lawyers in the legal process [32] ; judges, public prosecutors and barristers,
2. It will be a book of reference for NFI-experts, a peer NFI-insight, particularly when it concerns interdisciplinary forensic research [IDFO],
3. It will serve as a book of reference, including the practice aspects, of the forensic and technical police, [33]
4. Students at the Police Academy will use it,
5. Students of Criminalistics and Criminology at academic institutions and post-academic studies will study it,
6. The lawyers at the International Criminal Court [34] will need and use it as book of reference,
7. As a complementary service it will be useful for the NRGD [35] .

The NRGD in Utrecht offers forensic experts the possibility of standardization and

regulation in their field of practised expertise. Thus the NRGD offers a possibility to deal with certification and admission to the NRGD-list, which grants the individual expert a quality in criminal law.

The description by the NRGD of the ten areas of expertise, already accredited, can be used, (partially) to fill out the relevant Blueprints. Also, future Blueprints will be at the service of the NRGD, thus achieving an obvious process of Dutch cross-fertilization from which both the NFI and the NRGD will profit by unifying and clarifying national 'forensica'.

In this context the Forensic Science Regulator [36] , a governmental organisation in Birmingham, England (founded in 2008), can be compared with the NRGD.

By means of 'Codes of Practice and Conduct' it demands from the forensic experts that they live up to the high and uniform standards of conduct for the quality of individual behaviour and of professional methods in its organisations. It demands solid, effective and transparent reporting in criminal courts.

The Forensic Science Regulator aims at uniformity of individual behaviour and of the forensic process of research, within the world of forensic expertise, within the UK.

The NRGD aims at this by setting uniform expert-certifications in each area of expertise, in The Netherlands. While the proposed Blueprint tries to achieve a uniform way of describing the essentials per field of forensic expertise

In combination above mentioned 'uniformities' aim at a subject I wrote about in 2000, the so called 'double transparency'' in the [European] forensic expertise:

- 1) transparency of available qualified experts,
- 2) transparency of available methods of forensic research.

With the manufacturing of [the Blueprint-bundling](#), a uniform transparency of expertise-essentials will be created; reason why a better understanding and a better interpretation of the forensic reports by criminal lawyers will be enabled.

[37]



*“Alfa-Bèta-Circle”, Ills. Hans Jakobs, 2020*

### *Conclusion*

With the editing of a clearly written Handbook containing all NFI Forensic Expertise, a positive impulse may be given to the attitude of the NFI, known as a little customer-friendly attitude [38] . Of course with the passage of time more professional forensic data have become available.

Now it will be a matter of arranging and systematizing the already existing NFI-information per field of expertise, to pour that information into the uniform of the pivotal, definitive version of the Blueprint, in close collaboration with the experts concerned.

As an actual source of consistent information the NFI-Catalogue of forensic expertise will be the focus for the outside world, particularly where it concerns the chain of evidence. [39]

At the same time “the need of an explanatory mechanism and knowledge” [40] will be fulfilled, with regard to the so-often consulted NFI-forensic expertise areas. An important purpose formulated in the “Law Expert in Criminal Cases’ (2010) will be honoured: the improvement of the communication [41] between expert and jurisdiction.

An additional positive aspect is that also the insight into Criminalistics will increase.

All essentials on forensic expertise will come together in the Blueprints by way of

a logical and systematically described process. It will serve its purpose as an educational tool and may be helpful in the future of the university study 'Criminalistics', that will be insightfully safeguarded.

An NFI-reference book, edited by collecting all the Blueprints that describe essentials per field of expertise, thus basically is a sum of simple ideas [42] . It will achieve as its end-result a well-structured Handbook Forensic Expertise; the realisation of a timeless and useful Ideal.

Voorschoten, November 12th, 2020

### *Recommended Background Literature*

Aben, Diederik and Meulenbroek, Lex, *A Haystack filled with Needles, The use of genealogical DNA-data-banks, in tracing and identification*, Publisher Paris, December 2019

Broeders, Ton, *Developments in Criminalistics, From Fingertrace to DNA-profile, from certainty to probability*, Oration on the occasion of his appointment as Special Professor in Criminalistics, Leiden University, 19 November 2004.

