

RALP NADER RADIO HOUR EP 334 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: It's the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*.

[Music] Stand up, stand up, you've been sitting way too long.

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. Hello, David.

David Feldman: Good morning.

Steve Skrovan: David, I want to clear something up from last week, because we talked to Robert Fellmeth about Facebook. We talked about giving out numbers, and we neglected to do so. If you did want to contact Facebook, there are two numbers that we have here. 650-308-7300. That's 650-308-7300 and 650-543-4800. That's 650-543-4800. You may get redirected to a website; I don't know the phone service in this digital age if people are even doing that, but those are the numbers to call. And even if they direct you to a web address, it's still worth contacting them that way.

Ralph Nader: In order to ask them why Mark Zuckerberg has not replied to the distinguished law professor's letter a year ago, Robert Fellmeth, who teaches at University of San Diego Law School, and who asked Mr. Zuckerberg some pointed questions about anonymous commentary on Facebook and the need to hold people to their names when they make these commentaries.

Steve Skrovan: That's right. And the voice you just heard there of course is Ralph Nader. And we have a great show for you. We love to complain about the younger generation, but Generation Z is proving themselves to be a generation of incipient activists. They are coming of age in a time of constant disaster and ever-increasing income inequality. So they have been left with no choice but to fight for change. After the Parkland, Florida school shooting, for instance, teens like Emma González led the national conversation around gun control. And Greta Thunberg, another Gen Z, has been the new conscience of the environmental movement by speaking eloquently and organizing mass school walkouts to demand action on climate change from the government. Our first guest, Barbara Lewis, is going to talk with us more about youth activism. She has written a number of books about how to promote civic engagement in kids. She would tell us about how kids can get involved in activism and how you can encourage the kids around you to be civic-minded. That's the first half of the show.

In the second half of the program, we're going to talk to a guest we've been looking forward to having for a long time, investigative reporter Greg Palast. Greg Palast has done a lot of work around election corruption. He wrote extensively about the theft in Florida and the infamous election of George W. Bush in 2000, which he chronicled for *The Guardian* and in his *New York Times* bestseller, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, which later became a documentary film featuring, among others, Rosario Dawson, Shailene Woodley and Ice-T. Now it appears he's gazing into the future. His latest book has the scary title, *How Trump Stole 2020: The Hunt for America's Vanished Voters*. We live in a "democracy" where one in five mail-in ballots are never counted. And the chance of your vote being thrown in the garbage is 900% higher if you're black than if you're white. Greg Palast will join us to advise us about how to protect people's votes in this upcoming election.

In between, we'll take a short break and check in with our corporate crime reporter Russell Mokhiber, as always. But first, let's talk about how we can support and encourage the next generation of activists. David?

David Feldman: Barbara Lewis is a national award-winning author and educator. When she taught at Jackson Elementary School in Salt Lake City, her students initiated the cleanup of hazardous waste, improved sidewalks and planted thousands of trees. Ms. Lewis has written nine books aimed at teaching kids to be civically active. She wrote the book *What Do You Stand For? For Teens: A Guide to Building Character*. And her soon to be released book is entitled *Social Emotional Stories: Lessons and Learning from Plants and Animals*. Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Barbara Lewis.

Barbara Lewis: Thank you, David.

Ralph Nader: Welcome indeed, Barbara. Given our schools' preference to teach children by memorization, which goes to regurgitation, which then goes to vegetation, your findings and your examples of young children engaged in social action, putting their idealism to work, putting their innocent questioning of elders, saying "You know how to deal with climate disruption. Why don't we use the sun?" In their very innocence, they can bring the best out of adults. Give us some examples of what children are doing now. I know your books have many other examples but the children of those days are now adults, so we want to be contemporary here.

Barbara Lewis: That's right. And in fact, every single piece of social action, every action that young people do, those have roots that go way back. We have had youth who have interrupted society, who have made their voices heard clear back to . . . well, I can say, even in Poland when we were there, I found the youngest example or the oldest, I should say, example of social action. But we won't get into that right now. You wanted some examples of youth now. So if we take one of the issues that they're very much concerned with and it's in the headlines and everywhere right now, is Black Lives Matter movement. But it begins . . . if you go back, it's not just the kids now. I'm going to tell you about a middle school group of kids, but they're inspired by people like . . . you have Nupol Kiazolu, the New York City President of Black Lives Matter of Greater New York. She was 13 years old when she started and she did it in the wake of Trayvon Martin's murder. She wore a black hoodie to school with the words "Do I look suspicious?" It was kind of a gutsy thing to do. But she, and others before her, have set the steps that today, a very recent one, there is a school called Edmunds Middle School; they wanted to raise a Black Lives Matter flag in their school. They were in Burlington, Vermont, another group of good Vermont students. And so they wanted to do it in a way that they wouldn't get in trouble or cause too many repercussions. But they wanted that flag in their school. So they went to the school board. Now these were all middle school kids and it is absolutely attested that they completely did it, that it was completely student-led and student-organized. And it was amazing what happened. So they went there but they had done their homework. They had some statistics. Thirty-six percent of their students agreed that these middle school students engaged in racial discrimination, and that was white and black students equally. Then they also found out that one-third of the white students and one-third of the black students agreed that even the teachers discriminated against these black students.

