Life Matters Journal

Volume 2 - Issue 4
Summer 2013

#Stand4Life

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This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether legal or illegal.

We have been told by our society and our culture wars, that those of us who oppose these acts of violence must be divided. We have been told to take a lukewarm, half-way attitude toward the victims of violence. We have been told to embrace some with love while endorsing the killing of others.

We reject that conventional attitude, whether it's called "Left" or "Right", and instead embrace a consistent life ethic toward *all* victims of violence.

We are Life Matters Journal, and we're here to defang the viper that is legalized homicide.

cover art: "Lives: They Hang in the Balance" by Rosemary Lipnicki

Life Matters Journal

Summer 2013 - Volume 2 - Issue 4

Life Matters Journal is a new publication dedicated to opening a forum for discourse on all issues related to human life and dignity.
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Send correspondence to *info@lifemattersjournal.org* and visit www.lifemattersjournal.org to read the web copy of the journal.

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

The past three months have been an overwhelming blur of amazing opportunities to stand for life, and we have even more coming - almost faster than I would like!

I began the Summer networking with many different pro-life leaders: from Serrin and Sally from Feminists for Life of America, to Patrick Mahoney of the Christian Defense Coalition; from Jason Jones of I Am Whole Life (and Movie to Movement!), to Kate Bryan of Live Action -- and those are just the people I got to see in person! A lot of those meetings were to keep LMJ in the loop for future work that needs to be done on various different fronts, and how we can key ourselves into the niche that needs to be filled. I definitely felt assured that the work that we do is quite singular and needed - how we reach our audience and engage the world is so vital to the pro-life and consistent life movements.

Then July came like a whirlwind! I honestly haven't had a moment to rest yet, and I thought this Summer would be restful -- hah!

Senate Bill 5 (SB5) was up for a vote in the Texas State Legislature - and it missed passing by a mere few seconds and a whole galleryful of rowdy pro-choicers. The Students for Life of America team put together the #Stand4Life Bus Tour in a matter of one week, and I joined their grand adventure to add my voice to the sea of blue-shirts standing up for preborn rights. I am glad to be a consistent voice, a voice based on solid facts and clear ethics, a voice for minorities in the pro-life movement. I am glad to #stand4life.

Lastly, in case you didn't notice, we have begun a slightly new schedule of publication for Life Matters Journal: whereas before we were publishing in September, December, March, and June, we have now adjusted our timetable to best accomodate student academic calendars to help our interns put out their best possible work forward, year-round. I'm excited to see what we as a team can put together in the coming year as we transition to our third volume and continue our ever-important work of engaging the culture on the front for human rights.

For peace and all life,

Aimee Murphy

Executive Editor

Have a letter for the editors here at Life Matters Journal? Please write us at **info@lifemattersjournal.org** to let us know what you think.

Just put in the subject line "Letter" and we will post it in our next issue along with our responses.

Current events and consistent life

The Ongoing Struggle Over Guantanamo Bay

by John Whitehead

Detainees at the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have been on hunger strike since early this year. The strike began in February, with perhaps as few as 14 men participating; the number of participants grew over the following months and, as of July, 106 detainees out of the total prison population of 166 have joined the strike.[1] Of the men on hunger strike, 44 are being fed twice a day by Guantanamo authorities using a tube threaded through the nose and into the stomach.[2] The strike led to clashes between detainees and guards this past spring, when the military moved detainees who had shared communal quarters into single-man cells—partly for the purpose of monitoring their health, according to a Guantanamo spokesman. The move was resisted by detainees allegedly wielding homemade weapons. This led guards to fire non-lethal ammunition at the detainees.[3]

photo by Christoph Koettl, some rights reserved.

Searches of detainees' Korans by Guantanamo authorities reportedly provoked the hunger strike. Observers, including both the U.S. military and detainees' lawyers, say, however, that the underlying cause is the men's frustration over their detention.

One detainee lawyer explained the imprisoned men's mental state: "They are ready to die because they don't think they're getting out of here."[4]

Tangled History

Such frustration is understandable given the uncertainty over the detainees' ultimate fate. The Guantanamo base became a prison for alleged terrorists over 11 years ago, in January 2002. When President Obama was inaugurated in 2009, he inherited from President Bush's administration 241 men who were imprisoned there, as well as a complicated history of legislation and court cases related to the detainees' treatment.[5] The most important episode in this tangled history was a Supreme Court ruling made about six months before Obama took office, in the *Boumediene v. Bush* case. In that case, the Court ruled that detainees have a constitutional right to petition federal courts to evaluate their detention's legality—that is, detainees have a constitutional right to *habeas corpus*.[6]

Given this situation, President Obama issued an executive order shortly after taking office that called for a review of the detainees' cases to determine which of them could be released or transferred, which of them could be prosecuted in civilian courts, and which of them required some other approach. The order also called for Guantanamo's detention facilities to be closed by January, 2010.[7] A few months after issuing this order, Obama announced that Guantanamo detainees would be, depending on each man's specific circumstances, released, transferred to other countries, tried in civilian courts, or tried before military commissions. A select number of detainees, he announced, would have to be detained indefinitely without trial. This category of detainees the president characterized as "people who've received extensive explosives training at al Qaeda training camps, or commanded Taliban troops in battle, or expressed their allegiance to Osama bin Laden, or otherwise made it clear that they want to kill Americans. These are people who, in effect, remain at war with the United States." Obama was vague on why these men could not be put on trial, but he did say that in some cases the "evidence might be tainted."[8] According to one account, this refers to the fact that some detainees were tortured by American agents, making the resulting evidence inadmissible in court.[9]

Although acceptance of indefinite detention without trial in certain cases was cause for concern for civil libertarians, some progress was subsequently made toward settling the detainees' cases in Obama's first term. Roughly 70 men were transferred back to their home countries or third-party countries.[10] Ahmed Ghailani, a Guantanamo detainee charged with involvement in the bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa in the 1990s, was convicted in a federal civilian court in 2010 and sentenced to life imprisonment.[11] Nevertheless, the administration encountered significant setbacks. Efforts to try Guantanamo's most infamous detainee, Khalid Shaikh Mohammad—the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks—in federal court eventually ground to a halt and Mohammed's case was referred to a military commission. *Habeas* petitions to the courts as the result of the *Boumediene* decision have not led to any detainees being freed—the judicial system has so far upheld their detentions.[12] Congress passed successively narrower restrictions on transferring detainees to the United States, ultimately barring even their prosecution here.[13] Above all, the Guantanamo detention facilities remain open.

photo byAslan Media, some rights reserved.

President Obama's recent speech at National Defense University indicates he still wishes to close the Guantanamo prison and release, transfer, or prosecute detainees in the way outlined in 2009 (in the speech, he also referred again to detainees who could not be prosecuted "because the evidence against them has been compromised or is inadmissible in a court of law").[14] With the president possibly renewing efforts to resolve the Guantanamo situation and the men detained there resorting to self-starvation, the political and legal battles over detaining alleged terrorists seem likely to drag on for years to come.

Trying the Accused

Criminals may be punished with imprisonment if they are found guilty of wrongdoing, but some reasonably fair process such as a trial needs to determine their guilt or innocence. If they are determined to be innocent of wrongdoing, they must not be punished, whether by imprisonment or any other method.

"Accused criminals" seems an accurate description of the men detained at Guantanamo. It is more appropriate than "prisoners of war" (POWs), simply because al Qaeda or similar groups cannot plausibly be considered legitimate combatants in the same way American soldiers or those of other nations can. Al Qaeda members' transnational character, failure to distinguish themselves from the civilian populations in which they operate, and disregard for civilian immunity from attack make them closer to criminals than soldiers. If we regard detainees as accused criminals instead of POWs, they should be given civilian trials or similar hearings to determine if they are indeed guilty of terrorist attacks or other crimes.

Trials in civilian courts seem to be a better option for determining detainees' guilt than military commissions. Trying accused criminals according to the possibly watered-down legal standards of military commissions risks unjustly convicting the innocent. Given that trials in the civilian criminal justice system are hardly flawless and have led—as death-penalty opponents are well aware—to people being convicted of crimes they did not commit, weakening civilian trials' minimal guarantees of fairness seems very dangerous. Moreover, civilian trials have a proven track record of convicting accused terrorists, so opposing such trials for fear they will irresponsibly let terrorists go free is an overly extreme stance. In addition to Ahmed Ghailani, men such as Richard Reid and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, both of whom tried to blow up airplanes, and Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to bomb Times Square, have been convicted and received life sentences in civilian courts. The Obama administration should make an effort to give those detained at Guantanamo trials in civilian court that are as fair as possible. If, for political and other reasons (fear of revealing sensitive intelligence, for example), civil ian trials are simply not an option for some detainees, those men should receive the fairest military trials possible, perhaps following the same rules as a court martial for a member of the U.S. armed forces. Even a flawed trial is better than no trial at all.

This principle of giving detainees a trial ideally should be applied to all the detainees, even those Obama has spoken of imprisoning without trial indefinitely. To be sure, this particular class of detainee presents policymakers with an agonizing choice: either permanently denying someone a trial or taking the risk that a dangerous terrorist will be acquitted for lack of legally admissible evidence. Neither is a desirable option. Nevertheless, an effort should be made to

provide all detainees with at least some procedure to determine their guilt or innocence, in which they have the opportunity to defend themselves. The Ghailani case again offers a useful precedent: evidence against the accused terrorist was excluded by the court because it was obtained as a result of coercive methods, yet the government still won a conviction.[15] Whatever shortcomings Ahmed Ghailani's trial and sentencing might have had, they at least show that convicting an alleged terrorist in civilian court, even after evidence has been thrown out, is possible.

President Obama has inherited a terrible situation from his predecessor. Resolving the detainees' situation and finally closing Guantanamo Bay's detention facilities will not be easy. The situation has already dragged on for over a decade, though, and will not get any easier as more time passes. Action must be taken to give Guantanamo's prisoners the trials they deserve.

photo by Steve Rhodes, some rights reserved.

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Where Motivations Meet Morals

by Anthony Bedoy

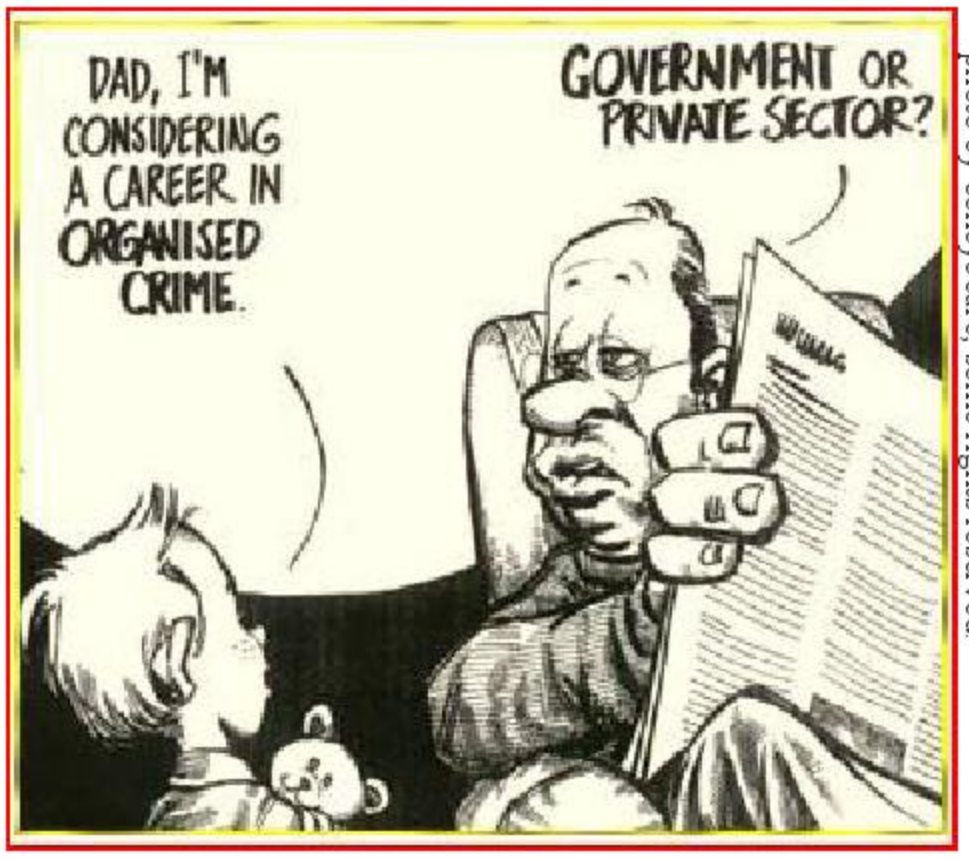
According to Eric Garris of the website *AntiWar.Blog*, Oklahoma state representative Paul Wesselhöft will be leading an anti-war rally on the south steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol. The event will be hosted Friday, July 12 at 7:00 p.m. and the public is invited. Wesselhöft mentioned that the theme of aforementioned rally will reflect those who oppose U.S. intervention in the Syrian civil war and that the event will be bipartisan in nature.

The backlash from this bipartisan group comes from a report that the Obama administration has considered arming the rebel forces in Syria who continue to fight President Bashar Assad. Understandably, the United States has some interest in arming the rebels, yet are the views of individuals like Wesselhöft reasonably cautious at permitting our foothold in a civil war?

The topic that sticks with me the most is the motivations of both the bipartisan group and the Obama administration. Is their moral compass simply a veiled capitalism seeking to spend or conserve resources in order to net the greatest profit? If so, is this a good or a bad thing? Should our foreign policy be all about keeping our foothold as the military and economic leaders of the globe?