Eco, Umberto, *The Enchantment of Lists*, Publishing House Bert Bakker, 2009

Fresco, Louise, *Cross-fertilization*, Prometheus, Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 2014

Groeneveld, Robert, *The art of investigation and science, Instruments for the intelligent criminal judge*. Farewell Lecture as a Professor Criminalistics, Leyden University, 7 December 1999

de Keijser, J.W., Elffers, H., Kok, R.M., Sjerps, M.J., *Almost understood? Boom* Legal Publishers, The Hague, 2009

van Koppen, Peter, *Convincing Proof*, New Amsterdam Publishers, 2011

Bernard - Robertson / G.A. Vignaux / Charles Berger, *Interpreting Evidence, Evaluating Forensic Science in the Courtroom*, Second Edition, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Oxford, UK, 2016. de Spinoza, Baruch / Benedict, *Ethics (1663 - 1675)*, Publishing House Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 2004

Thorwald, Jurgen, *Das Jahrhundert der Detektive*, Droemer Knaur, Zurich, 1973

Uges, Donald, *Perfect as murderer or toxicologist, A matter of the dose or the teaching*, Oration at the acceptance of the Professorship in clinical and forensic toxicology, State University of Groningen, 2 June 1998

Van de Voorde, Wim, *Handbook Forensic Medicin*, die Keure, Bruges, Belgium, 2010

Yasar Iscan, Mehmet & Steyn, Maryna, *The Human Skeleton in Forensic*

*Medicine*, Third Edition, Thomas Publisher Ltd, Illinois, 2013

By way of finding what alpha-lawyers need, beta-sciences will be able to gather strength, by describing the forensic essentials in the connecting Blueprint, the understanding of the target audiences will be enhanced and criminal proceedings are lightened.

### Notes

[1] An essay is a contemplative text in prose in which a personal view is given on a contemporary issue. The term is derived from the French 'essai', an attempt or probe. The creator of this literary genre is Michel de Montaigne, whose first edition of "*Essais*" appeared in France in 1580.

[2] Forensic expertise: expertise = research by experts, forensic= at the service of the 'Forum ' / the Court in old Rome.

[3] Prof. Dr. Ir. Charles Berger, *Truth-finding to a Higher Level*. Inaugural Address delivered by Charles E.H. Berger at the acceptance of the renewed appointment as extraordinary professor Criminalistics at Leyden University, on behalf of the Foundation Criminalistics, on Friday 3 February 2017, p.3

[4] *Focus on Forensic Laboratories, An acquaintance with practised expertises*, Livia Jakobs, Ed., Wolters Noordhoff, Groningen, 1995. A special incident is, on May 10th 1995, during the Symposium "Focus on Forensic Laboratories", on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, this book was presented to the then Minister of Justice, Mrs. W. Sorgdrager; see Note 39)

[5] Ir. H.J.J. Hardy, former coordinator Research & Development NFI and Teacher Forensic Science, University of Amsterdam

[6] H. Hardy and I are grateful for the attentive mediation of Forensic Staff Members: Anique Henderson MSC Courts Utrecht and Arnhem]; Michelle Claushuis MSC [Courts of Appeal Amsterdam and Leeuwarden]; Wanda Remijn MSC [Courts Lelystad and Rotterdam].

[7] Research on source-level: What is the origin, the source of the trace?

[8] Research on activity-level; In which activity did the trace originate?

[9] Contamination: any substance inadvertently introduced into or onto an item of evidence after its recognition by a responsible party. Keith Inman, M.Crim., Norah Rudin, Ph.D., *Principles and Practice of Criminalistics, The profession of Forensic Science*, CRC Press, London, 2001, p.211

[10] Secondary transfer: this refers to a fragment transferred from its source A to target B, and then transferred from target B to target C. Detecting the fragment

from source A on target C leads to the inference of contact between A and C, when in fact no such contact has been made; Keith Inman, M.Crim., Norah Rudin Ph.D., *Principles and Practice of Criminalistics, The Profession of Forensic Science*, CRC Press, London, 2001, p.96

[11] Thomas Bayes (1702-1761) English statistician / philosopher. The Theorem of Bayes in the shape of odds [the hypotheses are part of this] is as follows: Posterior odds = Prior odds X likelihood ratio. In other words: the expert decides, on the basis of his research, the diagnostic value of his observation = the likelihood ratio = LR = the evidential value. The "new" odds / the posterior odds follows from the "old" odds / prior odds multiplied by the likelihood ratio / LR / the evidential value.

[12] Professor Dr, Ir. Charles Berger, *Truth-finding to a higher level*, Oration Leiden University, February 3, 2017.

[13] Minister of Justice & Security Mr. Ferdinand Grapperhaus in his letter to the House of Commons, Second Chamber, July 1, 2019. <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-33628-63.pdf>

[14] Zie [www.nfi.nl](http://www.nfi.nl)

[15] Prof. Dr. Mr. Hans [J.F.] Nijboer, *Forensic Expertise*, 4th edition, Gouda Quint, Deventer, 2009, p. 36

[16] Since 1994 run by Prof. Dr. P. de Knijff, professor of population and evolutionary genetics at the department of human genetics of the Leiden University Medical Centre, LUMC.

[17] Article 6, European Convention for Human Rights [ECHR], *Treaty of Rome*, 1950.

[18] Series of Lectures: Frontiers of Forensic Science, University of Amsterdam, and Forensic Symposia of the Co van Ledde Hulsebos Centre (CLHC) Amsterdam, Amsterdam Centre for Forensic Science and Medicine. Teamleaders: Prof. Dr. Maurice Aalders and Prof. Dr. Arian van Asten, with thanks to both for their hospitality we enjoyed at the University of Amsterdam, mostly in 'The Science Park'.