And so it's quite amazing what they did, and they did get permission from the [school] board that was impressed because it was totally student-led, and that's the caveat. It can't be something that teachers set kids up to. I've seen those things fail. They saw what was going on in the community and they wanted to do something about it. They cared. That's the secret, Ralph. They cared. They

had empathy. So, I got on the internet just the other night, to see if these kids ever succeeded, because this was done in November of 2019. And they wanted to raise this flag during Black History Month, which is in the spring, and then leave it flying clear until summer. And I thought, Uh-oh, COVID. Did they succeed? But I found out they did and they did it in February, luckily. There were hundreds of people who attended and they succeeded in this totally youth-driven action that is a hot topic today.

Ralph Nader: How old were they?

Barbara Lewis: They were middle school, all middle school.

Ralph Nader: Barbara, can you give us some other examples around the country?

Barbara Lewis: Yes, I'd be happy to. I'd be happy to. So if we get into the subject of climate or trees, that's another topic. The environment is a hot topic with kids. It has been for decades. You mentioned to me Felix Finkbeiner, the one from Germany, the little kid that, at nine years old, started planting trees. He's 22 years old today but they had his program that became a global youth movement, called Plant For the Planet. By the time he was 12, he had planted his one millionth tree. After that, the UN gave him their Billion Tree program. And he has also set a goal that within 30 years we'll have a trillion trees. Now he's had a huge, huge following but when I say how this spreads, how do kids get motivated; they motivate each other. So right now, Felix met recently with a young man from Nairobi, Kenya who is a cracker jack soccer player, a 15-year-old by the name . . . I know I'll mispronounce his name, Lesein, Mutunkei. This young man said, "Okay. Whenever I kick a soccer goal, I'm going to plant a tree." And then this young man went even further and said, "Well, why not just for soccer? How about if you get a nice award for chemistry, plant a tree? If you are a good singer and you have a program, plant a tree. If you're an artist, someone good in math, or any other sport--anytime you do something you're proud of, plant a tree." And that is spreading even now today with funeral things. I know you always have the options, if you go on the websites, that you can choose to plant trees instead of donating flowers that wilt and die, to the family of the grieving ones. So there's that and you can follow that also. You mentioned earlier Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish environmental activist who has campaigned for climate change. We all know the story about her. She's been in the news so much. I'm Swedish too, half-Swedish, so I identify there. But at age 15, she boycotted school, you know that, and went and sat outside the Swedish Parliament, demanding action on climate change. Well, she has had a huge impact. Internationally, because of our ability to connect through the internet and other ways, these kids are in contact with each other. And she set up strikes, a million strikes. She just set up some every week in the world and there were millions who participated each time, so she's had a huge impact.

Ralph Nader: We're talking with Barbara Lewis, author of many books centering on kids in social action. Now, after you put out your first book about kids in social action, you left your teaching position and went all over the country talking with educators, talking at schools, trying to get them to make a priority out of connecting knowledge to action among the youngsters, and to connect with their community and learn how to practice democracy. And, in effect, bring the best out of the grown-ups. There's nobody that can touch the conscience of a grown-up more than a child. That was shown in children urging their parents to wear seatbelts many years ago. That was expressed by children who would talk to their parents and ask them why are they smoking cigarettes, that they want the parents around when they're grown up. I mean it has a huge impact not just an educational quality dimension. What kind of response did you get from these schools,

these social studies teachers? Because I don't think anybody has gone around that much on the core issue of knowledge for what.

Barbara Lewis: Yes. I think that it had an impact and I did continue to teach for about 15 years in there, but I did that on the side. But, yes, I had strong reactions to it. They were excited to go out. I've received tons of letters from people telling things on projects that kids have been involved in. But the real key to this, Ralph, that I learned, that some teachers bypassed, is you can't give a project to a child. You mentioned their innocence. They have to be actually rubbed up against conflict, I think, before they see something. And then with their innocence, they cut right through the tape and they say, "Well, let's just do this." Like you said, the innocence, "The sun needs us." They have solutions that don't say all the yeah buts: Yeah, but that won't work; yeah, but it's too expensive; yeah, but it's impossible; yeah, but no one will agree. They don't get caught in that little spiral. These young people, if allowed to give their thoughts and their feelings, go out and do amazing things. I liked to say all the time back then, "Make life happen. Don't let it happen," because they're . . .

Ralph Nader: What's interesting is they don't have an axe to grind. They don't have . . .

Barbara Lewis: No, they don't. They're pure.

Ralph Nader: They're not self-censoring themselves. They're not worried about being promoted or being laid off for expressing their minds. And that's a huge asset for democracy we haven't recognized enough.

Barbara Lewis: It is.

Ralph Nader: Did you get any adoption of what you were trying to do in the schools? I know kids in social action often is outside the schools; they develop it by themselves. But in your school in Salt Lake City, I understand a girl in the fifth grade came to your class one day and said she just saw a waste dump that was covered over some blocks away with shrubbery. And that's how it started and you turned it into a classroom project. So what kind of response did teachers and principals give you? Did they say the curriculum is too rigid, it's too controversial, it'll upset city hall or upset the chamber of commerce, the board of education? Give us a varied flavor of the obstacles and the successes.