What I have noticed as I learn more about the Obama administrations stance on the Syrian civil war is the guise that comes from their somewhat humanitarian response to the war. Evidence and reports show that the Syrian government has used chemical warfare against their people and the rebels, killing hundreds of people.

While it is noble to defend a people who have been mistreated, it seems a bit misguided to assume that the Obama administration is only invested to provide



aid. Like most contemporary United States politicians, Boehner made the all too often disguise that **"the United States has a strategic interest in what happens in Syria. We all would like to see Assad go. We'd also like to see a democratically elected government there. . . . And so for our interest and to support our allies in the region, I'm going to continue to work with the president on responsible steps that can take to protect our interests."**[1] Notice that Boehner is quite vague about the specific interests of the administration. Boehner also implanted a subtle rhetorical device that disguises his motivation for action.

Boehner used a tool I like to call the classical modernization approach. It is quite simply really. The masses of the United States are infatuated with democracy. We feel it is the utmost pinnacle of government. Thus we must impart our glorious perfect government on all lowly governments who are in turmoil.

It is a perfect disguise to seem like the administration stands for a humanitarian approach. The "inhumane" Syrian government (don't get me wrong I am against war crimes, etc., but I am using sarcasm to make a point about the motivations and argument style of the Obama administration) is entirely the target of the

argument. The administration seeks to topple the government hoping that they can impart a new democracy, one that they can control with money, weapons bribes and trade deals. From our standpoint (solely based on press conferences with the administration), it seems as though the Obama administration is driven out of good morals; they seem to want to help the innocent and aid the needy, but in reality, their motivations are driven out of greed. The U.S. government only sees fit to set up democracy in locations that can provide us with resources. Syria has now been added to the list of countries the U.S. is trying and has tried to set up democracy with the disguise of a humanitarian motivation.

Thus the question arises here, do we stand by a government who invests in war in order to provide oil for the U.S. (at the expense of the lives of foreign citizens), or do we stand by a government who acts justly and provides aid, not weapons? Is morality as a political motivation entirely lost?

The cynic in me holds to the stance that the U.S. politicians only seek to feed their own pocketbooks and the bank accounts of their backers. I see not only the Obama administration backing oil production in foreign countries, but I also see the bipartisan group hoping to save money by not engaging in war with Russia.

Wesselhöft said, **"The U.S. has no political or moral obligation to intervene in Syria's intractable civil war. It's none of our business….Our involvement in shipping arms to the Syrian rebels commits us to a proxy war with Russia. This is not good, not wise, not acceptable, so we object."**[2] My only question to clarify Wesselhöft's statement is whether or not he thinks we should provide aid to the Syrian people facing turmoil in their civil war. If he is all for "moral obligations" does he see it fit for us to aid the innocent, or is he simply hoping to save money by not engaging in another costly war that drives our economy down?

As much as I want to believe that some politicians have still held fast to their moral obligations, when I see anti-war and pro-war debates, I am convinced that a majority of arguments which seem outwardly to defend a humanitarian ethic are somehow tainted with a utilitarian economic twist hiding beneath the blood of the innocent, the wrath of dictators, and the promise of a new tomorrow in democracy.

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Essays

Viewer and Victim

by Nicholas Neal

"The Scourged Back," so dubbed by Kathleen Collins, is an image that pops up in the mind of most people when thinking of American slavery. A nineteenth century photo of a man sitting in a chair with his whiplashed back turned towards the camera was the horrific image of America's historic injustice used by abolitionists to prick the consciences of their contemporaries and lay forth a visual case against slavery.[1] The same could be said of the Associated Press' iconic photo of a young girl being burnt by napalm in the Vietnam War. Such imagery contributed to the unpopularity of the war among the general populace. So with this power of imagery to contribute to social change, one must ask how documentary uses graphic imagery to reveal acts of injustice, particularly acts of legalized violence. Two documentaries that attempt such an incorporation would be *The Atomic Café* (1982)[2] and *The Silent Scream* (1984)[3]. What is interesting is that these two films come from different sides of the political spectrum. *The Atomic Café* is an anti-nuclear documentary while *The Silent Scream* is an anti-abortion documentary, yet both of these films use graphic imagery to uncover the injustices they respectively oppose.

The Atomic Café has graphic pictures early on, showing two singed Japanese bodies lying on the ground, piles of bodies under rubble, a skull burned black, as well as survivors with burns on their skin. *The Silent Scream*'s graphic pictures are later on. They show pictures of aborted fetuses in buckets intercut with footage of Planned Parenthood. The most controversial element of the film is when Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a former abortionist and NARAL founder turned pro-life convert, shows ultrasound footage of a twelve-week fetus being dismembered. The reason both of these documentaries show such graphic imagery is not because of some sick fetish, but rather to break the hegemony of moral ambivalence that surrounds these issues.

Literature Review

I will attempt to incorporate several different theories from four authors: Michael Chanan, Susan Sontag, Walter Murch, and Rachel MacNair. Chanan's work, *The Politics of Documentary*, is a defense of documentary's ability to convey reality against the criticism of postmodern thinkers who claim that documentary is no different than any other narrative in its representation of reality. Chanan's main argument is that the characters and setting in the documentary have a determinable link in the real world, whereas the characters in regular narrative are fake. Chanan concedes that photographic images are subjective,

portrait by Mathew Brady Studio, from National Portrait Gallery

but he claims that they are also objective due to their tie to the real world. He rejects that objectivity and subjectivity are mutually exclusive when it comes to photographs. Images are like fragmented pieces of reality that, while needing context, can still be trusted. This will be important to my work since both of these documentaries are politically charged, and thus the integrity of their images will naturally be made suspect.[4]

I will also rely on *The Politics of Documentary*'s section on how the interpretation of an image can change based on the individual viewer. In that section, Chanan examines how the jury interpreted the video depiction of the brutal beating of Rodney King in a way that still found the police not guilty.[5] This will serve as a valuable comparison for how the audience might view the graphic imagery in documentary.

I will be drawing on two works of Susan Sontag: her *New York Times* piece "Regarding the Torture of Others"[6] and her book *On Photography*.[7] In both of these works, Sontag deals with graphic imagery and their relation to desensitization. This theory will be worth considering in regard to what risks documentarians take morally when using graphic pictures.

My reason for using Walter Murch's book *In the Blink of an Eye* is his theory on how editing can manipulate emotion.[8] This would address Sontag's concern about people's emotions being dulled by graphic imagery. Documentary's cinematic quality would be able to preserve the emotional impact of the image because of how it is edited.

Dr. Rachel MacNair's book, *The Psychology of Peace*, will be the one work I draw on that does not have to do with film. Dr. MacNair describes the psychological elements that cause society to legitimize violence against certain groups. Such a work will be helpful in showing the psychological reasons why society legitimizes violence against both pre-born children and the Japanese. This will give us a sense of what I will term "the hegemony of legitimized violence" that both the anti-abortion and anti-nuclear movements are trying to overcome.[9]

Arguments: hegemony, desensitization and viewer's interpretation

I will be using *The Psychology of Peace* to examine the psychological underpinnings for the hegemony of legitimized violence. Dr. MacNair lays out four different mental mechanisms that cause societal violence. For the sake of this essay, I will look at three of them and apply them to both the use of the atom bomb as well as the legal killing of the unborn. One mechanisms is dehumanization, the refusal to recognize certain people as human beings with the same moral worth as other human beings. For the anti-nuclear movement, the dehumanization they have to counteract is the jingoistic nationalism that discourages people from having any type of sympathy toward the citizens of an "enemy nation." The fact that Japanese citizens look different than most Americans also adds to this dehumanization. During WWII, there was rampant racism against the Japanese. This was evident in popular culture where political cartoons of "Japs" depicted Japanese people as strange-looking with big teeth and cartoonish features.[10] This is also evident in the federal government which flagrantly disregarded the civil liberties of Japanese Americans

by holding them in internment camps on the west coast.[11] MacNair explains how dehumanization can be expressed through language that attacks the humanity of victims.[12] An example of this in all warfare, including the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is the term "collateral damage."[13] The word "damage" is usually meant for harm done to property. If it is ever applied to people, it is usually meant to refer to an injury like "a damaged arm." To use the term "damage" to describe civilian deaths is to denote at best that these people were "hurt" rather than killed and at worst that they are somehow comparable with the buildings in the surrounding area and therefore snuffing out their lives is merely "damage."

The pro-life movement also has to counteract a form of dehumanization: the lethal ageism that bases the moral worth of human beings on their stage of development. This idea within our culture is that the humanity of the fetus is treated with ambiguity despite the biological evidence that affirms it.[14] It is also evident in the court system in which the Supreme Court declared pre-born humans to be "non-persons" in *Roe v. Wade*.[15] Thus this ageism is not only prevalent in society but is legitimized by the State. The fetus is excluded from the community of legal protection in which other people older than he or she are included. This dehumanization is also fostered by language. The fetus is called a "parasite," "trash," a "potential person" and is often referred to as "it" when described with a pro-noun (implying the fetus is an object).[16] Even the term "fetus" (which is simply Latin for "little one"[17]) itself is sometimes used to advance dehumanization due to its alien sounding nature. The somewhat alien appearance of the fetus also adds to this ageism since it makes it harder for the public to identify with the unborn due to difference in appearance.

Another mechanism that causes societal violence is "distancing".[18] This is a kind of "out of sight, out of mind" approach in which we isolate ourselves from the violence inflicted on others. Physical distance adds to this since it limits our sight from what is going on. MacNair gives an example of this in the Vietnam War when a bomber was shot down and held hostage by a native. There was a point when the native dropped his rifle and the bomber actually gave the gun back to him. He did this because there was a group of children following them and the bomber did not want to have to kill them. This is rather contradictory considering the fact that his bombs were very likely killing children anyway. Yet the fact that he was facing those children up close as opposed to bombing them from far away changed his disposition toward killing them.[19]

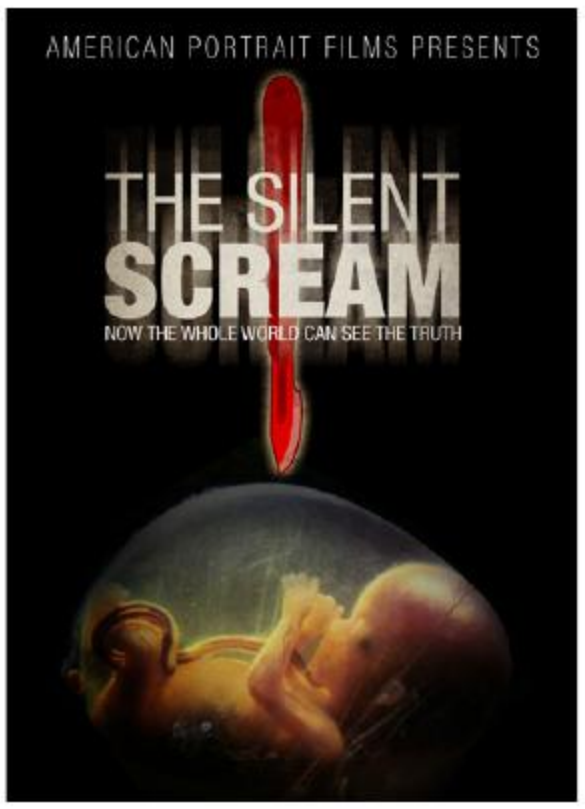
The mechanism of distancing can be observed in the vast spatial difference between Americans and the Japanese. The victims of the bombing were in Japan, far away from the United States. Thus the burnt Japanese were out of sight and made invisible. Unfortunately this caused people to give the matter less thought because it was not affecting them. The spatial difference can even be seen in the relation between the bomber and the bombed. In *The Atomic Café*, the captain of the plane that bombed Nagasaki is interviewed about his experience in the bombing and all he talks about are the clouds and smoke.[20] He makes no mention of the people because he could not see them.

There is also distancing between the fetus and Americans; because of his or her proximity within the mother's womb, the fetus is "away" or at least hidden from most Americans. We treat birth as if it is "coming into the world" and thus imply that the womb is somehow outside the world in some type of limbo between existence and pre-existence. This causes the fetus to be made invisible and thus we have ambiguity about his or her very humanity.

The final mechanism that I think applies to this hegemony of legitimized violence is the "just world" view.[21] This is the view that the world we live in (or at least the power structure that we live under) is inherently just. Thus the very possibility of societal injustice is excluded from our minds. If the state is

sanctioning some type of violence either by bombing Hiroshima or by legalizing abortion it must be just somehow, because our government is just. MacNair points to the phenomenon of slut-shaming rape victims as an example: people blame the victim because the possibility that we live in an unjust rape culture is excluded from thought.

Now I should make it clear that I am merely talking about the aesthetic hegemony that both of these movements have to overcome, not the intellectual, ideological, and philosophic hegemony that they must overcome. This is the fourth mechanism that MacNair refers to as "The cognitive transformation of reprehensible conduct into good conduct."[22] Graphic pictures are not and should not be used as substitutes for intellectual argument on behalf of these causes. They are the pathos, not the logos of the argument. They do not make arguments such as "if we had not bombed the Japanese, than we would have lost more troops in the invasion" or "if we had not legalized abortion, mothers would be dying from back alley abortions" go away. A rebuttal to such arguments must be taken on the logical level and the photos merely add a healthy emotional element to those arguments. So when I argue that these photos break the hegemony of moral ambiguity, I merely mean on an emotional and aesthetic level.