<https://www.clhc.nl/shared-content/news/news/2020/09/1st-ffs-session-in-new-academic-year-2020-221.html?origin=Bz1gpBgwThqTdnLkMIFl%2FQ>

[19] Prof. Dr. Maurice Aalders et al., Reconstructing the time since death using noninvasive thermometry of the human body and numerical analysis, *Science Advances*, American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Washington DC, 29 May 2020 <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/22/eaba4243.full>

[20] Both Concepts of [Blueprints](#) are for your perusal at the author



- [21] Mr. Paul Acda, *NFI Digital Magazine* 6, 2019; Comment on readability of NFI-reports
- [22] Prof.Dr. Amade A. M'charek, Second Triannual Signalling for Forensic Research, executed and commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security, June 24, 2019, p.23 <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/blg-892793>
- [23] The Sprankmodel is developed by Katri Schweitzer and Roeland Schweitzer, Schworks, 2002
- [24] Dr. J. Zeldenrust, *Murder analyzed*, Stubeg, Hoogezand, 1988, Introduction J. Zeldenrust.
- [25] *Trouw*, de Verdieping, p.1,2 en 3, 12 november 2020, In that article the future plans for a revision of the present Code of Criminal Procedure (1926) are described. Under the guidance of the Rector Magnificus of Maastricht University, Rianne Letschert and in consultation with the Minister of Justice and Security Ferd Grapperhaus. Among other, there is a tendency towards a greater attention for the suspect, to the extent that 'the public prosecutor must more readily share with the defence the assignments for research, for instance the assignments to the NFI to analyse certain traces more closely. In this way the defence can participate in the NFI-research assignment and possibly make suggestions for adaptations.'
- [26] Prof. Peter J. van Koppen, Leader of the Project 'Reasonable Doubt' by students of the Free University of Amsterdam.
- [27] Lex Meulenbroek and Diederik Aben, *A haystack full of pins*, Editor Paris, December 2019, in which the use of genealogic DNA-databanks is described, after American example.[pending legal regulation in The Netherlands].
- [28] Carina van Leeuwen, forensic - cold case - detective at the Amsterdam Police, hopes to solve cold cases by using public DNA-databanks, in the future.
- [29] Prof. Gert-Jan Knoops, Plenary Lecture November 13, 2017, Leiden University, "The Knoops Innocence Project" as Dutch part of the International Innocence Network of the Cardozo School of Law, New York, 2012.
- [30] Drs. Jan A. de Koeijer, Forensic Expert, Interdisciplinary Forensic Research, NFI.
- [31] Mr. Dr. R.A. Hoving, *Expert Evidence in Criminal law*, Dissertation State University Groningen, June, 1, 2017, p. 67.  
[https://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/42081819/Complete\\_thesis.pdf](https://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/42081819/Complete_thesis.pdf)
- [32] Mr. H.W.J. de Groot, former counselor of the Amsterdam Court, From Practice. A robbery during a drugsdeal and a burglary; twice a judgement on quicksand?, *Expertise en Recht*, 2020,4, pp. 141-147. Page 147: "that research

shows that legal professionals often have a poor understanding of forensic reports". This statement supports, once again, the sum of conclusions from our research into criminal cases 2014-2020, on which one of the motivations for the [Blueprint](#) lies.

[33] Prof. Dr. Christianne de Poot, *The reconstruction of criminal facts*, Oration to Professor Criminalistics by special appointment, Free University of Amsterdam, 4th October 2017.

[34] Mr. Christina Ribeiro, Public Prosecutor International Criminal Court (ICC), *'Forensic science at the ICC'*, Lecture Frontiers in Forensics, Amsterdam University, 18 September 2019; In her lecture she asks herself: if the solid and reliable NFI-forensic expertise-reporting is understood for a 100 % by all judges?

[35] Mr. Michel Smithuis, medical doctor, n.p., director and founder of the 'Nederlands Register Gerechtelijk Deskundigen', 2010. The NRGD is responsible for the accreditation and the certification of forensic experts in order to achieve excellence in areas of expertise to serve in Dutch criminal trials. Meanwhile accreditation is possible in 10 fields of forensic expertise.

<https://www.nrgd.nl/zoek-eeen-deskundige/grenzen-per-deskundigheidsgebied.aspx>

[36] Forensic Science Regulator, Director Dr. Gilian Tully, Birmingham, UK; [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forensic-science-regulator](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forensic-science-regulator)

[37] Jakobs, Livia .E.M.P. en Sprangers, Wim .J.J.M., A European View on Forensic Expertise and Counter Expertise, Criminal Law Forum, An International Journal. The official Journal of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, p.390, Volume 11, No.3, 2000.