Barbara Lewis: Actually, Ralph, in those days it was a little easier to put programs like that in place. They're getting many, many restrictive rules and things that they have to do nowadays and everyone is worried about liability and all those kinds of things. But what I did to make it possible for me, is I checked with my district superintendent. I checked to make sure that there was a liability policy put in place that would cover all people who were participating in this. I used parents; I used teachers; I got everyone involved with the students. But the students ran the project. I have always said that . . . I mean I say about myself that I don't always know answers but I ask really good questions and let the students figure it out. So they had to learn how to connect into the community and get the adults to work with them. You mentioned their big eyes; they go to an adult and say they're worried about something. How does an adult turn them away? But they had to learn to work with their opposition. That was huge. And if they didn't include those people who wanted to throw tacks on their path, they wouldn't succeed. So they go to the tack throwers and say, "Can you help us? We know that you have another point . . . something going on here, but we need your help. You're an adult and you've got good answers and you're a good leader." They'd go

to these people and ask for help. Now you asked if this was spread around the country. It went into schools all over the place and it was largely supported with an organization called Service-Learning that was a national education organization that was set up [by the Corporation for National and Community Service-CNCS]. And so, yes, there were kids all over and I have stacks and stacks of letters. So it was never hard for me to find more stories, because they were constantly writing about the awesome . . .

Ralph Nader: How much support did the social studies teachers association [National Council for the Social Studies], which has national and state chapters, give you in those days?

Barbara Lewis: I didn't have any kind of flak from them. They didn't totally reach out to me and say, "Come and teach us." Mainly, the teaching I did around the country went through Service-learning, through organizations like the National Crime Prevention Council, Character Education, and things like that. They'd set up and have me go and teach all the people in that organization in their state or something like that. That's mainly how it spread. It did not really spread through social studies, through that area.

Ralph Nader: Well, one thing we're trying to do with The American Museum of Tort Law is to develop a curriculum about wrongful injury law, bullying, street level, and toxic chemicals, and defective consumer products. And it's just a tragedy [that] all these years, K-12, and they don't learn about things that really matter to them before they're adults, not to mention adults. Let me ask you this question. Let's assume you were the board of education of a major city, middle schools, and you had free rein. How would you develop the curriculum in an iPhone era? How would you develop the curriculum to integrate some of the social action proposals and experiences so that the school children can learn about their community? Where does the drinking water come from? What's the highway repair program like? What's the city hall offering us? Where do we go to vote when we turn 18? They don't know the geography of their community. They can hardly name the creeks and the streams and the rivers if they're in the suburban or rural area. Let's say you're in charge, Barbara Lewis. How would you change the curriculum?

Barbara Lewis: I would change the curriculum so the teachers did not have so many things they had to do, so they felt personally they had time for these things; these are time-consuming. But I would also teach at the end of every single curricular topic, what has this got to do with me now, and I would inject that. So we're studying Roman Empire, what has that got to do with us here now? How does that connect to our community? And then they begin seeing, well, they had water problems back then. Do we have water problems today? Yes, okay. Then the kids go out and find the connections. If you just give them a list of connections of people around the community, of who's in charge of all these different categories you listed, that doesn't quite strike, at least my experience, strike home to them. They have to say, okay, for example, I just gave, well, the kids with groundwater, we were studying groundwater, the very first project we did. One the things we learned was that groundwater could be contaminated by hazardous waste. So then I throw out a question. "Huh, are there any hazardous waste sites around here? Who knows?" They go to the health department, get a list of potentially hazardous waste sites and find there are hundreds of them near where they live and find there's one close to their school. Then that becomes relevant. Education becomes real [i.e.,] Okay, this is why it matters. But we don't hand them the answers to begin with; it has to be part of problem solving that extends from every curricular area. And it can extend from every curricular area.

Ralph Nader: Let me give you an example. School lunch programs from the Department of Agriculture down to the school level, they just struggle trying to overcome the students' exposure from when they were little toddlers to junk food through television programs. So they try to get them to eat fresh fruit and the kids just push the sliced apples aside and they have to be thrown away. And they want sugar. They want bakery products. They want sweetened drinks. So the school lunch program is a great opportunity to do what you're thinking should be done, no?

Barbara Lewis: Yes, it certainly is, and kids could address that problem. But what we couldn't do, what teachers couldn't do, what the district shouldn't do is go to them and say, "Here's the problem. What should we do about it?" They have to discover it. What I learned with working with youth, and even with adults, is that they have to discover the problem; they have to see it. These couple of stories I told you, they discovered the problem. They saw it. They were turned on by other youth. And when that happens, then they start to develop empathy. They start to feel. And education does not occur until there is feeling. They don't remember it necessarily. I've got so much stuff to show you that I could. But this whole business, for example, of gun violence that started with the Parkland students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, and you mentioned David Hogg, Emma González, some of those that have done so many things, so here's how they inspire others. So there are a group of young kids at the Everglades K-8 Center in Miami who joined a club. They were made up of sixth, seventh and eighth graders, so that's precisely middle school kids. And they decided they wanted to do something to make themselves feel safe at schools. They live with trauma and fear. They do, a lot of them, especially those close. This group incidentally is only about 50 miles south of Parkland, the area. So they decided to write a magazine. In this magazine, they give all their issues, persuasive essays, gun reform policies, drawings of victims, statistics, poetry, all kinds of things, which they then would bound. And their plan is to give this to all of the 535 members of the House and the Senate [Congress]. And this is important. This is really an important thing. We talked about people who have done things but these kids are actually going for a change in legislation. So if they can convince these people with their very powerful little magazine, they're trying something at a different angle. I remember reading in a *National Geographic* article that said, "Will the movements that are going on succeed, these social movements?" And they said history argues against it, that social movements that are waged against villains like Hitler or despots often succeed. But social movements that are forcing us to change our structural changes in the way we live are much harder to succeed. So I think this is a real success story because this is a group of kids who are trying to hit at the core of it and get the Congress to do something. They're not asking for huge things. They're just asking for making limits on gun ownership so they protect who gets them a little better. They're asking for that . . .