Photography has an ability to break spatial barriers between peoples; because the images it gives are portable, it allows someone to see others who live in far distant places without ever leaving their own country. Thus *The Atomic Café* can show Americans the burned Japanese without having to take them to Japan. In the same sense, *The Silent Scream* shows viewers who have already been born the occupant of the womb without performing a C-section. The graphic imagery breaks the spatial barrier between the viewer and the victim.

Graphic images also breaks the process of dehumanization because of the gut moral revulsion that viewers feel toward them. The viewers' desire to not see these human beings burnt or dismembered implies that they are seeing these victims as beings with moral worth. Thus they cannot easily dismiss these victims as subhuman and be reconciled with their desire to not see these "subhumans" destroyed.

It is through Chanan's defense of the integrity of the image that graphic imagery breaks the "just world view" aspect of the hegemony of legitimized violence. One of the greatest arguments that may be hurled against users of graphic imagery is the post modern argument that these photos, no matter how compelling they are, can not represent reality. Chanan's response would be that subjectivity and objectivity are not exclusive when it comes to photography and that while the pictures of victims are not the victims themselves, the victims they depict have a determinable link to the real world.[23] The singed Japanese bodies depicted in *The Atomic Café* and the dismembered fetuses depicted in *The Silent Scream* were real people in the real world who really were killed. The photos are fragments of reality, but still depict reality nonetheless. These pictures' determinable link to the real world shows that the world we live in is not just, that injustice is a possibility, and it is staring the viewer right in the face.

Now some may argue that graphic pictures have a desensitizing effect and that after prolonged

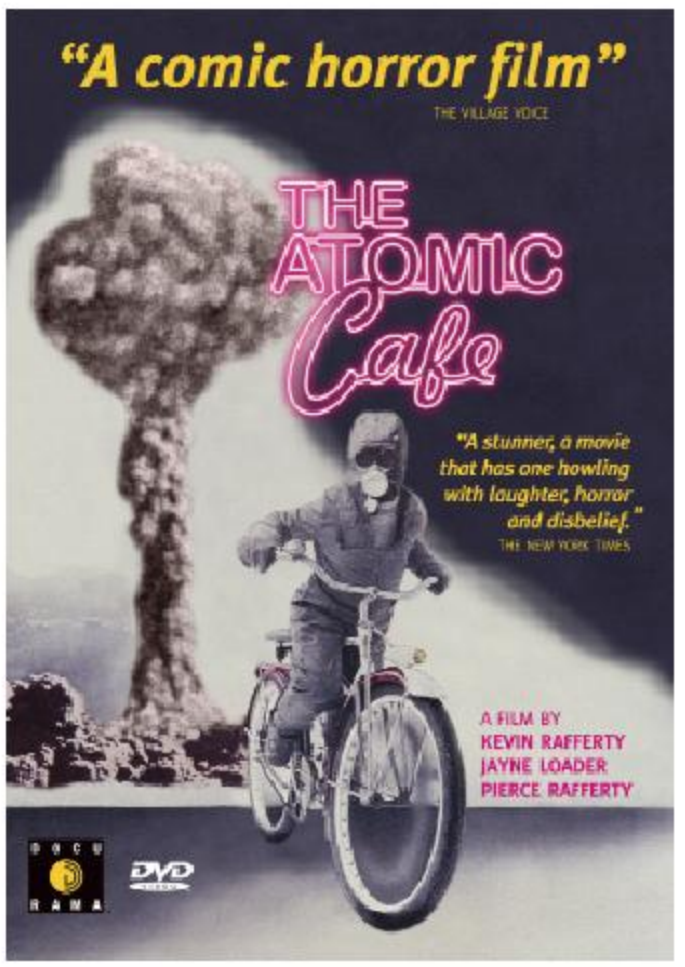
exposure, people become used to them, and the emotional stigma associated with them gradually withers away. Susan Sontag argued this in her *New York Times* piece, "Regarding the Torture of Others," that the constant presence of violent imagery in culture causes people to lose their moral stigma against violence. She is particularly concerned with how the torturers in Abu Ghraib seem to gleefully take pictures of their own atrocities and send them to friends.[24] In her book *On Photography*, Sontag compares photos of atrocities to pornography; she argues that just as pornography eventually dulls the initial sexual excitement of first seeing it, pro-longed exposure to photos of atrocities eventually dulls the moral and emotional outrage the viewer feels when seeing them.[25]

I think this argument holds merit in the sense that it is damaging to watch these graphic images over and over again. One never wants to get to the point where they can watch them while eating popcorn. The imagery certainly should be used sparingly, however I would not take that to the conclusion that they should not be used at all. Humans are ultimately visual creatures and unfortunately they sometimes need visual representation to fully understand the evil of an action. Mere words alone do not do that.

The context of cinema however helps to counteract desensitization. Because of the editor's ability instill emotion through rhythm and story,[26] the graphic images' placement in the sequence and musical timing allows the emotional stigma they have to be preserved. However, even if the audience would become desensitized to the emotional impact of the imagery, the moral impact will likely still remain. People may not feel the same emotional horror in looking at the images of the holocaust that they felt when first learning of it, or of looking at images of lynchings when learning of Jim Crow, but they still feel the moral repulsion toward it. The images may not make them mad anymore, but it will make them consider the higher norms of how human beings ought to be treated.

There is also something to be said of the context of the film itself in fighting moral desensitization. The type of entertainment violence in mainstream culture today and in the Roman blood-sport of yesteryear were and are meant to be for the enjoyment of the audience. Documentarians can frame their graphic imagery in a way that is not glorifying violence and is not for the enjoyment of the audience. An example of this being used in narrative would be *The Hunger Games* (2012) in which the plot is set around a fictional world where teenage children kill each other.[27] The way the violence is edited with its use of ambience makes the gore sobering as opposed to exciting. They are not scenes one looks forward to when re-watching the movie. The context of the film plus its subject matter does not allow the audience to have entertainment from the imagery. While this cannot stop desensitization from repetitive viewings, it can preserve the moral sting of the image.

Both of these documentaries also use juxtaposition to preserve an emotional outrage toward the graphic imagery. *The Atomic Café* does this early on by juxtaposing the destruction of Hiroshima and the burned victims of the bombing with partying Americans at the end of World War II.[28] Doing so creates an



intellectual montage that calls into question the nationalistic presumption that we should celebrate over the deaths of foreigners in war. *The Silent Scream* does this type of juxtaposition later on in the film when Bernard Nathanson discusses Planned Parenthood's commercial success through providing abortion. The movie shows imagery of Planned Parenthood facilities intercut with graphic photos of dead fetuses in buckets.[29] Doing so creates an intellectual montage that says behind this facility with its nice slogans is an organization that makes money off dead children.

Something that may limit the impact of the image is the mindset and environment of the viewer. Chanan talks about this in his book *The Politics of Documentary* in which he states that there is a series of sociological and psychological factors that affect how people view the film.[30] Thus when *The Silent Scream* came out, one of the criticisms of it was that it was not known whether the twelve-week-old fetus thrashing on the ultrasound could really feel pain. Others criticized it for making the fetus appear larger than it already was.[31] The sociological factor of ableism thus affect how people viewed the film. No one seemed to deny that the fetus was dismembered; their main contention was that the dismemberment was not that bad if it was carried out on someone small.

For both of these films, their opponents will likely accuse the documentarians of "manipulating people's emotions." Thus viewers with strongly opposing ideologies will feel offended by the photos rather than convicted. Comparing two films from opposite sides of the political spectrum also helps us to see the double standard that people apply to graphic photos. The leftist who opposes the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will likely agree that the graphic imagery in *The Atomic Café* is important in revealing injustice, but are more inclined to label similar graphic images of dead fetuses in *The Silent Scream* as mere emotional manipulation. On the flip side of that, the rightist who views *The Silent Scream* will see it as a graphic evidence for her cause against abortion, but will view the use of similar graphic imagery in *The Atomic Café* as an example of "liberal heart bleeding."

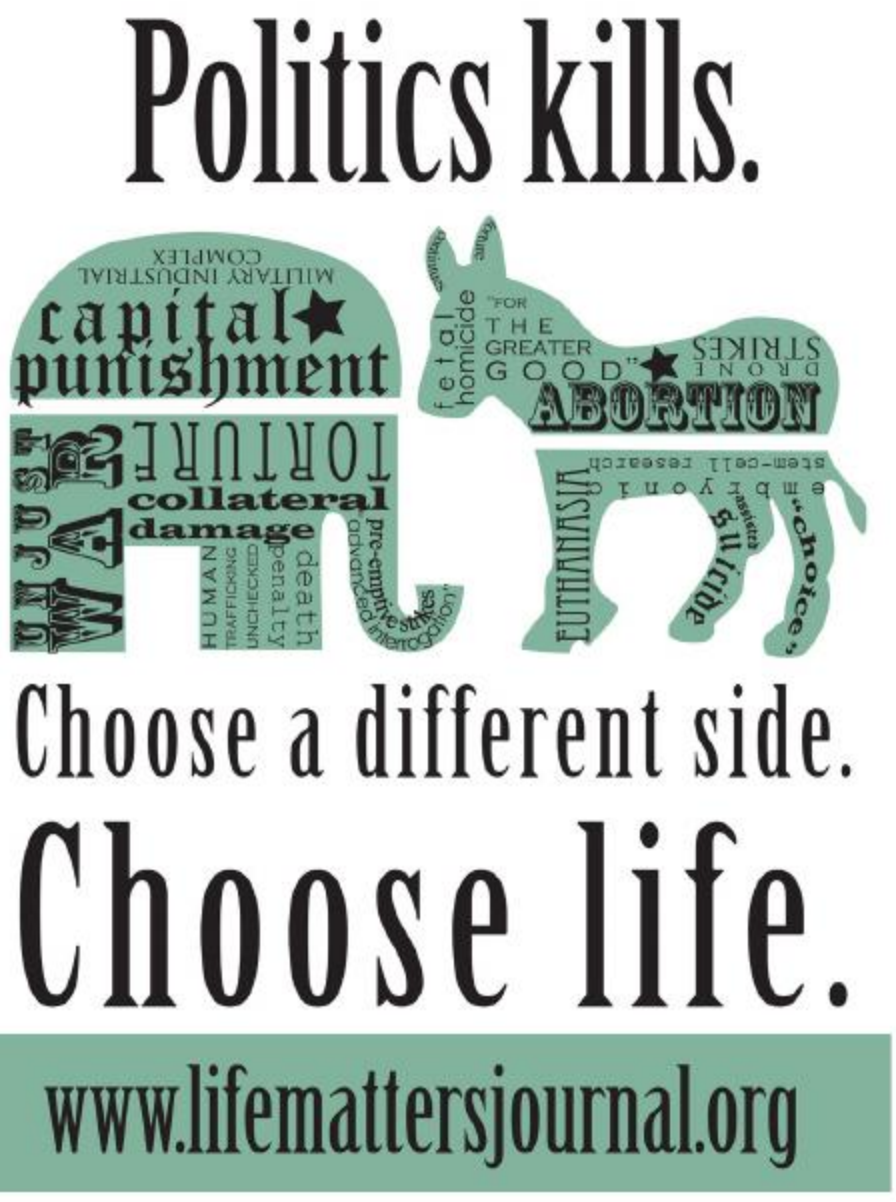
Conclusion

In the struggle against this hegemony of legitimized violence, this "culture of death," the anti-nuclear movement and the anti-abortion movement as well as other historic movements against violence like the anti-lynching, anti-war and anti-slavery movement have been willing to use graphic imagery to raise moral outrage against the violence they were protesting.

However in the twenty first century, both the anti-abortion and anti-nuclear movements have gradually given less attention that this approach. *Blood Money* (2009), a twenty-first century anti-abortion documentary does not show any graphic images, and actually makes a point to censor them out at some point.[32] At the same time, *Countdown to Zero* (2010), a twenty-first century anti-nuclear documentary, does not show the burned bodies of Hiroshima and in fact barely mentions the bombing in moral terms.[33] The reasons for this is likely a fear that it will "turn off" viewers from the message. While this certainly may be true, the fact that people are turned away from a message because its proponents present graphic evidence of evil says much more about said people than it does the graphic image: it shows that people value politeness over moral implication, that when they see the pictures of dead Japanese and dead fetuses, they think "this is really disturbing; what is wrong with the people showing this?" rather than "this is really disturbing, why is this legally sanctioned?" This brings to mind Susan Sontag's remark about the President Bush claiming to be disgusted at the photos of Abu Ghraib: "The administration's initial response was to say that the president was shocked and disgusted by the photographs—as if the fault or horror lay in the images, not in what they depict."[34] People being too squeamish to see graphic evidence of injustice may just do more to reinforce the hegemony of moral ambiguity.

Without proper visualization, the victims of these acts of homicide become hidden in the abstract and thus the moral certainty of the cause on their behalf is also placed in the abstract.

Still the use of graphic imagery in activism is not dead in the twenty-first century. A famous example would be the Wikileaks video that reveals soldiers in Iraq targeting and killing journalists. Such footage is said to have motivated the Iraqi government not allow the Obama administration to extend their occupation date in Iraq.[35] In pro-life activism there is an online film found on *Heresthebloood.com* that shows a montage of dismembered fetuses intercut with footage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to give it both a prophetic flair as well as to connect it with historic injustice.[36] However these activists are considered outside the establishment of their own movements. The mainstream pro-peace and pro-life movements are very careful to keep the use of graphic imagery in moderate use, which is beneficial in light of Sontag's argument, but it will be hard for these movements to break the hegemony of legitimized violence if they pursue a total abandonment of graphic evidence.