[38] Prof. Dr. Amade A. M'charek, *Second Triannual Signalling of Forensic Research*, executed and commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security, June 23, 2019, p. 22. <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/blg-892793>

[39] Mrs. W. Sorgdrager, Chairman, First Visitation-Round, Visitation-Commission NFI, 13 juni 2019, p.3. 3

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/rapporten/2019/07/01/tk-bijlage-visitatiecommissie-nfi-rapport-2019/tk-bijlage-visitatiecommissie-nfi-rapport-2019.pdf>

[40] Mr. Diederik Aben, Public-Prosecutor High Court, Lecture Post Academic Education, *About Law of Evidence, proof and interpretation of evidence*, Leiden University, 11th December 2017.

[41] *Law Expert in Criminal Cases, Memory of Explanation*, 2009. <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-31116-3.html>

[42] Baruch / Benedict de Spinoza, *The Treat about the Enhancement of the Mind* (1662 - 1677) Historic Editor Groningen, 2010, "a true idea is simple, or a combination of simple ideas", p. 79



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# **Leïla Slimani - De duivel zit in de details**



Leïla Slimani. Ills.: Joseph Sassoon Semah

‘Literatuur is harder nodig dan ooit, omdat die een enorme ruimte aan vrijheid biedt waarin alles gezegd kan worden, waar je het kwaad kunt aanroeren, het gruwelijke kunt vertellen en kunt breken met de regels van moraal en fatsoen. Literatuur brengt complexiteit en ambivalentie terug in een wereld die dat verwerpt.’

In de recent verschenen, kleine essaybundel *De duivel zit in de details* spreekt de Marokkaans/Franse schrijver Leïla Slimani zich in zes verhalende essays uit tegen moslimterrorisme dat de wereld heeft veranderd.

In *De Duivel zit in de details* is de door iedereen gerespecteerde en geliefde hoogleraar Amine Moussa de hoofdpersoon. Hij is bang en somber geworden, en wordt getergd door angstaanvallen en slapeloosheid ten gevolge van de fundamentalistische islambeweging die steeds meer vat krijgt op de samenleving. Zo wordt er in de wijk een ‘brigade ter bevordering van deugd en voorkoming van ondeugd’ ingesteld en hebben moslimfundamentalisten een groep jongeren doodgeslagen omdat ze ’s avonds uitgingen en niet meededen aan het gebed, of omdat ze alcohol dronken. Tijdens de laatste dagen van de ramadan staat Moussa in de rij bij de bakkerij Nour om gevulde crêpes voor zijn vrouw te kopen. Een moslima beticht hem van roken tijdens de ramadan. Beledigingen volgen, er wordt geschermd met God. “Iemand trekt aan zijn jasje. Dan rent hij weg.”

In één van de essays, *Een leger van pennen*, beschrijft Leïla Slimani hoe zij, op verzoek, in het hoofd kroop van een van de jonge daders van de moordpartij bij

Charlie Hebdo en een fictieve tekst probeert te schrijven. Het lukt haar niet iets op papier te krijgen, niet omdat ze te laf is, maar domweg dat ze zich niet kon overgeven aan zo'n exercitie een paar dagen na de aanslag op 7 januari 2015. Ook miste ze op dit moment, teveel aangeslagen, de onweerstaanbare, innerlijke drang het essay te schrijven.

Bijna een jaar later, op 14 november 2015, schrijft zij 'Fundamentalisten, ik haat jullie' en heeft ze genoeg afstand genomen om te kunnen reflecteren op het bloedbad in haar geboortestad Parijs, waarna ze eerst nauwelijks haar mening durfde te ventileren uit angst domme dingen te zeggen in 'een wereld die al bezwijkt onder onwetendheid en haat.' Maar wat Leïla Slimani wel weet is dat we moeten strijden voor onze vrijheid, strijden tegen de weerzinwekkende ideologie van deze moordenaars. 'Tegen barbaren, terroristen en fundamentalisten uit welke hoek dan ook heb ik maar één ding te zeggen: Ik haat jullie.' We moeten ons niet verschuilen achter een zogenaamd respect voor culturen, ze gaat over haar nek van hun sharia.

Leïla Slimani (1981) wordt door de fundamentalistische islam gezien als een ongelovige vrouw uit de Magreb die haar ziel heeft verkocht aan het Westen, en een misdaad heeft begaan door een roman te schrijven. Ondertussen is ze wel een van de meest spraakmakende auteurs van dit moment. Ze won de Prix Goncourt met *Een zachte hand*. Ze is geboren in Marokko en werd tweetalig opgevoed: Marokkaans en Frans. Ze studeerde in Frankrijk politicologie en handelswetenschappen.