Ralph Nader: It's interesting. They've learned where the decision makers are--in Congress!

Barbara Lewis: Exactly. See, that's the clue.

Ralph Nader: And that's very impressive.

Barbara Lewis: I think it is.

Ralph Nader: Well, that's part of the whole educational process, Barbara.

Barbara Lewis: Yeah.

Ralph Nader: I remember that after some children saw a television program on foods and nutrition, in Indiana, they looked at their vending machines in the schools and they said to the

teachers, "The food here is not good. It's too salty, too fat, too sugary. Why don't you put more nutritious food in the vending machines?" And the school did. So there is a connection between knowledge and action. Didn't you find, in your experience in Salt Lake, that when the fifth graders under your tutelage organized to clean up this waste dump that the press was very responsive?

Barbara Lewis: Oh, yes.

Ralph Nader: Explain how that turned out.

Barbara Lewis: Well, number one, I said, "If you really want to make a difference, who would you contact?" I never told them the answers. What people would you contact who could help spread your word? They came up with all kinds of people. They visited legislators; they visited the mayor; they even wrote letters to the EPA in Denver. And the heads roll began at that point. But I say, "Where do you learn about your information? Where do you find out what's going on?" "Well, TV." "Oh, really? How would you contact them?" And it begins a whole process where they have to hunt and find how to do it and then they're in charge. They wrote press releases. And if you get a press release into a TV station and it's colored with some crayon marks on it, it's very obviously written by a kid, that's going to get greater attention than a computer print spiffy thing in the right envelope that's all typed and beautiful that's sent in to the station. If you hear from a child, a kid, they listen. And they were just like media magnets. But I didn't stand in the front of them unless they ~~en~~ forced me to have an interview. The kids were interviewed. They were the ones that lobbied in the legislature. They were the ones that set it up.

Ralph Nader: They actually got this square block of dumps cleaned up, right, by the city?

Barbara Lewis: It did. It took about two to three years. And kids going through the program actually had ended up being fourth, fifth and sixth graders, and even the seventh and eighth graders came back to watch it happen as it was cleaned up. So yes, it was their project. I have one story I would love to end with, if you'd let me because it . . .

Ralph Nader: Sure, go ahead.

Barbara Lewis: It's the best story of all but it's not grand, it's on a small scale but it had a huge impact upon the school where it happened. This happened with a young man named Carson Jones who lived in Arizona, and a high school . . . it's a high school student story but it's still a beautiful one. There was a young girl in the school who was about four feet high, Chy Johnson, who had genetic birth defect, which made her not on the same level as others. She had the brain capacity of about a third grader, but they had integrated her into the school. She was made fun of. They threw garbage at her; they made fun of her. She had to sit alone at the back of the lunchroom. So the mother tried talking to all of those who should care--the teachers, the administrators, everybody, and got nowhere. Eventually, a young man by the name of Carson Jones who was on the football team decided this was . . . but he wasn't going to go and scold anyone because he knew that wouldn't work. Instead, he talked to his football team and he talked to people who had made fun of her and just asked, "Why are you doing that?" just in a kind way. And then he began inviting this little Chy to sit with the football team at lunch. They began walking with her in the hall. No one could beat up on her or throw anything at her. Before long, people started to catch on. No instruction of what to do, nothing, just by pure example of having the courage to stand up for being kind to someone, he totally changed the whole flavor of that school. Everyone began being nice to her. They talked to her in the halls. No one said, "Let's be nice to her." Isn't that a beautiful story,

how you can have social action right in your own neighborhood, right in your small little world, and have a huge impact.

Ralph Nader: Talk about one student making a difference.

Barbara Lewis: Oh, I'll say. And he said, "What's she going to do when I leave?" He was leaving that year. And his little brother was sitting at the table and he was on the sophomore football team, and he said, "Don't worry. I got this." So it's wonderful what young people do if they just see the problem and we allow them to do it without telling them all the reasons why something won't work. And also to realize they will hit at things that are uncomfortable to many of us, and that's okay. They are learning. They are growing. They will come of age. They will be a great, great asset to our society.

Ralph Nader: On those positive notes, thank you very much. We've been talking with Barbara Lewis who, for many years, went all over the country in addition to her teaching elementary school in Utah, and has written many books about how to encourage youngsters to engage in social justice action as part of their education and as part of bringing the best out of adults. Thank you very much, Barbara.

Barbara Lewis: Thank you for the opportunity.

Steve Skrovan: We have been speaking with Educator Barbara Lewis. We will link to her work at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Let's take a short break. When we return, we're going to talk about a few of the fraudulent ways that Donald Trump could possibly win the election this November. But first, let's check in with our corporate crime reporter Russell Mokhiber.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your Corporate Crime Reporter Morning Minute for Friday, July 31, 2020. I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Stacy Mitchell of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance has resigned her fellowship at Yale University's Thurman Arnold Project on the heels of a *Bloomberg* report that the director of that project, Fiona Scott Morton, is a paid advisor to Amazon and Apple. "I think that makes it hard to achieve the project's goal of creating a space to grapple with the antitrust implications of Big Tech," Mitchell said. It's also at odds with the legacy of Thurman Arnold, the anti-monopolist hired by FDR to rebuild the antitrust division at the Justice Department. Arnold took an aggressive approach to prosecuting monopolies, which he described as a dictatorial power subject to no public responsibility and a toll bridge over which everybody has to pass. Mitchell said, "That sounds a lot like Amazon to me." For the Corporate Crime Reporter, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. I'm Steve Skrovan, along with David Feldman and Ralph. In 2016, Donald Trump apparently won Michigan by 10,700 votes. But in Detroit, over 75,000 ballots were never counted. The barriers to voting are enormous and yet, even when people make it through those barriers, their vote isn't always counted. Our next guest is going to tell us what we can do to help protect the vote this fall. David?