Some may, at the end of all of this, still claim that *The Atomic Café* and *The Silent Scream* cannot be compared because they come from different ends of the political spectrum, one taking on a left wing cause (anti-nuclear) and the other a right wing cause (anti-abortion). This objection takes the political spectrum too literally. "Left wing" and "right wing" are merely metaphorical terms, not literal directions; the political spectrum and the division of movements is itself a cultural construction, a type of hegemony, one that should also be challenged and done away with. It is the most dastardly grid of intelligibility ever constructed, because in appearing to show the range of ideology, its very nature presumes that certain ideas should never go together and thus puts an invisible block on certain views.

May the similarities between these two documentaries spark a movement to assault that hegemony as well! May society see that the victims in both of theses documentaries are both real victims in a real world of lethal ageism and jingoistic nationalism. May we have a new generation of documentaries that reveal all of the victims of legalized homicide, not just breaking the spatial barrier between American and foreigner or born and preborn, but the spatial barrier between Left and Right in our minds that irrationally segregates the advocates of life and peace.

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It's a Fact: Conservatives are Concerned About the Death Penalty

by Ben Jones

When I told some of my friends that I would be going to the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) to help launch Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty (CCATDP), some were downright skeptical that anything good could come of that experience. The dominant assumption for years has been that, if you are conservative, you support the death penalty. Surely, CPAC—one of the largest gatherings of the year of conservatives from across the country—would not be the venue to share concerns about the death penalty, right?

CCATDP not only survived CPAC, but it was an overwhelming success. Time and again, CPAC attendees told us, "I thought I was the only conservative against the death penalty. Thank you for being here." Though this response came as a shock to some of my friends, it should not be a surprise. The death penalty is contrary to fundamental conservative principles: a commitment to fiscal responsibility, limited government, and protecting the sanctity of human life. There is nothing conservative about capital punishment. It is a broken government program that wastes millions in taxpayer dollars, fails to reduce crime, and sometimes executes the innocent. Unsurprisingly, more conservatives are recognizing the death penalty's abysmal track record and are taking the lead in efforts to end it.

Challenging Assumptions about Conservatives and the Death Penalty

For years, politicians on the right and the left have tried to use the death penalty for political gain. In response to public concern over crime, some politicians would champion the death penalty as a tough-on-crime response to violence. The individual who perfected this tactic was not a Republican, but a "double-death Democrat"—a supporter of abortion and the death penalty—Bill Clinton. During his 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton highlighted his support for the death penalty in campaign ads and even suspended his campaign to sign the death warrant for Ricky Ray Rector, who suffered from a severe mental disability. (At his last meal, Rector told prison officials that he would save his dessert for later, not realizing there would be no later.)[1] Clinton then went on after his election to sign legislation greatly expanding the federal death penalty and shortening the appeals process in capital cases.

As Clinton's example makes clear, Republicans hardly have been alone in supporting the death penalty. Still, the high rate of executions in the red South[2] and stronger support for the death penalty among registered Republicans than registered Democrats[3] lead some to conclude that capital punishment is a conservative institution. CCATDP's primary purpose is to

challenge this assumption and begin a dialogue among conservatives on this issue.

Fortunately, CCATDP's work is not occurring in a vacuum, and changing attitudes among conservatives toward criminal justice policy have created a favorable climate for reexamining the death penalty. The tough-on-crime mindset prevalent in the 1990s, which led to the expansion of the death penalty, is no longer orthodoxy within the Republican Party. In fact, there has been a backlash from conservatives to many criminal justice policies enacted in the 1980s and 1990s, which have proven incredibly costly.[4]

CCATDP's work fits directly into this broader trend in the conservative world of taking a hard look at failed criminal justice policies. A criminal justice system must hold individuals accountable, protect the innocent, be responsive to the needs of victims, spend taxpayer dollars responsibly, and demonstrate effectiveness in reducing crime. On all these fronts, the death penalty has been an abysmal failure:

- The government cannot be trusted to apply the death penalty to the worst of the worst. Similar crimes often are treated differently. Race and geography play a role in deciding which murders are prosecuted as death penalty cases.[5]
- The death penalty prolongs the legal process, which can inflict harm on murder victims' families.[6]
- Since 1973, 142 individuals in the US have been sentenced to death and later set free after evidence was discovered proving they were wrongfully convicted, often decades after they were sentenced to die.[7]
- Study after study in states around the country finds that the death penalty wastes hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year.[8]
- There is no evidence that the death penalty reduces crime—states with the death penalty have higher murder rates on average than states without it.[9]

Given the abundance of evidence exposing the ineffectiveness of the death penalty, it is becoming more difficult for politicians to sell the death penalty as a tough on crime policy that works. Conservatives, in particular, increasingly see the death penalty as another failed government program that wastes taxpayers' money.

More Conservatives Embrace a Consistent Life Ethic

Beyond the death penalty's policy failures, there is a deeper motivation driving more conservatives to question the death penalty. A consistent life ethic is enjoying broader appeal, which has led more conservatives to reject the death penalty. The Catholic Church has led the way in calling for consistency in opposing all threats to life—abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and unjust war. These positions make some uncomfortable because they do not neatly fit within the platform of either of the two dominant US political parties.

photo from CCATDP Facebook page.

Faced with this dilemma, more conservative Catholics are choosing the Church's position over their party's platform. Mike Janocik, a longtime pro-life activist in Kentucky and supporter of CCATDP, recently explained his change of mind at CatholicVote.org: "If all life is valuable, how can we justify taking life through executions when other means can protect society? Moreover, how can we justify a system of capital punishment that makes mistakes and sometimes threatens innocent life? As someone who deeply values the sanctity of human life and has dedicated myself to protecting life, I no longer could ignore the grave concerns raised by capital punishment."[10]

The consistent life ethic also is attracting some conservative Protestants. One recent example of this quiet but real shift comes from South Dakota. Pastor and Republican State Representative Steve Hickey changed his mind on the death penalty and explained this shift in a recent sermon. He went through the many compelling policy arguments to end capital punishment. At the end of the day, however, the issue came down to following Christ's teaching and example. Rhetorically, Pastor Hickey asked his congregation, "What would Jesus do? Would he flip the switch or would he switch places?"[11]

Help Change the Conversation on the Death Penalty

In a short period of time, CCATDP has made tremendous strides in challenging assumptions about conservatives and the death penalty. Conservative leaders such as Jay Sekulow, Richard Viguerie, and Brent Bozell are national supporters and publicly have shared why the death penalty is contrary to their conservative beliefs.[12] A Montana chapter of CCATDP—which preceded the national CCATDP—has been active for years and helped pass a death penalty repeal bill through Montana's Republican-controlled state senate. More state chapters are in the process of forming in other states.

There have been important successes, but it would be a mistake to ignore the obvious challenges in this work. The Republican platform at the national level and in some states includes a plank supporting capital punishment. A number of red states still have the death penalty, and some—particularly in the South— frequently carry out executions. To change these policies, the coalition of conservatives simply has to grow. We hope you will join CCATDP in this important work—sign up at conservativesconcerned.org, "Friend" us on Facebook, "Follow" us on Twitter, "Connect" with us on LinkedIn, and get involved today.

Ben Jones is a Kansas-based campaign strategist for Equal Justice USA (EJUSA) and also works in support of Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty, a project of EJUSA. Ben led the successful effort to repeal Connecticut's death penalty last year.

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PERIPHERAL MATTERS:
THE "KISSING COUSINS"
by Rose Evans

The consistent life ethic is spreading in the mind of the community. There is more and more discussion of it, even by pro-choice advocates, and more and more individuals and groups are expressing support of it.[1]

The major organization that exists purely to advocate for the consistent life ethic is Consistent Life (http://www.consistent-life.org/), a coalition of 200 diverse organizations that support that ethic. There are also over 200 individual endorsers of the ethic, many of them noted for their work for peace, justice, and life.

To quote the website of Consistent Life, "What are we trying to achieve? A revolution in thinking and feeling, an affirmation of peace and nonviolence, an infinite gentleness, a value for the life, happiness and welfare of every person, and all the political and structural changes that will bring this about."
CL drew up a Mission Statement, a short and simple statement of principles, which includes the major threats to human life today:

> We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

This is the statement that CL member groups and individual signers endorse. Of course, this statement cannot include every threat to human life today. Other threats to life that are not mentioned would seem to be "kissing cousins" of those named in the Mission Statement.

Torture, for example, kills sometimes but not always. It sometimes occurs as part of a war, but sometimes in other contexts, such as cruelty in the prison system, including long terms of solitary confinement. While torture is not mentioned in the Mission Statement, the individuals and organizations that embrace the CL Mission Statement are likely to strongly oppose torture. Their deep commitment to peace and nonviolence is part of a mindset that opposes a wide array of wrongs.

The same could be said of other things: prison conditions, excessive sentences as part of "the war on drugs," experimentation on human subjects without informed consent, violence in the media, human trafficking, disablity rights, and many other issues.
Imbued with the consistent life ethic vision, member groups and individual endorsers are guided by that vision to oppose a wide variety of other threats against life.

A reader looking at the print and internet publications of CL member groups will see much information and advocacy on issues named in the Mission Statement. For example, the latest issue of the magazine of member group Sojourners has eloquent articles opposing killing people by drones and opposing homelessness and dangerous working conditions for poor workers.[2] These connect

with the opposition to war and poverty in the CL Mission Statement. It also has articles on equal rights and advancement for women, about immigration reform, and about flaws in the U.S. criminal justice system. These are not named in the Mission Statement, but are "kissing cousins" issues.

The recent national conference of member group Pax Christi USA included workshops on drone warfare, the death penalty, immigration, and global restoration/care for the environment.[3] The first two of these are issues named in the Mission Statement. The second two are not.

We note that an increasing numbers of CL member groups include care for the earth and the environment as part of their consistent ethic. There have always been some CL member groups who took that position. For example, member group the Agape Community, in addition to its work against war and capital punishment, has long been committed to "giving back to the earth more than we take from it." Their website says, "When human beings live in harmony with the earth, we uphold the sanctity of all life." They use solar power, saying that burning fossil fuels creates a greenhouse effect and adds to global warming. They run their car on cooking grease (available free from restaurants) to reduce the use of fossil fuels and find many ways to reduce their impact on the planet. The community is vegetarian.

Another example is member group the Center for Action and Contemplation, which publishes a Daily Meditation by founder Richard Rohr, OFM. The June 15, 2013, Meditation, on A Seamless Garment of Life, said: "All policies that needlessly destroy life – abortion, war, capital punishment, euthanasia, poverty itself, and the selfish destruction of the earth and its creatures–are anti-life and against the fifth commandment."

Similarly, member group Evangelicals for Social Action, states on its website (www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org): "We are pro-life and pro-poor, pro-family and pro-creation care." The latest issue of their magazine, Prism, has articles on the core issues of abortion and racism and the "kissing cousin" issue of immigration.[4]

Indeed, Consistent Life itself has often advocated for some of these "kissing cousins" issues. One example is the popular consistent life t-shirt that CL sells on in its CaféPress.com online store (go to www.consistent-life.org and click on "products"). The t-shirt has the theme of "no violence." On the back is

photo from Consistent Life Facebook page.

No violence to our earth.
No violence to our unborn.
No violence to our partners.
No violence to our enemies.
No violence to our children.
No violence to our prisoners.
No violence to our dying.

No Violence. Period.

It is a happy and promising thing that the consistent life ethic is spreading in the mind of the community and that this has not only affected views on the basic major life issues, but has also overflowed into "kissing cousin" issues to move our community toward peace, justice, and life in many other areas.

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We don't just talk the talk...

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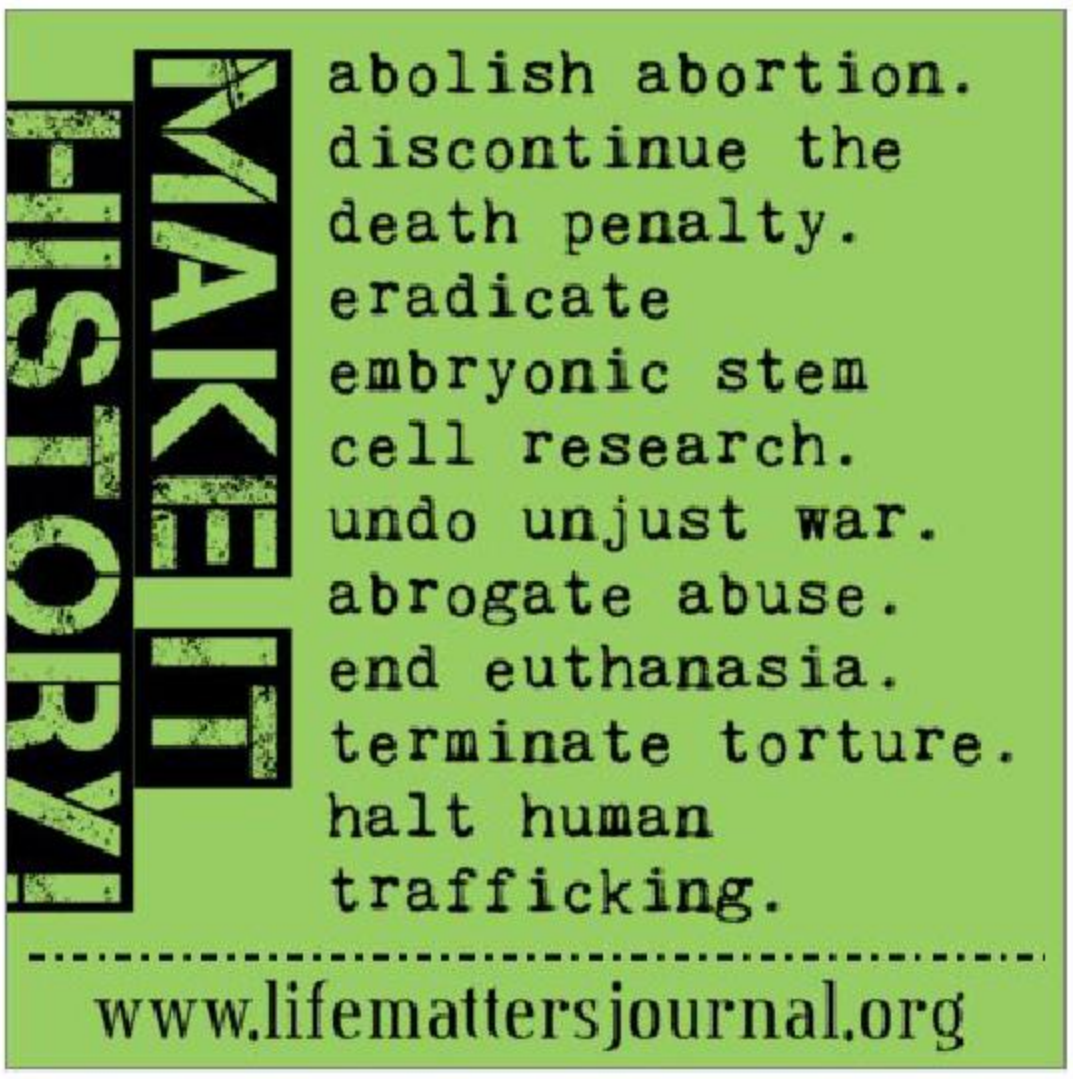

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Visit www.lifemattersjournal.org or email us at admin@lifemattersjournal.org

The "Make it History" Campaign

A Student Speaks Against Unjust War at SIU Carbondale

Photo by Steve Rhodes, some rights reserved.

