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The People's Hour

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- [Breitbart] DOJ Sues 4 More States over in-State Tuition for Illegal Aliens

<https://www.breitbart.com/immigration/2026/08/27/doj-sues-arizona-new-mexico-oregon-washington-instate-tuition-illegal-aliens/>

Why: Directly impacts taxpayers funding benefits for illegal immigrants, a core populist issue about who pays for government services.

- [Axios] The housing market's fragile place

<https://www.axios.com/2026/08/28/housing-mortgages-prices-economy>

Why: Hits working-class wallets with concrete stakes about affordability and economic stability for middle America.

- [Breitbart] CENTCOM: U.S. Clears Mines from Hormuz Lanes; Iran Oil Exports at Zero

<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/28/centcom-u-s-clears-iranian-mines-from-hormuz-lanes-iran-oil-exports-at-zero-trump-says-tehran-begging-to-make-a-deal/>

Why: Shows Trump administration's hardline Iran policy with material impact on oil prices and national security.

- [Washington Times] George Washington University med school illegally discriminates in admissions, DOJ finds

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/aug/27/george-washington-university-med-school-illegally-discriminates/>

Why: Exposes elite institution's discriminatory practices, resonating with anti-establishment sentiment about unfair systems.

- [Washington Times] Judge again blocks Trump mail ballot executive order in ruling that's likely to be swiftly appealed

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/aug/27/trump-mail-ballot-executive-order-blocked-ruling-likely-swiftly/>

Why: Fuels populist anger about judicial overreach and election integrity ahead of midterms.

PRODUCTION CUE

[STING — markford_open.mp3]

02 — COLD OPEN (DATE SLATE + ROADMAP)

You are listening to WRZF. I am Mark Ford, and this is The People's Hour, on a Friday night, August twenty-eighth, two thousand twenty-six. Tonight the whole hour is one question. One "what if." What if the United States held its own Nuremberg trial — not against a foreign enemy, but against ourselves. Against an American administration. Before you touch that dial, hear me the way you heard me the last time I brought this up. I am not calling anybody a Nazi. That is the cheap version of this conversation and it is not the one I'm having tonight. What I'm talking about is a specific legal framework, built by American lawyers in 1945 and 1946, that says power does not equal immunity, and following orders is not a defense. That framework never expired. It's sitting on the shelf right now.

And I'm going to spend the next hour walking you through exactly what it was built to do, and then, piece by piece, laying the last year of American foreign and domestic policy next to it and letting you decide if it fits. Here's where we're going. First, the real history — what happened at Nuremberg, why the United States insisted on a trial instead of a firing squad, and the one lesson from those courtrooms almost nobody remembers, about judges instead of soldiers. Second, the boat strikes off Venezuela — the "double-tap," and why the law says it doesn't matter whether the men on that boat were guilty of anything. Third, what actually happened in Caracas on January third, because the story you've probably heard isn't the one the record supports — and the real one is worse.

Fourth, the oil underneath all of it, and a war with Iran that's been reshaping the price of gasoline in your car for six months. And last, the part closest to home — the pardons, the ICE shootings, and the Epstein files — and why I don't think a single one of them should be shielded by a blanket

pardon, including the man who signed it. Stay with me. I'm Mark Ford. This is WRZF. We'll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

04 — SEGMENT A: WHAT NUREMBERG ACTUALLY WAS

Let's go back to 1945, because you can't judge whether something is "Nuremberg-level" if you don't actually know what Nuremberg was. After the Second World War, four powers — the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union — convened an International Military Tribunal in the German city of Nuremberg. They put the surviving leadership of the Third Reich in a courtroom. Not for losing the war. For specific, named crimes: war crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy to wage a war of aggression. Here's the part people forget. There was a serious argument at the time for not doing this at all. Winston Churchill's early position was blunt — take the top fifty or so Nazi leaders, identify them, and shoot them. No trial. The people who said no to that were Americans. The United States insisted on a trial, on evidence, on a defense for the accused.

Robert Jackson, a sitting justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, stepped down from the bench, went to Germany, and prosecuted the case himself. Nuremberg was, in large part, an American idea. Jackson said something in his opening statement that I want you to actually sit with, because four hundred years from now this is the sentence historians will still be quoting. He said that four great nations, "flushed with victory and stung with injury," were "staying the hand of vengeance" and voluntarily submitting their captive enemies to the judgment of the law. Staying the hand of vengeance. That's the whole idea, right there. We had won. We had every reason and every opportunity to simply execute the men responsible. We chose to prove it in a

courtroom instead. What came out of that courtroom was radical, and it's the part that actually matters for tonight's show.