David Feldman: Greg Palast is an economist and financial investigator turned journalist. He is known for his investigative reports for the BBC, *The Guardian* and *Rolling Stone* [magazine]. Mr. Palast was instrumental in exposing historic controversies such as the Shoreham Nuclear Power Station Project, Exxon Valdez, the 2000 U.S. presidential election and Deepwater Horizon. He is

the author of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*. And his latest book is *How Trump Stole 2020: The Hunt for America's Vanished Voters*. Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Greg Palast.

Greg Palast: Glad to be with you.

Ralph Nader: Welcome indeed, Greg. I'd like to have you indulge me with the following ground rules. I want to spend just 20% of the time in this interview with you describing the horrific categories and deeds on the ground obstructing voters in America like no other country that presumes to be a democracy would even dare to do. And then I want you to tell our listeners what they can do in various states that are going to be swing states. So let's start with your crisp summary of all the various ways voters are obstructed from even being allowed to vote, registered, et cetera, and having their votes counted. You can't get into all the ways because they're innumerable, but let's be candid with our listeners. Most of the obstruction comes from the Republican Party, but not all of it. Some of it came from the Democrats in California against Bernie Sanders. So what are the ways people are obstructed and what kind of people are usually the ones who are blocked?

Greg Palast: Yeah, Ralph. Here's how they get you. Number one, they don't let you vote because they've taken you off the voter rolls. 16.7 million people in the last two years of record-keeping, according to the federal government, 16.7 million people purged, erased, blocked from the voter rolls, overwhelmingly, young people and voters of color. Ballots rejected . . . one of the secrets of American democracy, our nasty little secret is, we don't count all the votes. According to the Elections Assistance Commission, that's that little agency that tracks our votes and non-votes, 1,913,369 ballots were cast in 2016 and were not counted. Whose ballots don't get counted? These are so-called spoiled ballots. You put a X instead of fill in a bubble; they didn't like your signature. Whatever it is, they rejected almost 2 million ballots. Whose, you're asking again? The US Civil Rights Commission did a study. The chance your vote will be invalidated, that is someone will challenge it and say, "Don't count that vote," is 900% higher if you're black than if you're white. Nine hundred percent higher if you're black than if you're white. Five hundred percent more if you are Hispanic. And if you are Native American or American Native, you're talking about 1200% more likely than a white person to have your vote disqualified. So we literally don't count the votes and then we have people shifted. We had 2.5 million people shifted to provisional ballots. This is the kind of back-of-the-bus, what I call the placebo ballots. You fill them out, think you voted, but, well, the official number is 925,000 of these were never counted. So about a million provisional ballots, almost half were never counted. Who gets them? Well, if you're Hispanic, the chance you'll get a shift to a provisional ballot is 300% more likely than if you're a white voter, et cetera, et cetera. And then we have voter ID challenges. That's exactly how Trump shoplifted Wisconsin back in 2016. They changed the law so that two weeks, Ralph, before the 2016 election, two weeks, the courts approved a Republican plan signed by Governor Walker which required photo voter ID to vote. The thing is that 182,000 University of Wisconsin students with state photo ID, that ID was disqualified. But your concealed carry gun permit, that was qualified. As a result, 182,000 students were suddenly disenfranchised before the election. And in addition, according to a University of Wisconsin study in my book, *How Trump Stole 2020*, according the University of Wisconsin, 50,000 African Americans lost their vote because guess who doesn't have driver's licenses? People who don't have cars, who don't drive. And while that may include you, Ralph, in Milwaukee and in Wisconsin, that's mostly African Americans and Hispanics who live in Milwaukee. Fifty thousand lost their vote. So you have 182,000 students losing their vote in Wisconsin, 50,000 African Americans minimum, and Trump supposedly wins Wisconsin by 22,000 votes. This game continues. And finally, the most dangerous thing . . . I'm not going to go

through every way that they can getcha, Ralph. But the most dangerous thing of all is that according to MIT, are you ready? Twenty-two% of all mail-in ballots are never counted. That's not Greg Palast; that's MIT. One in five mail-in ballots never get counted. And once again, overwhelmingly, in communities of color. They know what they're doing.

Ralph Nader: We're talking to Greg Palast out with a new book called *How Trump Stole 2020*. Greg, people listening to this program are going to say these are crimes; how do they get away with it? Why aren't they prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned? There's only been one prosecution recently in North Carolina. In Georgia, where Brian Kemp, the Secretary of State, stole the election from Stacey Abrams and he's now the governor stealing other elections in the process, how do these people get away with that? Are the laws not criminal statutes with penalties? The prosecutors don't want to prosecute these matters? These are first class felonies, wouldn't you say?

Greg Palast: They are indeed. Read the Voting Rights Act, which is still there, they've gutted it but it's still there, the National Voter Registration Act, other acts, Voting Rights Act, Civil Rights Act. Yeah, these are crimes but vote theft, Ralph, is the perfect crime because you've stolen the police department as well. That is the enforcement mechanism. When you say why isn't there prosecution, I guess you should ask Bill Barr why there is no prosecution of the Trumpitas that stole the election.