The following is a transcript of a speech given at an anti-war rally by Nicholas Neal, a student at SIU Carbondale and a leader in the Students Against Unjust War student organization on campus.

Greetings fellow activists! My name Is Nicholas R. Neal. I am the president of Students Against Unjust War. I'm here at this great gathering because the drone issue is critical for the cause of peace. I happen to be twenty-two, and were I to unfortunately be killed by a drone in say some far off country, I would be labeled an "enemy combatant" regardless of whatever previous activity I was engaged in. This has been the practice of the Obama administration: to label any military-aged male killed by a drone as an enemy combatant. If you add this to the shocking amount of civilian deaths—including children—the picture of our activity overseas looks rather grim.

Now there are some strategic disadvantages to this type of warfare, namely, the issue of blowback. Imagine if your child or sibling was found dead tomorrow. Imagine if your loved one had suffered a horrible death by explosives. Imagine if it had been carried out by, say, the Chinese, and imagine if there was a group of people offering you the chance to exact justice or vengeance—whatever you want to think of it as—on the country that killed your brother or your son. That is what motivates terrorism. Blowback is not merely some cynical thought-experiment cooked up by the "unpatriotic." It is an theory established by the CIA and was offered as one of the key explanations for the September 11th attacks. Make no

mistake: our actions overseas have dangerous consequences.

In addition to the strategic reason, there's also a moral reason. I am not merely talking about the issue of citizen assassination, though that certainly is troubling. I am talking about an unstated assumption in the national dialogue on foreign policy: the assumption that our vague national interests outweigh the lives of foreigners. Such an assumption can be deduced from former Secretary of State Madeline Albright's infamous statement that the half a million children starved to death in Iraq due to our sanctions, was "worth it." Indeed the writing-off of the deaths of children by our use of drones reveals that same attitude that foreigners' lives are expendable when they inconvenience our national interests.

That attitude needs to be rejected! Human life is sacred, regardless of the color of one's skin or the borders one lives between. We understand that it is morally unacceptable for individuals to commit mass murder. The incident in Sandy Hook affirmed that. But the State is not above this moral law. Mass murder does not become legitimate when it's called "foreign policy." "National interests," real or imaginary, are not enough to justify killing the innocent, whether accidental or purposeful, and the victims having different sounding names doesn't mitigate the crime committed against them.

For those in the halls of power in Washington, I encourage them to rethink and reject this jingoistic attitude of foreign inferiority. I ask that they then substantiate that moral change with action, by drawing back our drone use across the world and traveling the path of diplomacy toward the ultimate goal of peace.

For those of us gathered here, I applaud you for taking the time to raise your voice against this injustice, and I encourage you rethink and reject other forms of societal violence that do not respect the sanctity of human life such as the homicide of those on death row, the homicide of children in the womb, the homicide of the elderly, and, of course, the homicide of foreigners. All these issues make up what Catholic Peace Activist Eileen Eagan called a "seamless garment" that should clothe our moral vision.

For a just world through a just peace. Thanks to all of you.

Want to have **your group featured** in an upcoming issue of Life Matters Journal in the Make it History Campaign?

Write up a *2-5 page report* on a year of your work, or one event, and let us know what's been fruitful on your campus, and perhaps what could be improved.

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An Interview With Heather Beaudoin of Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty

Conservatives Concerned | About the Death Penalty

A Project of EJUSA

Photo from CCATDP Facebook

Heather Beaudoin is one you might be keen to call an "anomaly." She's different from the Right-wing stereotype inasmuch as she stands firmly against a practice that has been championed by the Conservative Right for decades. Alas, she is proud to bear the title of conservative and to work for the success and future of the Republican party in her own way. We had the honor of interviewing Heather to learn more about her efforts to call conservatives to work to end the death penalty.

LMJ: *Tell us a little about yourself, your involvement in conservative politics, and your involvement in Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty.*

Heather: My involvement in conservative politics began during my college years. During that time I worked for the Republican senate majority leader in Michigan and the National Republican Congressional Committee, along with numerous GOP campaigns in Michigan and Montana. I also helped to start the Helena, Montana, Pregnancy Resource Center and served as its assistant director.

My involvement with Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty started several years ago in Montana. I was working with the Montana Abolition Coalition when conservative Republican members of the legislature and other state conservative leaders started to discover they opposed capital punishment. That revelation caused them to form Montana Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty on the statewide level, and I was privileged to help coordinate their efforts. When the national group was being formed I was recruited to help.

LMJ: *What does Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty do?*

Heather: Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty is a national group of people who question whether capital punishment is in sync with their conservative principles. Our mission is to end the myth that all conservatives support the death penalty and to let other conservatives know that they are not alone in raising questions about the system. Our group provides a forum for conservatives to discuss and reexamine the death penalty from a conservative perspective. We can be found exhibiting and networking at many national and state-level conservative and religious gatherings, sharing our information, and gaining converts. For example, we will have a booth at Life/Peace/Justice: A Conference on Life Issues next March in Philadelphia.

LMJ: *How does conservatism shape your views against the death penalty?*

Heather: My pro-life views have had the greatest impact on my position regarding the death penalty. Like so many conservatives, I believe in the sanctity of life from conception to natural death and I do not believe mankind should ever interfere with God's intent.

I am also a fiscal conservative who fervently believes our government should be fiscally responsible and not waste my tax dollars on expensive programs that accomplish little or nothing. The death penalty system fits the bill because it costs far more than the alternatives. Not only that, we have more than three thousand people on death rows in the United States – costing us billions of dollars – but last year only 43 were executed. To me, and the other conservatives who are joining us, this represents a stunningly inefficient government program.

Predictably, I believe in limited government power, and the fact that so many people have been released from death rows due to innocence issues is profoundly disturbing to me. Giving the government the

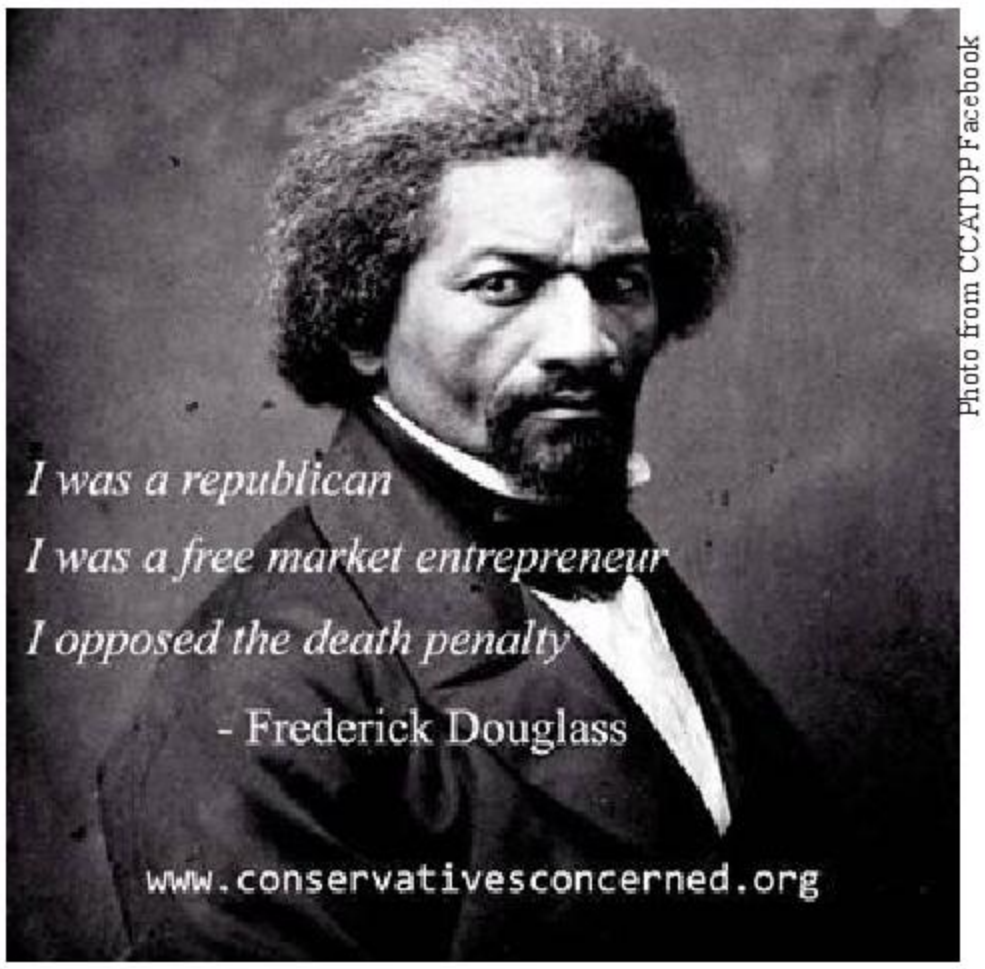

Photo from CCATDP Facebook

power to kill our own citizens makes me very uncomfortable, especially given the real risk of executing innocent people with the death penalty.

I'm also concerned about the impact the system has on murder victims' families, as well as the racial and wealth disparities in terms of how cases are chosen to be death penalty prosecutions.

LMJ: *What's your typical reaction from conservatives when they hear about your group?*

Heather: The typical reaction I get from most conservatives is, "where have you been? I thought I was the only one." For example, when our group made its debut at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in March our booth was overrun with people saying exactly that and signing up to lend their names to the cause. The conservative reaction has been the same everywhere we go. Interestingly, even those who support the death penalty are moved by the facts about cost, innocence, the impacts on families, and the racial disparities in its application. We actually have supporters who still believe capital punishment is morally and constitutionally acceptable but believe the system cannot be fixed and should be ended, with the money returned to the taxpayers.

LMJ: *Why do you think conservatives have traditionally supported the death penalty and why are they wrong?*

Heather: In recent times many conservatives embraced tough-on-crime policies with the goal of ensuring public safety. However, today, many of those same conservatives are re-thinking their views about criminal justice with new concerns about over-criminalization and new approaches for reforming the system. Re-assessing the death penalty is a part of that movement. Tough on crime conservatives are now acknowledging the death penalty does not make us safer and that it is not a deterrent--and these same people who love liberty find the possibility of killing innocents to be unacceptable.

LMJ: *Is there an ethical link between being anti-death penalty and being pro-life?*

Heather: Many of our supporters believe there is an ethical link between being pro-life and against the death penalty. For myself, I believe that God calls on me to value all life, not just innocent life, which I believe is clear throughout the Gospels. The inconsistency of being pro-life and pro-death penalty has troubled many of the conservatives who have joined our ranks. They, like me, ask themselves the following question: If all life is valuable, how can we justify taking life through executions when other means can protect society?

LMJ: *Is there a contradiction with some more liberal anti-death penalty people opposing the death penalty but supporting legal abortion?*

Heather: Everyone must answer to his or her own conscience and follow their beliefs. I can only speak for myself and the other conservatives who are expressing their concerns about the death penalty that we – in ever increasing numbers – are putting an end to the contradictions in our beliefs.

LMJ: *Do any members of Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty advocate a consistent life ethic?*

Heather: Yes, many of us do advocate for a consistent life ethic. In fact, some of our supporters are pro-life activists in their own states.

LMJ: *Do you see yourselves as parallel to groups like Feminists for Life? Breaking an ideological stereotype?*

Heather: As I previously mentioned, our goal is to shatter the fiction that conservatives supposedly have one monolithic position on capital punishment, so we are most definitely trying to break an ideological stereotype. Conservatives and our positions are constantly evolving, as well they should in our ever-changing society. What we know about the death penalty today is different from the available information of times past. It's human nature to try and pigeonhole groups, but as times change, our preconceptions and notions must also change. Conservatives are changing and they are increasingly concerned about the death penalty. That's a fact.