Leïla Slimani - *De duivel zit in de details*. ISBN 9789046823231. Uitgeverij Nieuw Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2021

Zie interview met Margot Dijkgraaf over haar boek haar boek 'Mathilde':

*Crossing Border*. On Tuesday the 16th of June, we welcomed bestselling author Leila Slimani (*The Perfect Nanny*, *Adèle*) for a free online BorderKitchen. She was interviewed by Margot Dijkgraaf about her new book, *Mathilde*. At the end of the interview, viewers had the opportunity to ask questions to the author and human rights activist.

About *Mathilde*: 1946. The young, French, Mathilde falls head over heels for Amine, a Moroccan officer of the French army. They get married and leave for a

secluded family farm, hours from Rabat. How can their love, which is constantly being tested, stand the test of time? Mathilde is the first part of the *'The Land of the Others'*-trilogy. The story was based on her family history and entered the French bestseller charts at number one. Leila Slimani (Morocco, 1981) is the bestselling author of *The Perfect Nanny*, winner of the Prix Goncourt, and *Adèle*, for which she won the La Mamounia Prize. Thank you to Uitgeverij Nieuw Amsterdam.

*Linda Bouws - St. Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten*

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# **Chomsky And Pollin: A Global Green New Deal Is The Only Way To Avert Disaster**



*Robert Pollin*

Global warming is the biggest challenge facing humanity today. Yet, climate change has yet to become our number one priority even though, as the World Meteorological Organization warned back in March 2020, [“time is fast running out”](#) on averting an acute environmental catastrophe.

In this context, a comprehensive Green New Deal is urgently needed to be put into action. A Global Green New Deal. And, hopefully, the incoming Biden

administration will not squander the opportunity to have the U.S. take the lead on climate emergency now that the Senate is under Democratic control.

In the interview that follows, Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin explain the urgency of undertaking ambitious efforts to respond globally to the existential crisis of climate change within the context of a just transition to a green economy. Chomsky and Pollin are joint recipients of the 2020 Climate Courage Award granted by the Climate Change Leadership Institute for their book *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal* and its articulation of “a global solution that is not only bold and viable but also replete with the need for a just transition.”

*C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, the outgoing Trump administration was the worst thing that could have happened for the environment. Trump rolled out dozens of deregulation policies. His administration reversed the Obama-rule on methane emissions, even though methane, the natural ingredient in natural gas, is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Meanwhile he denied the science of climate change and withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement. What can we expect from the Biden administration on climate emergency, especially now that the Senate is under Democratic control, and why is it so important that the U.S. should rejoin the Paris Agreement?*



*Noam Chomsky*

*Noam Chomsky:* Rejoining the Paris Agreement is imperative, but only a bare beginning. The Agreement was an important step forward. It is, however, very weak, not even close to what has to be done. It also has no teeth: it is voluntary, no binding commitments. The primary reason for the weakness is the U.S. Republican Party, which would not permit anything that went much beyond symbolism. The Party is still there. In fact, it just achieved overwhelming success in the November 2020 elections, winning at every level except for the White

House, where distaste for Trump's antics prevailed. That victory is quite astonishing if only in light of the fact that the Party's leaders were responsible for killing tens if not hundreds of thousands of Americans in the preceding months — not to speak of racing to the abyss of environmental catastrophe, a fact that scarcely registered.

The Party is still there, a dominating force, poised to ensure that the country is ungovernable, a specialty of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell as he proclaimed with pride during the Obama years and demonstrated with considerable success.

And Trump is not gone, far from it. A large majority of the Republican voting base regards him as their leader, if not savior. They can be whipped up to threaten any Republican office holder who dares to depart from Trump-McConnell malevolence, much as the Tea Party was organized and used for that purpose, with plenty of funding from powerful concentrations of capital. It may be recalled that as recently as 2008, during the McCain campaign, Republicans were willing to entertain the thought that there might be some problem about destroying the climate that sustains life. With virtual unanimity, they succumbed to a juggernaut launched by David Koch to extirpate that heresy, a victory that remains in place. With Trump setting himself up as the "true victor" in the elections, stirring up poisons in the ways he masters very well, there will be serious barriers to returning the country to a moderately civilized course.

How serious the barriers are we saw right before our eyes on January 6, a fateful day.

Ever since he gained office, Trump has been working hard to turn the country into a tin-pot dictatorship under his rule, a process we have been discussing regularly in this forum as it has unfolded.

To repeat briefly, there have been three prongs to the assault against the world by this miserable creature:

1. Destroying the environment that sustains life
2. Sharply increasing the threat of terminal nuclear war;
3. Dismantling formal democracy.

The first one alone suffices to establish him as arguably the most dangerous political figure in human history, a truism that has been hard for many to



contemplate.

Right now we are witnessing the next step in his dedication to destroy American democracy. He has been bragging for years about the “Tough Guys for Trump” — his Black and Brown Shirts.

On January 6, he unleashed them, encouraging their violence and destruction as they broke into the Capitol Building to prevent formal ratification of his electoral defeat, which, it seems, he will never acknowledge no matter how much destruction is caused by his malevolence.