For the first time in modern history, "I was just following orders" was not a defense. The standard the tribunal set was that individual human beings — whatever their rank, whatever their title — are personally responsible for what they do under color of authority. That doctrine became the cornerstone of modern international law. It went into the Geneva Conventions. It became the foundation of the International Criminal Court when the Rome Statute created it in 2002. Now here's the piece of Nuremberg almost nobody talks about, and it's the one I can't stop thinking about while I put this episode together. The main tribunal wasn't the only one. There were twelve additional Nuremberg trials afterward, run by the United States alone — the doctors' trial, the industrialists, and one that matters more than any other for what we're about to spend the next eighty minutes on: the Judges' Trial.

Sixteen German jurists, prosecutors, and Ministry of Justice officials — men in robes, not men with rifles. They hadn't personally shot anyone. What they'd done was take the machinery of the law — the courts, the statutes, the paperwork, the procedures — and turn it into an instrument of persecution while keeping every outward appearance of legality. Everything was signed. Everything was filed. Everything was, on paper, legal. The tribunal convicted them anyway. The finding was that a legal system can itself be the crime — that you can commit an atrocity with paperwork, and that the appearance of process is not the same thing as process. Hold onto that idea.

We're going to come back to it twice tonight — once when we talk about a Justice Department that missed a deadline Congress set by a four hundred twenty-seven to one vote, and once when we talk about a criminal conviction that's being litigated out of existence instead of served. And I want to give you the uncomfortable half of this history too, because a show that only tells you the flattering version isn't worth an hour of your night. There's an American Nuremberg the sequel that we don't like to talk about. Within a few years of convicting the industrialists who ran I.G. Farben — the company that manufactured the gas — and the House of Krupp, which ran on slave labor, America let them out. A clemency board reviewed the sentences. A high

commissioner cut them down. Alfred Krupp walked free in 1951 and got his fortune back.

A Farben executive convicted at Nuremberg was chairman of the board at Bayer by 1956. Not hiding. Chairman. The Cold War had started, we wanted German industry back on its feet, and accountability turned out to be negotiable the moment it got inconvenient. Both halves of that story belong to us. We built the most serious accountability framework in the history of nations, and we also proved, within a decade, that we'd abandon it the moment geopolitics made it inconvenient. So when you hear somebody tell you tonight, "let it go, we need to move forward, stop relitigating the past" — understand that's not a new argument. They said that in 1946 too. Jackson's answer then is still the answer now: accountability isn't about revenge. It's about the future. It's about establishing, once, clearly, that power does not equal impunity. Keep all of that in your pocket. We'll be right back.

05 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

04 — SEGMENT A: WHAT NUREMBERG ACTUALLY WAS

06 — SEGMENT B: The Boat Strikes — Crimes Against Humanity, Guilty or Not

On September second, 2025, the U.S. military carried out a strike on a boat in the Caribbean that the Pentagon said was smuggling narcotics, part of what the administration calls Operation Southern Spear. The first strike hit the vessel and killed most of the people aboard. Two men survived, thrown into open water, clinging to the wreckage. Here's what happened next, and it's not disputed by anyone — only who ordered it is disputed. Minutes later, a second strike hit the wreckage again and killed both survivors. Multiple

outlets, including the Washington Post, reported that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth gave a verbal order to "kill everybody" after the first strike.

Hegseth has called that reporting fabricated, inflammatory, and derogatory — his exact words — and says he wasn't even in the room when the second strike happened. The administration's account of who actually gave the order — Hegseth, or the mission commander, Navy Admiral Frank Bradley — has shifted multiple times over the following weeks. Trump, when asked, backed Hegseth publicly and said he believed him. I want you to notice how Hegseth himself described watching the first strike, because I think it tells you everything about the administration's legal theory here. He said, quote, "I watched it live. We knew exactly who was in that boat. We knew exactly what they were doing and we knew exactly who they represented." End quote.

He called them gang members trying to "poison our country with illicit drugs."

Here's why that quote doesn't answer the actual legal question, and this is the single most important sentence in this entire segment: the law of armed conflict does not turn on whether the people on that boat were guilty of something. It turns on their status once they're disabled. Two men, blown into the water, with no boat, no weapon, and nowhere to go, are what the law calls hors de combat — out of the fight. Finishing them off at that point isn't drug interdiction. Former military lawyers — Judge Advocates General who spent careers inside this exact body of law — have said publicly that the second strike is a likely war crime, full stop, independent of what was or wasn't on that boat to begin with.