Photo by Patrick Feller, some rights reserved.

LMJ: *The national Republican Party platform states that "Courts should have the option of imposing the death penalty in capital murder cases." Does Conservatives Concerned think that plank of the platform should change?*

Heather: We believe the evidence is clear about the death penalty – it costs too much, it puts innocent lives at risk, it abuses murder victims' families, it's applied unfairly – and we are learning that conservative Republicans are incredibly open and responsive to what we are sharing with them. We are confident that national GOP leaders will be the same once they take another look and reflect upon the realities.

LMJ: *Who are some famous conservatives that oppose the death penalty?*

Heather: We are incredibly proud of the support our group is receiving from some of the true icons of the national conservative movement. They include Richard A. Viguerie, who was an advisor to President Reagan, Media Research Center founder and Fox News commentator Brent Bozell III, and Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice who also is a contributor to Fox News. Other famous conservatives who have expressed their concerns about the death penalty include Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr, Fox News' Tucker Carlson, Senator Rand Paul, columnist George Will, and the Rev. Pat Robertson.

LMJ: *Are you optimistic about other conservatives coming around to your position?*

Heather: We are more than optimistic. Every day, since the start, the feedback has been remarkable. In a scant few months our social media has hundreds upon hundreds of conservative followers, and our fact sheets, lists and articles are being shared with thousands of people through the Internet. Every day more conservatives are coming to us seeking information.

Photo by Jay Sekulow, some rights reserved.

We are being invited to meet with the leaders of the conservative movement. So, yes, we have plenty of reasons for being optimistic because conservatives are, in fact, coming around to our position. For them it just makes sense. They want to limit the size of government, reduce waste in government, and protect liberty. The death penalty does none of those things and is inconsistent with our conservative values.

LMJ: Thank you so much for your time, Heather! We're grateful for your witness for peace and the life and dignity of the death row inmate and the preborn. Good luck in your work, we hope to see CCATDP at future events.

Heather Beaudoin is a national advocacy coordinator for Conservatives Concerned About the Death Penalty. Beaudoin lives in Michigan with her husband and infant daughter.

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Stand4Life:
Lessons From Austin
by Aimee Murphy

Photo from Brendan O'Morchoe

I left at 9 p.m. on July 6th, and returned home by 8 a.m. on July 15th. I gave up more than a week of what was supposed to be the most relaxing part of summer break to stand out in the hot Texan sun doing some pretty thankless - if not generally despised - work. That's not to say we weren't the beneficiaries of some very generous and gracious hosts and donors, but the young people with the Students for Life of America "Stand4Life" Bus Tour who descended upon Austin, Texas, were the much-coveted reinforcements for the blue-clad pro-lifers, and simultaneously and contrariwise the source of much consternation for the orange-shirted pro-aborts.

It was a very eye-opening week for me. Both pro-choicers and pro-lifers surprised me with their words and actions. I learned a lot about the political process and confirmed some of my misgivings and reaffirmed my faith in individuals dedicated to human flourishing. And finally, I learned that our movement still has a long way to go to educate, engage, and convert hearts and minds to the cause of life – but we won this little battle in Texas. I only hope that my true life experience can be a learning experience for us all.

The Brief History of the Rainbow Baby Sign

I was there as a sort of representative for all of the secular and LGBT pro-lifers who couldn't be with us - and while at times I got less-than-positive responses from pro-lifers, more often than not I think people were glad to see that our cause was not singular in background, and more diverse than the media would portray. I have two little stories to tell about my special "gay baby" sign that give me hope for the future of the pro-life movement.

I suppose I was shocked by the response of some pro-lifers in the Texas capitol who looked at me with disgust when I wore both "Life" tape and "LGBT" on my shirt. But then just days before I had been walking around with my sign that reads "If the fetus you abort is gay, does that mean you're homophobic?" and got the remark from a trio of pro-choice women that I had "the best sign" there from either side. The ladies then proceeded to engage me in a nearly 2-hour completely civil conversation about understanding the plight of LGBT youth, what it was like for me to be an LGBT pro-lifer, the quest for personalism in this fight (rehumanizing the other side, instead of referring to them as "enemies"), collaboration on ways to reduce abortion, and finally the ethics and science involved in the abortion debate. All of this because I was toting a sign that made them seriously think about who I am as a person, the personhood of the preborn, and human rights in general. I don't think I changed hearts and minds in that very instant, but I am fully confident that I planted seeds. I hope, someday, they'll look back on that conversation and remember it as a turning point in their hearts.

A few days later we were in San Antonio, for a pro-life witness outside of a Planned Parenthood rally. I stood near the entry gates with my "gay baby" sign yet again, and a fellow SFLA Bus Tour student overheard one pro-abort inside the gates say to another:

"I bet if there was a test for [gayness], pro-lifers would murder [gay fetuses] in a heartbeat."

Did you grasp what was said there? Did you let it sink in?

Pro-choicers used the word "murder" to mean abortion. In attributing some sort of sexuality (whether future or genetically determined) to the preborn human being, my sign rehumanized the preborn and tripped up even the most dedicated pro-choicer at the Planned Parenthood rally. Because to the typical feminist liberal, discrimination based on sexuality or gender identity is anathema. Violence towards gays is often typified as "homophobia", and it only makes sense to qualify the violence against the LGBT preborn human being as the same. It touched a nerve, it made them think – they dropped their guard and they spoke truth about abortion. Again, I don't know if I changed hearts or minds that day, but I do know that I cultivated the truth in their hearts.

"Politics Kills" in the Texas Capitol

I have a very well-loved shirt that gets worn at least once every other week (considering how many clothes I hoard this is an accomplishment I assure you). It's printed and created by Life Matters Journal and I wear it with much pride. It reads: "Politics Kills. Choose a different side. Choose life." The Republican Elephant and the Democrat Donkey are on the left and right side as you read it, respectively, with many of the ongoing and legally perpetuated aggressive violences of our time written within their frames. I wore this shirt twice to the Texas capitol, wondering what sort of response I might get from either side, or the politicians who we met throughout our trip. But what I witnessed in the halls and chambers of the Texas legislature was an interesting contradiction.

Photo from Erin Stoyell-Mulholland

The pro-life legislators were by and far Republican, standing behind Rick Perry, their governor, as he signed the bill they worked so hard to pass through. The plain irony inherent in this situation of course is that this pro-life bill was the bookend of the month for Rick Perry, whose other main "achievement" was the 500th execution of a death-row inmate. I passed many a pro-abort who had signs observing and condemning this inconsistent attitude towards the value of human life – I of course questioned why, instead, they were not on our side being consistently pro-life and asking Rick Perry the same question. There was, however, a more subversive set of contradictions that I was simultaneously pleased and dismayed to encounter: Democrats would propose "pork" legislation that I suppose was just meant to make the bill harder to pass, but in suggesting amendments that would improve maternal healthcare, childcare, and even abolish the death penalty, they pointed out clear inconsistencies in the overall approach to ending abortion and respecting life on the part of so many Republicans. I was, of course, glad to see such life-affirming amendments being offered, dismayed to see them tabled so quickly, approving of Democratic ideas to end the need for abortion, and yet disgusted to see so many Democrats seemingly concerned with life vote "nay" on the bill in the end.

But while in Texas, I also found one of my new heroes: Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. A pro-life Democrat from District 27 in the very southernmost tip of Texas, I found a man who is willing to stand for the "little guy", and respects life in all its stages. I found a man who is keen to cross party lines for the sake of life, and who is eager to push for consistency in the political sphere for human dignity. I learned that, though elusive, the Pro-Life Democrat does exist and Senator Lucio is one of the most honorable and well-loved men in the Texas pro-life movement. It gave me hope for the future of the pro-life movement, for all of my peers to see his closing comments on HB2, and cheer and applaud his fervor and his intellectual honesty – that even though this human rights champion may be ending his political career sooner than we'd like, we have the ability to step up and take the reins for which he has so graciously fought.

Photo from Texas Coalition for Life Facebook page

A Long Way to Go

The major downside to HB2 is that it once again limits abortion by an arbitrary means. Perhaps the clinic and medication regulations will stand, but likely the 20-week ban will be overturned based on some sort of court-pronounced "precedent" from Planned Parenthood v. Casey. It's hard, knowing the stakes at hand, to fight for a law which will just as easily (if not more so) be flipped by some far-off court ruling in favor of so-called "privacy" in the face of "medical uncertainty." But I was there and I handed out water bottles and engaged in discussion and just tried to be a loving and real witness for life. In the process, I was privy to more than a few events and occurrences that made me flinch and pray for a different future. Yes, in small part I am speaking about the vitriol and hate that came from many of the pro-aborts: it absolutely terrified me and I feared for my life at one point (which is one point too many, might I add). But more than that, I am actually speaking to the pro-life movement: if you want to change hearts and minds for the cause of life, we really do have a long way to go.

At the pro-life rally on Monday evening (our first night in town), I heard a plethora of prayers, a

religious lexicon, and discussion about issues that were at best related by a single thread, and at worst, exclusionary. Now, most courteous atheists and agnostics will respect the typical convocation and/or closing prayer, but littering discussion of a human rights abuse with religious speak can be a turn-off to the audience we are most trying to convince. People will ascribe religion to the "personal preference" category of ideas and will write off the pro-life side as such: mere individual belief. Instead, I propose, we have the responsibility to frame the anti-abortion argument in terms of a human rights violation based in sound ethics and factual science. We must develop a lexicon based on this framework that is inviting and opens doors to those on all sides of the religious and political spectrum.

I heard it screamed from the fourth floor of the capitol rotunda: "F*** the church! Not the state! Women must decide their fate." I saw "Keep your rosaries off my ovaries" plastered on many a pro-abort sign. Religion is hampering the argument where there should be engaging discussion about the depravity of humanity to kill members of our own species. There's still a long way to go if we want to reach the audience at hand instead of preaching to the choir.

In addition, I would advance that consistency in our arguments is vital to the movement – and our own intellectual honesty. Compromise in the face of death rarely means true victory; instead, compromise here means sacrificing lives and our own integrity. While there was no rape or incest exception in HB2, there was an exception for "gross fetal abnormalities." Still,

Photo from Erin Stoyell-Mulholland

Photo from Texas Coalition for Life Facebook page

those human beings with such abnormalities remain human! And in compromising I think we suggest that there is some sort of relative value of the human person. This isn't even touching on the possibilities to end the death penalty that arose in the creation of this particular law, but the consistency needed in the anti-abortion fight alone. Consistency on the question of human rights and integrity in the face of compromise will indicate to our opponents that we are sincere in our fight for life, and that this cause is unquestionably the most vital of our time (if not of all time).

I learned a lot in Texas. I'm glad I went to lend my hands and my feet and my voice (or, sometimes, just my presence). It was without a doubt absolutely exhausting: physically, mentally, and emotionally. I'm a bleeding heart and it made me weep to think that there were those so uneducated, willfully blind, or openly selfish that they would kill another member of our human family. I cried a lot that week, but it helped to renew my passion for life, encourage me where I needed it most, and strengthen my resolve to devote my life to saving life.

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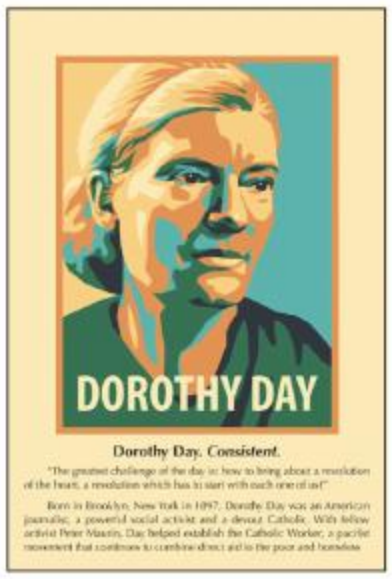
Father Daniel Berrigan. *Consistent.*

"One is called to live nonviolently, even if the change one works for seems impossible."

Born in Virginia, Minnesota on May 9, 1921, Daniel Berrigan has been a priest, a poet, a novelist, an activist. Along with his brother Philip, Berrigan was an outspoken opponent to American militarism, founding the national peace group, Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam.

Ordained in 1952, Father Berrigan marched with his brother during the civil rights movement at Selma in 1965. Together they led numerous protests against the war in Vietnam, including the destruction of draft board files in 1968. For his various acts of civil disobedience, Father Berrigan has spent more than six years of his life in prison.

"We spoke out, committed civil disobedience, and went to jail because the peace hangs senselessly and precariously upon weapons costing billions to build and to learn to improve—weapons which become more useless



Dorothy Day. *Consistent.*

"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us!"

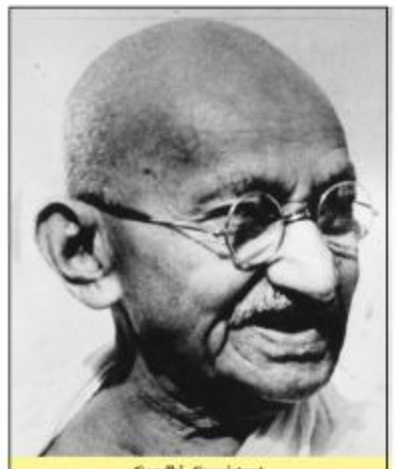
Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1897, Dorothy Day was an American journalist, a powerful social activist and a devout Catholic. With fellow activist Peter Maurin, Day helped establish the Catholic Worker, a pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid to the poor and homeless

Dr. Catherine Meeks. *Consistent.*

Catherine Meeks is a storyteller with a purpose.