In his disgraceful performance calling on his tough guys to go home — for now — he could not refrain from stirring up more poisons with brazen lies about how his “landslide victory” was stolen by evil forces, doing what he can to ensure maximum damage to the country to which he intends to return triumphantly to complete the wreckage.

That is only one force the Biden administration will have to overcome to save the country, and the world, from environmental catastrophe. Another is the Democratic National Committee (DNC) — Clintonite, neoliberal, oriented to Wall Street and the donor class. The intraparty conflict began to emerge even before the election. One central element was global warming. Under significant popular pressure, the Biden-Harris environmental program moved in a fairly progressive direction; insufficient, but a considerable step beyond predecessors. As we’ve discussed before, the DNC reacted by cutting it back.

The impediments to the urgently needed policy are extreme, but there are also popular forces that cannot be ignored. They are imposing what the powerful call “reputational risks” that have to be dealt with, sometimes in meaningful ways. And power does not make those who wield it totally impervious to human concerns. Whatever the mix of factors may be, there are changes taking place within the institutions that dominate the society. European-based fossil fuel companies are shifting toward sustainable energy. Bank of America, the last holdout, joined other major banks in refusing to join Trump’s last-ditch effort to destroy the Arctic nature reserve. Popular activism can influence those who own the country... And it can influence the government as well, despite the impediments over a spectrum from the DNC to the far right.

The outcome of this struggle for survival will determine what we can expect from the Biden administration.

*Polychroniou: Bob, you have made a strong case that any Green New Deal must be global in nature and scope if we are serious about addressing the climate emergency. How do you envision such an undertaking taking place, and what should be done with the less developed countries that don't have the resources to embark on a transition to clean and renewable energy systems?*

*Robert Pollin: The Green New Deal must be global in scope, whether we like it or not. This is the only possible way to have a chance of bringing global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions down to zero by 2050, which is the goal that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has set as the requirement for moving onto a climate stabilization path.*

The evidence on current global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions makes this clear. Thus, China and the U.S. are by far the biggest sources of emissions, with China at 27 percent and the U.S. at 15 percent. So adding emissions from China and the U.S. alone gets us to 42 percent of the global total. But we can also look at this same statistic from the opposite direction: even after combining the emissions levels for China and the U.S., we still haven't accounted for fully 58 percent of the global total. We can also push the individual country emissions figures a bit further, and include all 27 countries of the European Union (EU) along with the United States and China. This adds another 10 percent to current total emissions, getting us to 52 percent of global emissions with China, the United States and the 27 EU countries combined. Therefore, if we only pay attention to China, the U.S. and all EU countries, we still are neglecting the countries responsible for generating nearly half of current total global emissions. The point is that every place does matter if we really are going to hit the target of net zero global emissions by no later than 2050. Zero emissions does mean *zero*, everywhere. If we let some small countries, or low-income countries, off the hook, then where do we draw the line and still get to the zero emissions goal?

This is especially true if we are also serious about raising mass living standards in low-income countries. In areas such as rural Africa and India, roughly half of the population has no access to electricity at present. Raising living standards in low-income countries will entail providing affordable energy, for people to light and heat their homes, for cooking and to improve transportation systems. It will also

mean that, especially in rural areas of the developing world, women will be able to stop spending hours every day gathering wood to burn for cooking and heating. The energy supply that will deliver this rise in mass living standards will need to be renewable energy, provided at high efficiency levels — solar and wind energy primarily, but also some geothermal, small-scale hydro and low-emissions bioenergy.

Developing countries therefore need large-scale investments to build clean energy infrastructures. By my estimates, this will cost about 2 to 3 percent of overall spending (GDP) in these economies every year between now and 2050. That is not an overwhelming amount of money; it means that 97 percent of the economy's overall spending can be devoted to other things, like growing food in abundance, creating good-quality housing, transportation, education, health care, as well as producing some local manufactured goods. Still, that 3 percent of total spending needs to come from somewhere. As a basic standard of fairness, most of the funds should be provided by the high-income countries. This is because the high-income countries, starting with the U.S. but also including Canada, Western Europe, Japan and Australia are primarily responsible for loading up the atmosphere with greenhouse gases and causing climate change. There are straightforward ways for the high-income countries to raise these investment funds, including cutting military spending, eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and having the major central banks, starting with the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, purchase Green Bonds from the governments of low-income countries at zero- or near-zero interest rates.

That said, it should also be clear that in the low-income countries, as well as the high-income countries, clean energy investments will pay for themselves over time. This is because investing in dramatically raising energy efficiency levels will mean that people will be able to, for example, heat and light their homes with much less energy. In addition, investments in renewable energy will mean lower prices for the energy you do have to buy. It is already the case that, in both low- and high-income economies, average prices for renewable energy are comparable to or lower than those for fossil fuels and nuclear power, and these renewable energy costs are also falling.