Carrie Lee, a senior fellow with the German Marshall Fund, put the command responsibility question directly: if Hegseth approved the rules of engagement for this operation, "then it's on him... I don't think that the fact that Hegseth wasn't in the room lets him off the hook."

That's not a cable-news opinion. That's the exact Nuremberg doctrine we just spent fifteen minutes on, applied to the current secretary of defense. Individual responsibility doesn't evaporate because you delegated the trigger.

Let's talk about scale, because this wasn't an isolated incident. As of the most recent public tallies, more than eighty people have been killed across twenty-plus strikes on boats off Venezuela and in the Eastern Pacific. The Pentagon has restricted which members of Congress can even view the unedited video of the September second strike.

I want to be careful with you here and not overstate a number I can't verify — you may have heard claims about what percentage of the people on these boats were fishermen rather than traffickers. I don't have a sourced, verified breakdown of who was actually aboard each vessel, and I'm not going to hand you a number I can't stand behind. What I can tell you, and what is verified, is this: the administration has not made the evidence behind most of these targeting decisions public, Congress has had to fight for even limited video access, and in at least one confirmed case, two disabled, unarmed survivors were killed in a follow-up strike after the threat they posed was already gone. You don't need an unverified statistic to make the legal point. The legal point stands on its own. 07 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

04 — SEGMENT A: WHAT NUREMBERG ACTUALLY WAS

08 — SEGMENT C: Caracas — What Actually Happened, and Why the Real Story Is Worse

Now let's talk about Nicolás Maduro, and I want to correct something on the air that I got wrong when I was first sketching out tonight's show, because getting this one right actually makes the case stronger, not weaker. I'd heard the theory that Maduro basically gave himself up — that there was no way an American operation gets through seven layers of security in downtown Caracas without a firefight, so it must have been negotiated. That is not what happened, and the truth is more dramatic than the theory. On

January third of this year, in an operation the Pentagon has since named Operation Absolute Resolve, U.S. military and CIA forces launched a nighttime strike on Caracas. They cut electricity to the capital. They disabled Venezuela's air defenses with aircraft fire to clear a path.

Helicopters flew in at a hundred feet and special forces and law enforcement personnel physically extracted Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, from their residence. Estimates of the dead from that single night's operation in Caracas run as high as seventy to eighty people, including Venezuelan and reportedly Cuban military and security personnel, with American troops injured. Trump did call Maduro directly beforehand and, in his own words at a press conference afterward, told him "you got to surrender." Trump said Maduro "came close" to taking the deal but stayed put — and then the strike happened anyway. Trump announced it himself on Truth Social: "The United States of America has successfully carried out a large scale strike against Venezuela and its leader, President Nicolas Maduro, who has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of the Country." He later said the U.S.

was going to "run" Venezuela until a transition of power takes place. So no — nobody surrendered quietly through the diplomatic back channel. The United States bombed a foreign capital city in the middle of the night to physically seize its sitting head of state, with as many as eighty people killed in the process, without a declaration of war, and — according to multiple lawmakers — without meaningfully consulting Congress beforehand. That is not a smaller version of my original theory. That is the textbook version of what the Nuremberg tribunal's third charge, conspiracy to wage a war of aggression, was written to describe. You don't need to invent a cover story about a peaceful handover. The real one already fits the framework we spent Segment A explaining.

I'll give the other side its say plainly, because a fair account matters here: the administration frames this as regime change against a narco-terrorist state, tied to Maduro's own U.S. drug-trafficking indictment, and some U.S. allies have praised the outcome. Other governments and independent legal scholars have challenged its legality under international law, and members of

Congress from both parties have raised the same objection I'm raising tonight — that the executive branch launched a unilateral act of war inside another sovereign nation's capital without so much as a heads-up to the people's elected representatives. 09 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

10 — SEGMENT D: OIL, IRAN, AND THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Let's talk about what's actually under Venezuela and Iran, because I also want to correct a number here, and it's an easy one to get wrong. I'd had it that the top three oil-reserve countries on Earth were Venezuela, Greenland, and Iran. That's not the accurate ranking, and using it as stated would be the easiest thing in the world for a critic to knock down in the first ten seconds. The real top five by proven reserves: Venezuela is number one, at roughly three hundred three billion barrels — nearly a fifth of the entire planet's proven oil. Saudi Arabia is number two, at around two hundred sixty-seven billion. Iran is number three, at around two hundred nine billion. Canada and Iraq round out the top five.