Born in 1946 in segregated Arkansas, Ms. Meeks has spent a lifetime working on issues of racial healing and the promotion of life. The daughter of a sharecropper and a teacher, Catherine grew up hearing her father talk about a 12-year-old brother who died from a burst appendix before she was born—refused service at a white hospital. "I grew up in that kind of atmosphere of: The world is really hostile toward us because we're black and poor."

For more than 30 years, Catherine has advocated wellness and social justice, giving voice to those living on the margins of society and promoting a healthy racial dialogue worldwide.



Gandhi. *Consistent.*

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, and became the international symbol of the power of nonviolence. Gandhi was the most revered political and ideological leader in India during that nation's delicate transition to independence. His leadership of national civil disobedience led ultimately to India's separation from Great Britain, and

Reverend Johnny Hunter. *Consistent.*

Dr. Johnny M. Hunter nearly died at birth. After others had given up on the newborn, an elderly midwife refused to let him die. She later told him that he was born for a reason.

Reverend Hunter believes he knows the reason—to protect life. With more than 30 years in the ministry, Dr. Hunter is the President of Global Life & Family Mission (GLFM), a ministry dedicated to promoting traditional family values, racial harmony, and the survival of children around the world.

Dr. Hunter is an ordained minister, a cofounder of the National Community Church on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, and the Pastor Emeritus of Church of The Living Water, Buffalo, NY. He is a nationally respected pro-life and civil rights advocate, and founded the Life Education And Resource Network (LEARN, Inc.), a broad consortium of Christian pro-life, pro-family advocates. LEARN is a prominent African-American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States.

Rose Evans. *Consistent.*

Rose Evans was born in San Francisco in 1920, where she still lives, not far from the Pacific Ocean. Rose grew up in a loving family, with a Scottish father and a Canadian mother. She grew up without any particular religion, but in college was drawn to a relationship with Jesus, and with several friends was baptized in the Episcopal Church.

Rose Evans has been an activist for peace and life for more than 40 years. She is the oldest member of the Board of *Consistent Life*.

Rose was happily married to Matthew Evans, a university professor—until they raised four children together. When her youngest child was ten, Rose went back to college and got an M.A. in Education of Exceptional Children.

Her work in special education helped to inspire her activism in life issues.

Reverend Patrick Mahoney. *Consistent.*

Patrick J. Mahoney is a nationally known Christian social and political activist, and an ordained minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He is director of the Christian Defense Coalition, a "national ministry committed to challenging the Body of Christ to live out their faith in the public square."

Born in New Jersey, Rev. Mahoney attended the University of Dayton and the Faith School of Theology in Maine. His early ministerial experiences in New York City led him to embrace a commitment to expanding the role of the church in addressing society's wrongs. He began to develop and nurture social programs, and has worked tirelessly on pro-life causes, homelessness, hunger, racism and other pressing issues of social justice from a Christ-centered biblical perspective.

In 1992, Mahoney brought his family to Washington, DC, where he

Fannie Lou Hamer. *Consistent.*

Fannie Lou Hamer was a courageous civil rights leader and a passionate activist for voting rights in America. Her legacy remains today.

Born in 1917, Hamer played a major role in organizing the Mississippi Freedom Summer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Growing up poor in segregated Mississippi, Hamer developed her passion for social justice – and was known for her outspoken rhetoric. In the early 1960's she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and began work on registering voters in the deep south. Despite arrests and beatings, she maintained her vigilance, eventually helping to form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

Sister Helen Prejean. *Consistent.*

In 1982 a friend asked Sister Helen Prejean if she would correspond with convicted murderer Elmo Patrick Sonnier, located in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Thus began a journey recounted in her book *Dead Man Walking*—that continues today in her tireless work to abolish the death penalty.

A Catholic nun since 1957, Sister Helen embraces the consistent ethic of life. She works toward the recognition that every life has dignity—not only the innocent, but also the guilty— and she rejects all violence, from conception to natural death.

"I stand morally opposed to killing: war, executions, killing of the old and demented, the killing of children, unborn and born ... I believe that all of life is sacred and must be protected, especially in the vulnerable stages at the beginning of life and its end."

Martin Sheen. *Consistent.*

Martin Sheen is an actor. He is best known for his performances as Captain Willard in the film *Apocalypse Now*, Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Gettysburg, and President Josiah Bartlet in the popular television series *The West Wing*. Mr. Sheen has worked with some of the world's most noted directors, including Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Oliver Stone, Francis Ford Coppola, Richard Attenborough, Terrence Malick and Mike Nichols.

Martin Sheen also believes in the consistent life ethic. He rejects all violence, from abortion to war.

Inspired by a deep Catholic faith, Sheen has put his beliefs in action for almost 50 years. He supported Cesar Chavez during the early days of the farm worker movement in California, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of a variety of peace and justice causes. He has spoken out about political repression in Central America, marched on immigration reform, fought against the Salvadoran death squads, and supported the closing of nuclear test sites. He has been arrested on a number of occasions for nonviolent civil disobedience.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. *Consistent.*

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928–1996) has been widely credited with advancing the Consistent Life Ethic. Originally called the Seamless Garment, Bernardin drew from New Testament principles in rejecting all forms of violence as inconsistent with Catholic teaching.

Bernardin was an outspoken critic of nuclear war and abortion, but he soon expanded his vision to include all kinds of violence. "The spectrum of life cuts across the issues of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare and the care of the terminally ill," wrote Bernardin in a famous speech at Fordham University. He began to define a new moral theology for Catholics that respected all life, from conception to natural death.

Cardinal Bernardin told an audience in Portland, Oregon: "When human life is considered 'cheap' or easily expendable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy."

Aimee Bedoy Murphy. *Consistent.*

Aimee Murphy was born in 1988. She's young. She is also a founder and the Executive Director of Life Matters Journal, the leading consistent life ethic magazine.

Aimee was a teenager when a personal conversion led her to the cause against abortion, and the cause to support and defend the consistent life ethic during her time in university.

During her undergraduate studies, Aimee worked to successfully change the pro-life organization on her college campus to one that centered on equal respect for the dignity of all human life. She helped to facilitate change in the pro-life dialogue on many college campuses. As someone whose efforts began in anti-abortion work, Aimee believes that "making the pro-life movement more accessible correlates directly to the level of consistency in the ethic of its members."

Through her work with Life Matters Journal, Aimee intends to reach people all over the globe with the consistent message of human worth. The Journal's mission statement includes her words, "We must realize that the most important issue of

Shane Claiborne. *Consistent.*

You'll find Shane Claiborne on the streets of Philadelphia, bringing his radical Christianity to the poor and disenfranchized, ministering to people in need and serving as a radical voice in the church.

Born in Tennessee, Claiborne is one of the founding members of *The Simple Way* in Philadelphia, "a mob of subversive friends, conspiring to spread the vision of 'Loving God, Loving People, and Following Jesus' in our neighborhoods and in our world." This community was featured on the cover of *Christianity Today* magazine as a pioneer of the New Monastic/Emergent movement.

Shane studied at Eastern University, Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is now a part of The Alternative Seminary. Claiborne has interned at Willow Creek Community Church and spent time with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India. Shane has been a part of peace delega-

Why not a consistent voice?

These are just a few of the individuals who have spoken out with a clear, unwavering voice for peace and life—rejecting all violence. **Consistent Life** is a network of 200 groups and many individuals which furthers the consistent life ethic through exhibits at conferences, advertisements, a weekly e-newsletter, a presence on social media and community speakers. We need both a network such as Consistent Life and a quality journal like Life Matters Journal to spread the idea of respecting the dignity and worth of each human life.

What can you do to make the world a less violent place? Will you help us?

We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

Consistent Life

http://www.consistent-life.org/join.html

MEDIA REVIEWS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

STAR TREK RETURNS TO WRATH

by Rachel Whitehead

Among Star Trek fans – and I consider myself one – *The Wrath of Khan* is often hailed as the best film in the series. Driven by great villainy, great friendship, and great sacrifice, the 1982 classic remains the emotional powerhouse of the franchise. *Star Trek Into Darkness* is only our second foray into director J. J. Abrams' rebooted Star Trek universe, but already we're boldly going where Ricardo Montalban has gone before. Khan is back, once again seeking that dish best served cold: revenge. The new film reinvents familiar characters and rearranges established events, playing on audience nostalgia with plotlines that reflect the past like a distorted mirror (though the story stands on its own well enough that newcomers to Star Trek can follow and enjoy it). Most intriguingly, the film analyzes its central theme of "wrath" with an explicitly post-9/11 sensibility.

Since its inception in the 1960s, Star Trek has set contemporary events in its futuristic milieu in order to provide thinly veiled commentary on political and social issues, from the Civil Rights Movement to the Cold War. Into Darkness follows the same pattern, envisioning a Starfleet that reenacts modern

controversies about undeclared wars and the ethics of homeland security. But before taking things too seriously, remember *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, which took pride in making you laugh before reminding you to save the whales. Good Trek seeks to entertain you and make you think, in that order. *Into Darkness* includes serious underlying themes, but its tone is generally one of unashamed action-adventure.

Early in its running time, *Into Darkness* portrays two horrific, one-man strikes against Federation military and intelligence facilities; these terrorist acts set up the film's examination of wrath and vengeance: what might motivate it, and, most important, how should we respond to it as individuals and as a society? In this movie, the villain isn't the only character who feels the desire for vengeance. Captain Kirk loses a beloved friend in one of these attacks, and his fury makes him eager to hunt down and kill the perpetrator. Initially he doesn't care about whether or not the terrorist deserves a trial; he's willing to use long-range missiles (the sci-fi equivalent of drones) to assassinate him on alien soil and risk interstellar war in the process.

Kirk's wrath is portrayed empathetically; it is eminently human to respond to loss with rage. However, the film allows Spock – who, in the aftermath of his planet's destruction, has shut down all his painful emotions – to speak with detachment and challenge those violent instincts by urging a higher ideal: uphold the law, bring intergalactic criminals to trial, and protect the values of the institutions they attacked. Even in the midst of his grief, Kirk feels the power of that appeal and tries to listen to his own conscience.

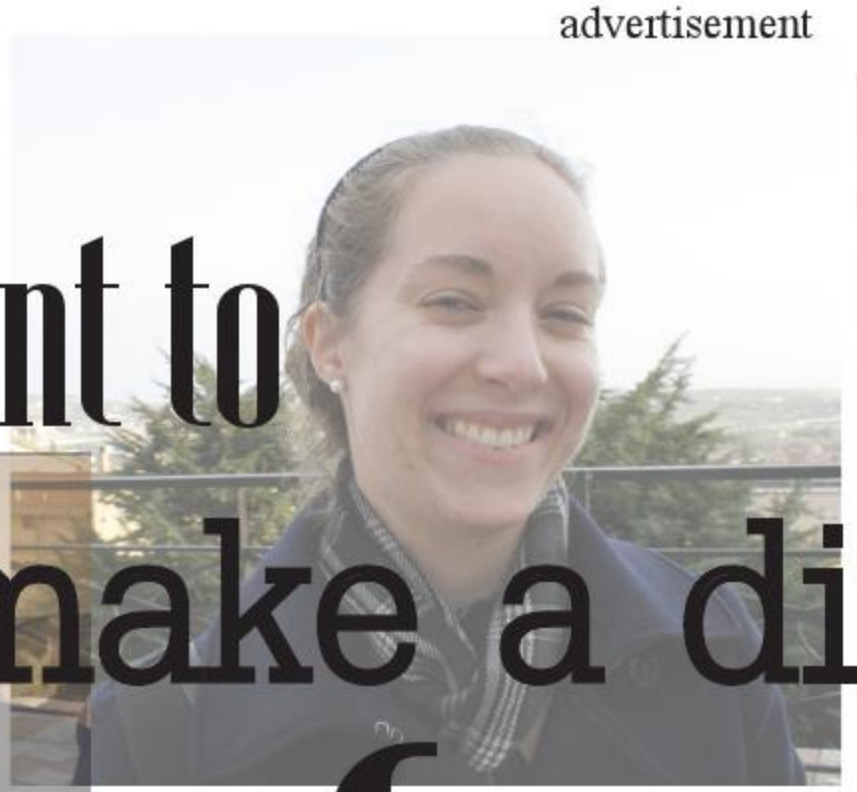
Individual changes of heart, however, cannot easily overcome institutionalized paranoia. The movie portrays a Starfleet made militant by the massive attacks against Vulcan and Earth that were portrayed in the previous 2009 *Star Trek* film, a Starfleet that is expanding its covert operations and actively warmongering. Rather than standing against the iconic villain Khan, we discover that Starfleet coerced him into designing new weapons and war strategies for them. Khan comments that, despite their mandate for peacekeeping and exploration, the leaders of Starfleet "wanted to exploit my savagery" and blackmailed him into doing their dirty work. The bargaining chips they held against Khan were human lives, the lives of those he loved. Their terrorist threats begat his terrorist reprisals. In a final reversal, it is eventually Kirk who takes heroic action to end the cycle of violence, and Spock whose losses overwhelm even Vulcan detachment.

Photo from StarTrek.com

At one time or another in this movie, everyone wants revenge. But the story ultimately pulls its heroes back from that precipice even as the villains tumble over. Oh, there are plenty of spectacular shoot 'em ups, fist-fights and blood-lettings, but in the end the heroes discover the power that lies in saving rather than destroying life. Through them, Starfleet can be reoriented along its proper ethical axis. Kirk concludes, "There will always be those who mean to do us harm. To stop them, we risk awakening the same evil within ourselves. Our first instinct is to seek revenge when those we love are taken from us. But that's not who we are."