Ralph Nader: The Attorney General.

Greg Palast: Yeah, our so-called Attorney General. And so we have a Justice Department which is an injustice department now and they literally . . . now, as an attorney, you know how unusual this is, and this never happened before. The [US] Department of Justice lawyers literally picked up their briefcases from the plaintiff's table where ACLU and other organizations were suing on several voting rights cases. And they literally picked up their briefcases and moved to the defendant's table defending the states that are basically sucking up and blocking you from voting.

Ralph Nader: Well, criminal enterprises pervade the whole Trump regime, obviously. What I think our listeners are interested in, Greg, is the following. Trump is falling further and further behind in the polls even in some of the swing states, behind Joe Biden. But that's not any guarantee, and the Republicans are working overtime. They don't even make it secret. Trump said, "Hey, if more people vote, the Republicans will never get elected." And people like Brian Kemp, who should have been prosecuted as governor of Georgia, is at it again in recent primary elections. So how can the people at the grassroot level looking over their own election registrars and election machinery in towns and cities, how can they fight back on this? How can they be monitors? Give people a lot to do here in a very short time, because if Trump steals the election again, apart from the impeachment authority, he's going to destroy the country.

Greg Palast: Okay. I'm going to give you two . . . there's two tracks here. There's the frontlines public attack that we have to take on the vote thieving and mainly expose it, right? So basically take the comic book from *How Trump Stole 2020*, take whatever you can and pass it around. Go to gregpalast.com and we'll be giving you more information. But the first thing I want you to do is protect your vote and tell people how to do it. At the back of *How Trump Stole 2020* is something called the . . . it says "Greg and Ted's New Improved Ballot Condom for Safe Voting." But here is the real serious things you must do. Number one, please check your registration. I just told you, 16.7 million people have been purged from the voter rolls. Half of those at least will be stunned and shocked when they try to get a mail-in ballot and it never arrives. That's why you saw those

giant lines in Atlanta and Milwaukee. I spoke with the head of the ACLU down in Georgia and they're saying everyone in those lines are saying, "We asked for the ballot, we never got our ballot." And in fact, the head of the ACLU asked for her ballot 45 days before the election. Her husband didn't receive his until June 10 and the election was June 9. Check your registration. And if you don't get a mail-in ballot and demand a mail-in ballot, that's the other thing, it's not just a question of pick and lick. You don't just pick a candidate and lick a stamp. Mail-in voting is complex. If you don't get that request for mail-in ballot to you, you call your county board of elections, your county clerk. Demand that ballot. Don't wait until two days before to find out that they're not mailing you that ballot. And when you do fill it out, for God's sake, don't skip a line. Be very careful. Follow the instructions to a tee. And if you're in Alabama, you're going to have to get that thing notarized. If you're in Missouri, you're going to have to get that thing notarized. If you are in Wisconsin, once again, the swing state of swing states, and you are a first-time student, you better . . . first-time voter by mail, you better include a photocopy of your ID. And if it's that student ID and you have the right one, you better have also proof that you are, are you ready for this Ralph, enrolled in good standing at your school. So don't flunk algebra, you'll lose your vote for president.

Ralph Nader: This is criminal harassment, obviously. We know what the motive is.

Greg Palast: It is

Ralph Nader: Yeah. We know what the motive is. I understand in Florida, you don't have to have a stamp to send it in. They're going to make it stamp-free because that's a real obstruction. A lot of people don't use stamps anymore obviously. And it's just enough to often tip someone and say, "the heck with it." So Greg, before we give your website again for all the guidelines and instructions, what proportion of the overall recorded vote in America in 2020 for the presidential race will be mail-in votes and absentee votes?

Greg Palast: I figure that it will be close to 80 million ballots, which means we could lose 16, 18 million ballots to challenges. That's the problem. It's not a secret ballot anymore once you mail it in. And the problem is mass challenging. And by the way, that stamp is no joke. Over 100,000 people, Ralph, lost their vote for postage due in 2016. Imagine what's coming up. And when you talk about having to do a notary, you're talking about a serious poll tax. But the US Supreme Court three weeks ago said Alabama can make you notarize your ballot. And there, Doug Jones is fighting for his life for [a] re-election-type battle. And in states like Georgia and Ohio . . . and Georgia is a swing state this year; it's now a white minority state, so it's a swing state. And several other states, they're not going to mail your mail-in ballot if you are in the so-called inactive list, that is you skipped an election. If you didn't vote in one or two elections, they're not going to send you that ballot. But you can get it still, under the federal law, by calling your government office, your county office and demanding it. The State of Ohio in '16 denied 1,039,000 Ohio residents, citizens who were on the voter rolls, denied them the hard-asking if you want a mail-in ballot. This is the games that they're playing. How do you think Ohio switched from Obama to Trump? That was a key part of it. Literally not sending ballots to people, a million ballots, mostly to low-income people.

Ralph Nader: What else can people do? What else can they pressure their legislators to do? Anything more Congress can do in time?

Greg Palast: Well, there's a lot Congress can do. I don't know if they're going to do it under obstructionist McConnell. But absolutely, number one, obviously there should be no postage

required to either request a mail-in ballot or otherwise. And it should be like Oregon, California, Washington, Colorado, other states; every person should get a mail-in ballot. It's your choice whether you want to use it or drop it off so you don't have to wait in line.