Greenland isn't on that list at all — its story is rare-earth minerals and Arctic strategic position, not proven petroleum, and Trump's administration has separately pursued that angle too. Here's the pattern that actually holds up: two of the three countries the Trump administration has applied the most direct military and economic pressure to in the last year — Venezuela and Iran — happen to sit on the largest and third-largest proven oil reserves on the entire planet. After Maduro's capture, Trump said publicly that American oil companies would rebuild and take control of Venezuela's oil industry. And fifty-six days after that operation, on February twenty-eighth of this year, the United States and Israel began a military campaign against Iran that's now been running, on and off, for six months.

That war has been driving the price of oil like a yo-yo, and every swing has your name on it if you drive a car. Brent crude spiked past a hundred, and at points as high as a hundred eighteen dollars a barrel, during periods of active strikes. Then, again and again — January fourteenth, February second, March twenty-third, August third of this year — oil prices dropped sharply, several percent in a single trading session, every single time Trump publicly announced a pause, a delay, or optimism about a deal with Tehran. That's not a one-time coincidence. That's a repeating pattern, month after month, documented by wire services and financial press every time it happened. Now — I want to be careful here, because I told you earlier I don't put numbers on air I can't stand behind, and the same rule applies to accusations.

I do not have documented proof of a specific insider-trading scheme where people close to this administration bought in ahead of a price drop and sold ahead of a spike. I looked. I couldn't find reporting that nails that down, and I'm not going to hand you a conspiracy dressed up as a fact. What I can hand you is the question, because it's a legitimate one and it's not being asked loudly enough in Washington: when one man's public statements can move the global price of a commodity five, six percent in a single session, multiple times, over six months — who benefits from knowing which way he's about to move, before the rest of the market does? That's not an accusation. That's a question for the SEC, for financial regulators, for investigative reporters with subpoena power I don't have. It deserves an answer. I just won't pretend I already have one.

And this week's news actually belongs in tonight's show, because it shows exactly how much economic leverage runs through this one waterway. On Thursday, CENTCOM's Admiral Brad Cooper announced U.S. forces have cleared Iranian sea mines from the Strait of Hormuz's international shipping lanes — months of work by Navy divers and SEALs — while, simultaneously, Iran has exported zero barrels of oil since the U.S. resumed a naval blockade in mid-July. Nearly one thousand five hundred commercial vessels have moved through under U.S. protection, carrying roughly seven hundred fifty million barrels, while Iran's own tankers sit frozen. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has paired that military blockade with an economic campaign —

sanctions on more than sixty entities tied to Iran's oil, shipping, and financial networks.

That's roughly a fifth of the world's daily oil demand running through a strait that one country now fully controls the flow of, and the other can't move a barrel through without American permission. However you feel about the Iran war itself, that is an enormous, undivided amount of leverage sitting in one administration's hands, over one of the most consequential chokepoints in the global economy. That's exactly the kind of concentrated, unchecked power the Nuremberg framework was built to ask hard questions about — not because clearing mines is a crime, but because nobody in Congress voted on any of it. 11 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

12 — SEGMENT E: PARDONS, ICE, AND THE EPSTEIN FILES

Let's bring this home, because the last piece of tonight's case isn't overseas at all. Start with January sixth. On his first day back in office, Trump issued what his own proclamation called a "full, complete and unconditional pardon" to roughly fifteen hundred to sixteen hundred people charged in the Capitol attack, with fourteen — Oath Keepers and Proud Boys leaders — getting commutations instead. That pardon did not distinguish between the man who walked in and took a photo and the roughly six hundred defendants the Justice Department itself had charged with assaulting, resisting, or impeding law enforcement officers. Some of those pardoned had violent criminal histories entirely unrelated to that day — documented prior convictions for offenses including rape, manslaughter, and domestic violence. Trump defended the decision to reporters directly: "They've served years in jail...

They should not have served, and they've served years in jail. And murderers don't even go to jail in this country." That's a real, on-the-record

quote, not my characterization of his position. I'm not telling you every one of those fifteen hundred people deserved to stay in prison forever. I'm telling you a blanket pardon that doesn't distinguish a nonviolent trespasser from a man convicted of assaulting a Capitol police officer with a weapon is not accountability — it's the opposite of the entire Nuremberg premise, which is that individual conduct gets individually judged. Now the other side of law enforcement — ICE. Over the past year there's been a documented pattern of ICE agents fatally shooting people during vehicle stops: a man in Franklin Park, Illinois, in September; a woman in Minneapolis in January; a U.S. citizen in South Texas in February; more since.