All that, and a tribble, too. I'd say Abrams' universe, though at times gimmicky and heavy-handed, continues to carry the torch of the original Trek's idealistic spirit. For me, that made it well worth the price of admission.

want to make a difference for life?



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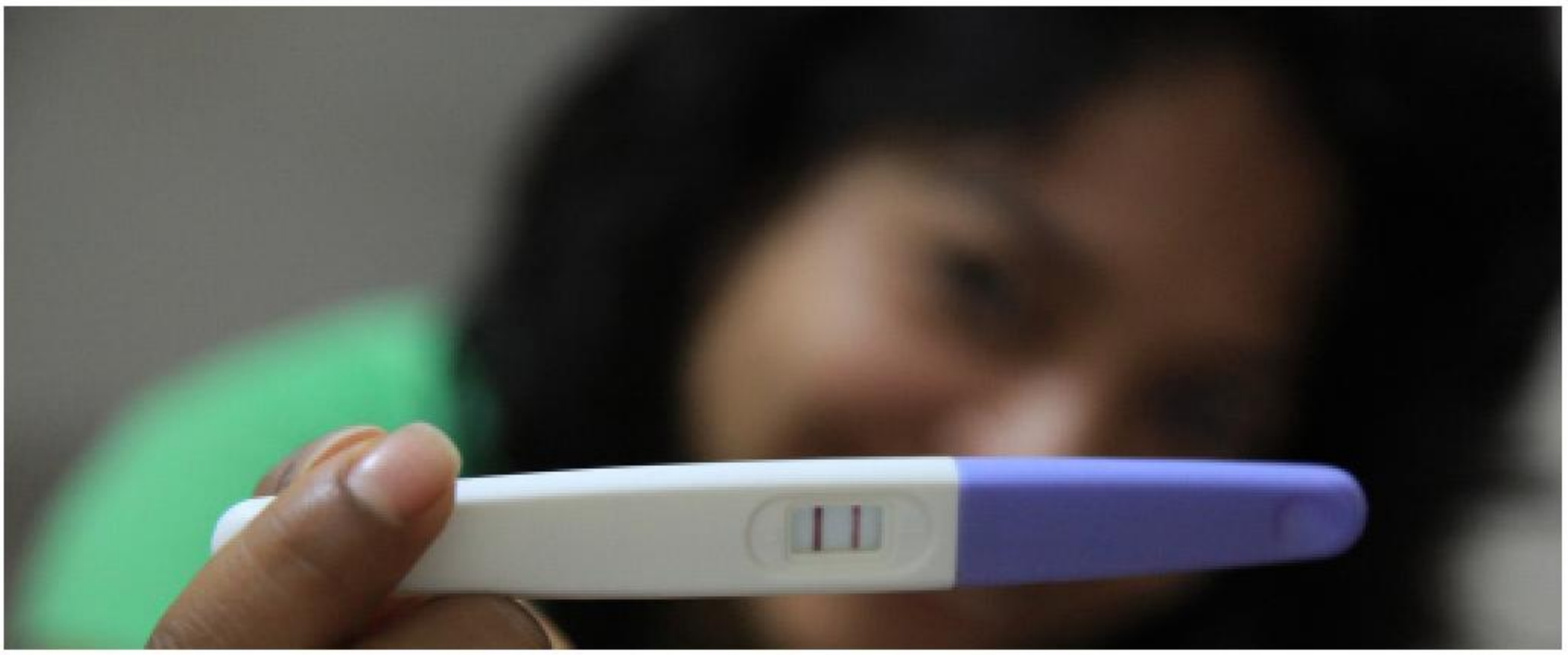
The End of Summer
A Short Story
(Part 2)

by Alexander Pyles



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Ellie woke with a groan. Sunlight crept along the pillow to her eyelids, peeling them back. She rolled onto her back, yet the movement woke her more than settling her back to sleep. The headache hit her, clamping down on her skull more tightly than any pair of jeans would.

She sat up hoping that the blood flow would slow if she were upright. When the initial wave of pain ended, she opened her eyes wide. She was lying on a tousled bed, and the sheets were strewn about the floor. Ellie realized that she was alone and somehow that felt wrong.

Her night with Van lingered for a moment, hazily as a memory, with the residue of sweet bliss. A smile came to her lips of the wistful pleasure, but it faded as the reality of Van's one-night stand formed in her mind. A part of her felt violated and hurt; she had been a virgin until last night. He could have at least left her a note or something.

Slowly dressing herself, Ellie walked down the stairs to find Jenny. She found her best friend passed out on a couch. Her head was cradled in a boy's lap. Ellie rocked Jenny's shoulders whispering, "Hey, hey Jenny. We need to get home."

Jenny woke with a slight start, but the boy didn't move despite the jerk. She rubbed her eyes, cradling her head at the same time. "What time is it?" she moaned. She eyed the boy and the lap that had served as her pillow and wrinkled her nose. "Ugh, remind me to think before drinking."

"You and me both," Ellie replied bitterly. "I don't know the time, but we should go."

Jenny righted her clothes as best as she could, but her mussed hair betrayed her wild activities. As soon as the two emerged from the trashed house, Jenny puked in the flower bed. She straightened up after her stomach decided it was done. "I'm ok, really," she said, waving Ellie off. The girls mentally limped home. Once she was in bed after a shower and ibuprofen, Ellie fell asleep with Van on her mind.

Work came a couple days later and the pattern of summer returned to Ellie, with a comfortable normalcy. The two best friends stayed away from parties for a few weeks, since the Persons' party had left a bad taste in their mouths. Van was still very much on Ellie's mind. She had no way to contact him unless she went through one of his lacrosse mates, but she didn't want to look desperate. She wanted him to be the man and make his move first.

When Ellie noticed toward the beginning of August that she had missed her period, it made her freeze. The realization came to her one night. She shrugged it off, since she knew how fickle period could be sometimes.

One day, after another week without any sign of having a period, she shivered uncontrollably for a moment and her mind immediately leapt to irrational conclusions, avoiding one possibility that only reality could say. She ran to her bed, cocooning herself in the blankets. Her heart was frantic. As tears started to form in her eyes, Ellie tried to escape from her mind. Her hand went to her phone, flipping it open to call Jenny. "What's up?" were the first words spoken.

Without prefacing her concern Ellie blurted, "Jenny, I missed my period." There was a pause, and every heartbeat was another shovel of dirt hollowing the pit that was opening for her.

"Well are you sure?" said Jenny, with an uncharacteristically timid tone in her voice. "Have you ever missed before? I have had an irregular cycle in the past. It could be anything."

Photo by Corey Taratuta, some rights reserved

"I'm not irregular," Ellie said defensively. "I'm sure."

"Ellie, let me come over. We can Google it and see if we can find the cause," said Jenny, sympathy gliding through the audio waves. Ellie was frozen by the stark reality that shattered all of her dreams and future plans. "I'm ok, you don't need to come over," she said and immediately hung up, flinging her phone away. The reality of Van's absence, college plans, and family all came upon her, crushing her thoughts and squeezing tears from her eyes.

The next day Jenny came over with a couple of store-bought pregnancy tests. "Here, let's try these. I got them late last night. I promise that it's nothing and we'll just find the real cause online."

Ellie didn't want to. Somehow she felt that if she didn't use the tests then the pregnancy would go away. She was terrified of a positive result. "What if you're wrong?"

"You have to Ellie. We'll walk together with this," Jenny said. She squeezed her friend's shoulder. "Please, you can't do this alone."

Ellie shook her head.

"You have to," implored Jenny, sitting next to her on her bed. She put her arm around Ellie. With the physical support of her best friend, Ellie finally conceded. "Ok," she whispered. She took the box and went to the bathroom. After she finished she came back to Jenny sitting on her bed.

Seeing Ellie, Jenny stood up, "Well, what are the results?"

"I didn't look," Ellie said, lifting the plastic instrument, her hand trembling. Jenny held Ellie's hand still and the two looked down at the reading and saw the word -Positive- bolded. Ellie's heart fell.

Jenny wasn't deterred quite yet. "Here try another one," she said. "Sometimes those things are defective." She opened another, handing it to Ellie who went again to the bathroom. Coming back both girls saw -Positive- again.

Ellie started to cry. The result was it. She was pregnant. Her life was over. Jenny hugged her. Her silence ratified the reality for Ellie. Her best friend had nothing left to tell her, there was nothing left to say. She felt as if she had fallen down into a pit and it swallowed her in anguish. She couldn't go to anyone for help. Not with this.

The next day she looked for a health clinic where she could find out what to do without running into someone she knew. Finding a number, she made an appointment for that weekend at a clinic downtown.

She didn't tell Jenny what she had planned and nursed her anxiety and fear alone. The appointment was mid-morning. She entered the sterile, generic waiting room, nervously clasping her hands in her lap.

"Ellie Cooper," called the nurse. Her heart beating faster, Ellie followed the short woman to a small examining room. "The doctor will be right with you," said the nurse, after she finished with her own questions. Ellie didn't respond and she was left in the room by herself with prickles forming on her arms from the crisp air-conditioning.

It was a few minutes before the doctor came in, which left Ellie to her scattered thoughts. Nothing could solidify before the clean-cut man entered. "What do we have here, Ms. Cooper?" the doctor asked.

"Well, I am pretty sure I am pregnant," Ellie said.

"Have you used the home kits?" inquired the doctor.

"I have twice, both were positive," Ellie replied.

The doctor's brow wrinkled as he thought for a moment. He looked at his clipboard then turned to Ellie. "Well, any further examination by me would be only a further confirmation. Does the father know?"

Ellie shook her head.

The doctor's eyes softened slightly. "Do your parents

know?"

She shook her head again.

"I know you're eighteen and you don't technically need parental consent, but they should know. But that's up to you. Your choices at this point, Ellie, are either to keep the fetus to term or to have an abortion. I have a number for an abortion clinic that does decent work and they are good people."

Ellie sat frozen for a moment. She had never thought of getting an abortion. That option had not crossed her mind. At least it hadn't yet.

"Ellie?" said the doctor. He stooped slightly to get her attention.

She broke from her trance and looked up at the doctor. "I haven't thought of getting an abortion. I'll need more time to think."

"That's fine. You can always call here and ask for the number whenever you're ready."

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"Ok, well then I'll go now, thanks," said Ellie and she left the cool sterile room.

The rest of the day, Ellie tossed around the idea of an abortion in her mind. The pros and cons went back and forth in a tumultuous tug of war. She would be able to continue with her life as normal if she got an abortion. It would be like having a short operation—everything would be normal again. She'd be able to go to college and her family would never know. No one would ever know. She decided to even not tell Jenny if she did decide to have it.

Ellie came to her decision a few days later. She was standing in the doorway to her bedroom looking at her bed and the rest of her room. It all seemed alien to her now. She wanted it back. She wanted the innocence and freedom back. As if in defiance of the reality of her pregnancy she said her decision aloud, though barely above a whisper. "I'm going to have an abortion."

...to be continued.

Why I Hate the Draft

by anonymous

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Like many believers in peace, I opposed the draft in principle, but I don't think I grasped the human face of it until recently. My brother had just turned 18, and I realized that he would have to sign up for the selective service. I had to sit down and tell him he was required by law to give his information to the state, in order to make it easier for them to take him by force to kill other human beings far away. I myself had to sign up for the selective service years ago and had thought nothing of it, yet somehow the thought of my soft-spoken, easy-going brother being taken into the military infuriated me.

I'm using the term "taken" rather than the usual propagandist terms for drafting like "called to service." Such terms are meant to hide the coercive nature of the draft. Typically when a private group or person takes peaceful people by force we call it kidnapping, and if they were to force the victims to work for them, we call it slavery. Yet our moral intuitions are somehow compromised when the state does these very things in the name of war.

I had to tell my brother to sign up to be enslaved. Oppression is bad enough. War is bad enough. It's worse when you have to take part in it.

It could be argued that I'm overreacting: after all, we haven't had a draft since Vietnam. It seems like the specter of massive protests and sit-ins would be enough to deter the government from ever implementing it. However, these concerns have not deterred Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) from introducing a bill mandating "universal service" for all military-aged citizens. If anything, it's encouraged him. Rangel thinks a draft would give citizens more of a stake

in war, thus making the United States more careful about military conduct. Daniel Gallington—a former policy official of the Office of the Secretary of Defense--notes that history proves otherwise, writing in U.S. News and World Report, "we should remember that of the over 58,000 killed during the Vietnam War, almost 40,000 were 20-years-old and younger and over 33,000 were just 18—and mostly draftees! The historical lesson here seems contrary to Rangel's basic premise and assumption."

Even if the draft did increase anti-war protests, reinstating it for that purpose would make about as much sense as reinstating segregation to increase protests against racism. It's counterproductive. Furthermore, the push by Rangel and certain feminists to make the draft more egalitarian makes it worse, not better.

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Equal application of a bad action only increases the victims of that action. A good literary depiction of this would be the raffle in the Hunger Games, in which one boy and one girl from each district are mandated to kill other boys and girls from other districts. Equality is good when it's the equal application of a good principle. It is horrific to the entire population when it is the equal application of a bad principle. The selective service does discriminate based on sex, but the way to get rid of that inequality is to abolish selective service, not extend military slavery to young women as well.

I'm not a father yet. With that in mind, I have given a goal to myself: to never have to tell my son or daughter that he or she must sign up to be kidnapped. Now, more than ever, I feel compelled to abolish this threat of human bondage that the state holds over the populace. The draft may not be as brutal as African slavery, but the abolition of one should certainly be viewed as having the same virtue as the abolition of the other.

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