*Polychroniou: The Global Green New Deal that you have proposed makes top priority a just transition for the workforce employed in the fossil fuel economy. Can you talk a bit about this issue?*

*Pollin:* Investments to build a clean energy economy will be a major source of job creation in all regions of the world. Countries at all levels of development will experience significant gains in job creation relative to maintaining their existing fossil fuel infrastructures. Research that I have conducted with co-workers has found this relationship to hold in Brazil, China, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Puerto Rico, South Africa, South Korea, Spain and the United States. As a rough approximation, I estimate the increase in employment worldwide would be in the range of 160 million jobs per year on average between 2021 and 2030.

At the same time, workers and communities throughout the world whose livelihoods depend on people consuming oil, coal and natural gas will lose out in the clean energy transition. It is only a modest exaggeration to say that the fate of the planet depends on whether we can put in place just transition policies for these workers and communities that will be negatively impacted by the decline and shuttering of the fossil fuel industry. Just transition policies are certainly justified according to any standard of fairness. But they are also a matter of strategic politics. In the absence of such adjustment assistance programs operating at a major scale, the workers and communities facing retrenchment from the clean energy investment project will, predictably and understandably, fight to defend their communities and livelihoods. This in turn will create unacceptable delays in proceeding with effective climate stabilization policies.

Considering the U.S. economy, co-workers and I have estimated that a rough high-end figure for such a program would average less than \$1 billion per year over 2021 to 2030 — that is, well below one one-hundredth of 1 percent of U.S. GDP. This level of funding would provide strong support in two areas: (1) income, retraining and relocation support for workers facing retrenchments; and (2) guaranteeing the pensions for workers in the affected industries. Comparable programs will of course need to be implemented in other country settings. The proportional costs as a share of GDP in all other economies is not likely to be much higher than the U.S. figure. In short, generous just transition policies for workers and communities that are currently dependent on the fossil fuel industry need to be included as a centerpiece of all Green New Deal programs throughout the world.

*Polychroniou: Noam, it is generally agreed that labor must play a leading role in tackling the existential crisis of global warming. What are the arguments that*

*climate emergency is a labor issue?*

*Chomsky:* To begin with, the climate emergency is a human emergency — in fact, an emergency for almost all living things. We are not just racing to destroy ourselves, a careening course accelerated by an array of villainous masters of the private economy and the state, but also the animal kingdom and much of the rest of the organic world. Human destructiveness, culminating in the Anthropocene, reaches levels of depravity that can hardly be captured in words, at least mine. Nor can words capture the failure to comprehend what is happening before our eyes.

Working people are humans, in fact the large majority of the species. A human emergency is an issue for labor by definition. More specifically, overcoming this emergency will require great changes in the kinds of work that people do, over a very broad range. One obvious case is fossil fuel workers. They will have to be helped in the transition to a new economy — one in which they can have better lives and work, a topic that Bob has studied in detail. If Democratic party leaders had cared enough about working people, they would have been organizing in oil-producing areas instead of conceding them to the Republicans with their easy and cynical tales of how Biden's goal is to take away their jobs and destroy their communities with some liberal hoax about climate. Another clear case is agricultural practices, which will have to be radically changed if we hope to survive. Constructing a new and much better society — and one that can survive — should open up a vast array of new and much better employment opportunities in manufacturing, construction, education, health, in fact, every area of life.

Throughout modern history, organized labor and labor activists have been in the lead in creating a better world. Reagan and Thatcher, and those behind them, knew very well what they were doing when they launched the neoliberal assault on global society by targeting unions, the main line of defense for working people in the bitter class war that they sharply accelerated. Labor has also been in the lead in the areas of our current concern. One of the earliest and most far-sighted environmentalists was the great labor leader Tony Mazzocchi, a high official of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), workers on the front line in enduring the effects of the industrial pollution that is destroying the planet. Reviving his Labor party initiative is not an idle dream. Along with badly needed revival of the labor movement, it might be one prong in the broad effort that is imperative if we are to escape from the catastrophe we are creating

and move on to a better life.

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## **Would A Bobi Wine Presidential Victory Bring Freedom And Prosperity To Uganda?**



*Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu—better known to the public as Bobi Wine—is a singer turned politician who is currently campaigning in the January 2021 general election to oust Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni who has been in power for more than 30 years.*

Bobi Wine, with a widespread following and popularity among a significant segment of the Ugandan population, has emerged as a strong challenger to Museveni. As a musician, many of Wine’s songs take a socially conscious tone by speaking out against poverty, and in favor of freedom and democracy for Ugandans. Wine grew up in one of the nation’s poorest neighborhoods in the capital city of Kampala and his rise from poverty to being a successful singer, and then an elected Member of Parliament, has been viewed as an inspiration to many of his followers who regard him as *[‘the Ghetto President’](#)*.