Ralph Nader: That's happening in California. Everybody is getting their ballot.

Greg Palast: Yeah. Everyone in several states will be getting the ballot, period. And the biggest problem is that you have to know what the rules are, by the way. And that's why at gregpalast.com, we're going to have all the rules for the states. Some of these rules for mailing in your ballot are nuts. And by the way, Stacey Abrams almost lost her vote because her return envelope had been sealed shut in the Georgia humidity. She has a Yale law degree, so she knew that if she ripped open that envelope or tried to use that and tape it, or use a different envelope, she'd lose her vote. But thousands of Georgians lost their vote that way. Be very, very super careful with your ballot and make sure you get it. But again, what can Congress do? Number one, let's end this challenge game. Donald Trump is talking about a vigilante force of 50,000. People are worried that this will be a group of people to intimidate voters. I can tell you, a bunch of slobs in Hawaiian shirts with their little pop guns are not going to intimidate the voters I've seen waiting in line five hours. They're not going to be intimidated. What I am concerned about is a mass challenge of the mail-in votes. We don't like that signature, wrong postage due, they didn't properly fill out the outside of the form, they used a red pen. My sister who is a lawyer, lost her vote in California because she didn't properly fill in a bubble on her absentee ballot. In California, you can check. So while they mostly challenge African American votes because they know the color of the vote, blue, I'm very concerned about mass challenges. We should say no challenges to votes unless you have absolute stone-cold, expert evidence that it's a stolen vote.

Ralph Nader: Let's get down to the voting precincts. One of the techniques you pointed out in your book is they closed the precincts, a number of them. Like Louisville, Kentucky in a primary a few days ago, just had one arena in downtown Louisville. The only place you could actually vote in person was one place and they closed down dozens of others. So let's get down to the precinct level. Sojourners, which you know is a very good group of pastors, they are going to have a lawyer and a clergyperson at hundreds of precincts in key states like Pennsylvania and North Carolina, to deal with the intimidation problem. But also, people are scared coming down there and they see these people glaring at them. So they want to do that, that's good. But if you do have citizen monitors outside the precinct, it may have an effect on the shenanigans going on inside. Spell this out, Greg.

Greg Palast: One hundred percent. By the way, in Milwaukee they went from 180 polling stations to 5, because the courts would not let the governor delay the primary to avoid the virus. They couldn't get poll workers. So we've got a big problem. If you don't get your ballot, you're going to have to wait in that line. Please sign up to work as a poll worker because we've lost about 80% of our poll workers because they're over 60 and they are not crazy and not going to sit at that table. We need young people to begin starting to volunteer as poll workers, second, as poll watchers, and third, something that Democrats have rarely done. And when I say Democrats, because it's usually the ones . . . the Republicans sit there during the count and they challenge ballots. Everyone has to participate whether you're green, blue, red, or white; I don't care. We need people to watch the actual count of the vote. I remember in New Mexico in 2004, Ralph, the Republicans took New Mexico because they challenged enough Democrat ballots, especially mail-in ballots, to flip New Mexico. And the only party challenging the challenge was the Green Party. The Democrats didn't

even show up. So when the Republicans said, "Don't count that ballot," it was only Green Party people who said, "No, you got to count that ballot." So we need people who are prepared for the mass challenge of votes.

Ralph Nader: Canadian listeners must wonder what kind of chaos the USA has descended into. In Canada, the census produces the registered voter. If you're counted in the census, you're registered. In Canada, I'm told they have so many precincts because they restrict each precinct to 500 voters so you don't have to go far from your house or wherever you work to go to a precinct. In the US, sometimes you got to get into a car and travel 5, 6, 10 miles in a rural area. And they're cutting the number of voting precincts, as Greg Palast points out in his book, *How Trump Stole 2020*. Give the website, because people are understandably prone to being confused here, like there are so many different curly cues and obstructions. Your website gives guidance. Give it slowly, Greg.

Greg Palast: Okay. Go to gregpalast.com. That's G-R-E-G P-A-L-A-S-T, gregpalast.com. And right there actually at the top of the site, I actually have our little ballot condom. You don't wrap it around your ballot. What you do is follow the seven steps to protect your vote. But again, it's protecting your vote and then being active to protect everyone's vote. I'm very, very concerned. While the book is called *How Trump Stole 2020*, we can steal it back. That is, we can bust the burglary. Ralph, they can't steal all the votes all the time. 7.8 million voters and votes were blocked in 2016. That's the official numbers from the EAC [Election Assistance Commission], from the government, and it's in the book. 7.8 million votes. But you can overcome that. You can't win with 51%; that's the other thing. Don't steal your own vote. Do what you can to vote.

Ralph Nader: To what extent, Greg, are really your revelations going to backfire and discourage people from doing ballot voting in a COVID-19 period? This is going to be, as you say, almost half of the votes in the country in the presidential election are going to be absentee or mail-in voters. Are you worried about discouraging people if you don't put tools in their hand, go down to the precinct, be monitors, volunteer inside the building? How do you address that?

Greg Palast: Real easy. A lot of Democrats, the white Democrats have been saying, you can't talk about votes . . . you can't talk about how they're stealing your vote, or people won't vote. Stacey Abrams proved that wrong. She shouted from the rooftops before the election night, "They're stealing this vote, they're stealing this election, they're stealing this election," and the massive turnout that resulted from people saying, "You're not going to steal my vote." They steal votes because they're valuable. That's why they steal them. And if someone's going to steal your car, you don't say, "Ah, well, here," and throw them the keys. No. You say, "That's it . . ."