DHS's account is consistently the first and, for a long time, the only version of events available. In one of those cases — the San Antonio shooting of Ruben Martinez — a Texas grand jury declined to indict the agent involved, despite a witness account that disputed the official story. That witness, Joshua Orta, died in a car accident before he could give further testimony. I'm stating that as a fact on the public record, not as an insinuation about how he died — I don't have evidence to make that leap, and I won't pretend to. And last, the Epstein files, because you specifically wanted this one in the show, and it belongs. In November of last year, emails from the Epstein estate suggested Trump had more direct knowledge of Epstein's conduct than he'd previously acknowledged.

Congress passed the Epstein Files Transparency Act four hundred twenty-seven to one, and Trump signed it — a law with a hard December nineteenth deadline to release the files. The Justice Department missed that deadline, then drip-fed documents afterward. By the end of January this year, DOJ said it had released roughly three and a half million of an initially identified six million responsive documents — leaving something like two and a half million unaccounted for. House Oversight's ranking member, Robert Garcia, called it exactly what it looks like: "Donald Trump is leading a White House cover-up and has tried everything to kill our Jeffrey Epstein investigation... Trump has the power to release all the files today." That's a sitting member of Congress, on the record, using the word cover-up — not me.

Now here's the piece I need to correct for accuracy, because it changes what "justice" actually looks like here. Trump's thirty-four felony counts — the hush-money case, falsifying business records — that's a New York state conviction. A jury convicted him on all thirty-four counts in May of 2024. He was sentenced in January 2025 to what's called an unconditional discharge: the conviction stands on his record forever, but no prison, no fine, no probation. Here's the part that matters for tonight: a presidential pardon — his own or anyone else's — cannot touch that conviction, because the pardon power only reaches federal crimes. So instead, his legal team has spent the last year and a half trying to get the case moved to federal court and thrown out entirely on immunity grounds — a federal judge has been openly skeptical of that argument as recently as February.

If you want him held accountable for those thirty-four counts, "revoke a pardon" is the wrong tool, because there was never a pardon to revoke. The actual fight is whether a sitting president's own Justice Department succeeds in litigating a state jury's unanimous verdict out of existence through procedure instead of appeal on the merits. And that — a legal system's own paperwork being used to make a documented crime disappear — is, word for word, the Judges' Trial lesson from Segment A. A legal system can itself be the crime. The appearance of process is not the same thing as process. 13 — [BREAK] — COMMERCIAL

PRODUCTION CUE

[COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

14 — CLOSING / SIGN-OFF

So let's close the loop on tonight's "what if."

What if the United States held its own Nuremberg trial against an American administration. I told you at the top I wasn't calling anybody a Nazi, and I meant it — this was never about costumes. It was about one question:

does the doctrine we built in 1945, that individual people in power are personally responsible for what's done under their authority, and that following orders is not a shield, still mean something when we point it at ourselves. I laid out five places tonight where I think it applies. A second strike on shipwrecked, disabled survivors that former military lawyers call a likely war crime. A foreign capital bombed in the night to seize its president, with as many as eighty dead, and Congress finding out after the explosions started.

Two of the three most oil-rich nations on Earth on the receiving end of that pressure, while oil prices swing on a president's own announcements in a pattern nobody in Washington seems eager to investigate. A blanket pardon that swept up violent offenders alongside peaceful ones. And a criminal conviction that stands unpunished, being litigated toward vacatur instead of served — while millions of pages a Congress voted for, four hundred twenty-seven to one, still haven't seen daylight. My position, plainly, once, not as a threat: no blanket pardon should place anyone beyond having to answer for documented conduct. Not a violent January sixth defendant. Not an ICE agent whose use of force an honest investigation finds unjustified. Not a cabinet official who authorized or ordered a strike on disabled survivors. And not a president, shielded by geography, by timing, or by the office itself.

I'm not going to tell you how this ends. I don't know. What I'm telling you is that the mechanisms exist. The precedent exists. Jackson's answer, back in 1946, to everybody who told him to let it go and move forward, was that accountability was never about revenge. It's about proving, once, that power does not equal impunity. That's still the only question that matters. I'm Mark Ford. This is WRZF. Good night, America.