Since Wine’s election as Member of Parliament in 2017, he strongly opposed authoritarian measures imposed by Museveni such as the President’s decision to remove age limits and Wine publicly rallied against the President’s decision to impose a [social media tax](#) to stifle opposition towards him on WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter.

During this time, Wine also created a national movement called “People Power”—a movement consisting of, as [The Economist](#) describes, “a messy coalition of established politicians, frustrated graduates, and the hustlers of his ghetto hinterland.”

The purpose of the movement is to bring awareness to Museveni’s improper governance and to challenge conventional politics. In response to Wine’s public demonstrations against Museveni, Wine has been subjected to state-sanctioned torture and repeated arrest. Most notably, in August 2018, allegedly on the orders of President Museveni, the Ugandan Security Forces [fired live bullets](#) into a crowd of Wine supporters, killed Wine’s personal driver, invaded the hotel that Wine was staying in and proceeded to arrest and subsequently torture him and

his colleagues.

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Wine announced his bid to run for president in the 2021 general election. In July 2020, Wine announced himself as the leader of the rebranded and previously obscure political party, the National Unity Platform (NUP). The formation of such a party, with its conventional structure and authority over candidates, comes in contradiction with the spirit of Wine's People Power movement aimed at challenging conventional politics. In addition, it has been reported that Wine's new party has engaged in transactional politics. For instance, Derrick Ssonko, who is a mechanic, felt inspired to run for local councilor, "but the party ticket went to a rival who paid a bribe. He worries that the NUP is 'old wine in new bottles' even though everyone he knows will vote for it."

During his Presidential campaign, supporters of Wine have been met with police violence. In November, [54 people were killed](#) as supporters called for the release of Wine from detention.

Wine had been arrested at a campaign rally. Uganda's security forces have routinely prevented Wine from attending his campaign rallies and the President has prevented Wine from appearing on TV and radio stations. Most recently, the United States' Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, [publicly condemned](#) tactics within Uganda to suppress free and fair elections. In addition, Eliot Engel, the chairperson of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, has requested that the US [impose sanctions](#) on several Ugandan security officials in response to "a worsening of human rights in the country." In order to prevent Museveni from rigging the election, [Wine has said](#) that he hopes for an overwhelming turnout at the ballot box to make it difficult for Museveni to do so.

Uganda consists of a nation where 80% of the population is under the age of 35, and for these individuals, Bobi Wine brings a great deal of hope for a better life. The disparity in the demographics has created a generational divide whereby Museveni is viewed as unpopular among the youth but is viewed as popular among older rural voters who view regime change as ["a hauntingly perilous idea"](#)—linking such change to the years of bloody horror that preceded Museveni. However, it must be met with cautious optimism whether, as a politician, Wine would be able to deliver on his promises or whether Wine's victory would mean a continuation of corrupt politics. In [Wine's campaign manifesto](#) he states, "*Our promise to the youth of Uganda, we shall ensure we find meaningful employment*



*for you. We want to create at least 5 million jobs. We shall invest in technology and a massive scale of industrialization.....A vote for NUP is an assurance that citizens will never be persecuted for disagreeing with the government. A vote for NUP is a vote for the protection of our natural resources as a country which Gen. Museveni now treats as his personal wealth. A vote for NUP is a vote for the closing of the income gap between the rich and the poor.... Our promise to all Ugandans is that we shall safeguard their land. We shall put an end to the enormous scale of land grabbing. If it is done, justice must prevail... The National Unity Platform is committed to working with all Ugandans to improve their lives. We believe that immediately after taking over government, every Ugandan from Kaabong to Kisoro, from Yumbe to Busia will experience meaningful change in their way of life.....”*

Despite such progressive electoral promises, it remains publicly unclear as to how Bobi Wine proposes to accomplish them. Wine’s political headquarters has images of pan-African heroes like socialist leader Thomas Sankara, but Wine has also been known to collaborate with free-market thinktanks. Wine said that his goal is to rebuild public institutions and end decades of personalized rule, but Wine himself has also said, “I don’t have a very radical programme.” In President Museveni’s first year in office, he published a book entitled, “*What’s Africa’s Problem?*”—in which he stated, “The problem of Africa, in general, and Uganda in particular, is not the people but leaders who want to overstay in power.” Bobi Wine’s call for freedom, democracy, and prosperity for Ugandans were the same political views that Museveni had once politically embraced long ago, but gradually, with time, Museveni became a corrupt authoritarian leader—if Bobi Wine won, would he be capable of ending the repetition of that authoritarian cycle?

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awareness to the country's ethnic tensions and human rights abuses. In 2017, Pitasanna launched a petition, which was later introduced in Parliament, calling on the Trudeau government to accept Rohingya refugees into Canada. His career goals include working with organizations to protect the rights of refugees and minority communities and advocating for constitutional reform in nations besieged by conflict.