Ralph Nader: And that's actually, to prove your point, that's what happened in the recent primary in Milwaukee.

Greg Palast: Exactly.

Ralph Nader: People stood in line for five hours, sometimes under the rain, basically saying, "They're not going to obstruct me from voting."

Greg Palast: Yeah. I remember I was in Milwaukee just before the COVID shutdown and I was having my teams talk to people in those lines. That's exactly it. They are stealing my vote. They never mailed me my ballot. They took me off the voter rolls. All these things, those people were going to stand in line and nothing was going to pull them out. You actually motivate people. And

by the way, I saw this in Mexico. When AMLO, the current president [Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador] I was there in 2006 and met with him when the election was just brutally stolen from him. By the way, that was orchestrated by the Bush Administration, the vote theft in Mexico. And he made that his number one campaign theme when he ran again in 2018. He said... he had five points. His number one is "We will count every vote, period. And we will stay in the streets until the votes are counted." And he won that time, because they can't steal all the votes all the time. They steal about 6%. That's what it is. Six percent steal, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: And just to encourage people listening, there are a lot of citizen groups working alongside what Greg is talking about. For example, there's the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition. The stealing with the blockage by the governor of ex-felons from voting if they still owe some court costs. You know, in Florida they charge ex-felons for health insurance, for public defender, for food, I mean it's just, telephone. And what's just happened is that LeBron James, who has 60 million followers on his Twitter account, has started a nonprofit group called More than a Vote. And he has put a first down payment of \$100,000 to the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition to pay off the debts of these ex-felons so they can exercise their right to vote. As you know, the US District Court in Florida said, "That's a poll tax. Get rid of it. You can't block ex-felons who've done their time from voting because they owe 50 bucks or 100 bucks, or 300 bucks for court fines or costs." And then the circuit court reversed and then the Supreme Court, the dodging 5-4 Supreme Court, sent it back without making a decision. So it's in limbo now. By the way, the Republicans have one explanation for obstructing votes. It's called voter fraud. The allegation itself is a fraud. Explain.

Greg Palast: Yeah. In fact, in my book I did a calculation. I spoke to Professor Lorraine Minnite, who is the number one expert on fraudulent voting. And we calculated out that the chance of getting hit by lightning is about 520% more likely than your casting a fraudulent vote. That is, you're five times more likely to be hit by lightning! It just doesn't happen, because it's easy to catch you and you will go to prison. In Wisconsin, there is the issue of impersonation fraud, right? That's why they said they needed to have a voter ID. I don't know what to stop fraud . . . yes, and you have to prove you're a properly enrolled student, crazy stuff, again to stop fraud. I looked at their records. In 100 years of recordkeeping, there is not one case of voter impersonation fraud in Wisconsin. However, almost 200,000 students and people of color lost their right to vote to prevent the fraud which doesn't happen. Grim. I'm sorry that voting is going to be more than, again, pick the president and lick the stamp. No. You're going to have to work at it. But you know what? It's worth it, because if the leaders pick you instead of you picking the leaders, what is that? When you don't pick the people who control you, you're a slave. So, what we're suggesting here is basically a slave uprising. Check your registration. Look, the Palast Investigative Fund which is a not-for-profit foundation is going to back this idea of low-cost, bulk sale, so we can get the word out. If you want to donate, we'll pass out books in your name. And look, I just want you to get the book too and pass it around. Photocopy whatever you want. I'm not worried about copyrights here. I'm trying to get democracy saved, not to see how many copies I can sell. So pick up the book. And by the way, pick up the book this week. Send gregpalast.com a copy of your receipt or something like that and we'll get you the audio book, no cost because I want you to spread it around in your- well, I know there's no carpools, but whatever clubs you have; listen to it. I want to get the word out. It's about saving this democracy. The book is I know it's . . . I don't want people to be discouraged when it says *How Trump Stole 2020*. It's not over. Yeah, it's a fact that he erased all these voters; they changed the rules; the election is fixed. But we can unfix it! We really can. That's the only way it happens, is action.

Ralph Nader: Anyway, we're out of time, unfortunately. Those of you who belong to large membership groups, civil rights groups, voting rights groups, consumer, environmental, worker groups, unions--all your interests are at stake in the coming election. And I'm not urging people to vote one way or another. I think people should vote their conscience. And if their conscience says Green Party, go for it. But what's going on in this country is the most serious challenge to a democratic society in its history, apart from wars. And we've got to play a role, all of us. We've got to do our homework. And you can start by reading this book, *How Trump Stole 2020*. We don't have to steal the election back. We have to recover the election. As implied in the preamble to our Constitution, we the people are the sovereigns. Thank you very much, Greg Palast.

Greg Palast: Thank you so much, Ralph, for the opportunity.

Steve Skrovan: We have been speaking with journalist Greg Palast. Seven Stories Press, the publisher of Greg's book, *How Trump Stole 2020*, is offering a discount on bulk purchases. You can buy 250 books for only \$5 a book, a real deal. Send an email to sevenstories@sevenstories.com. And we will also link to that at ralphnaderradiohour.com. I want to thank both our guests again, Barbara Lewis and Greg Palast. For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call "The Wrap Up". A transcript of this show will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website soon after the episode is posted.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* when we welcome Nicholas Carr to talk about his book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, everybody. Stay safe. Be active. Monitor those precincts.