



Life Matters Journal

V. 10, ISSUE 6 — DECEMBER 2022

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Our team is proud to present to you Volume 10 Issue 6 of *Life Matters Journal*. As we wrap up a decade of publishing this magazine, I continue to be grateful for this community we have built over the years. Readers like you, who come back issue after issue to engage with these challenging topics, are the reason we are driven to continue to do this work.



We often say that when Rehumanize International was founded in 2011 we were “just a magazine.” Since then, we have grown much larger and the scope of our mission has expanded to include more forms of education and advocacy that our founders didn’t envision at the time we came together. However, the truth is that we were never “just a magazine.” From the beginning, the passion that those involved had for this project enabled a community to develop around it that was bound to expand to challenge the status quo in more ways than one.

For the readers who have been with us since Volume 1 Issue 1, thank you for being an integral part of this community. If this is your first time picking up an issue of *Life Matters Journal*: welcome. I invite you to get involved in whatever way you are able. If you are not already, you can become a subscriber to this magazine, a donor to our outreach initiatives, or you can follow us on social media and join in on the conversation, attend the next Rehumanize Conference or other events, or even start a Rehumanize Chapter to advance our life-affirming mission in your own community and sphere of influence. Whatever you choose to do, I am grateful for your commitment to the cause of human rights and dignity.

I hope this magazine can be a tool for you to educate yourself on the important issues going on in our world and can spur you into action to build the peace-filled world we all deserve to live in.

For life,

Herb Geraghty

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether that violence is 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, halfway 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 ethic of life toward all victims of violence. We are *Life Matters Journal*, and we are here because politics kills.

Disclaimer

The views presented in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of all members, contributors, or donors. We exist to present a forum for discussion within the Consistent Life Ethic, to promote discourse and present an opportunity for peer-review and dialogue.

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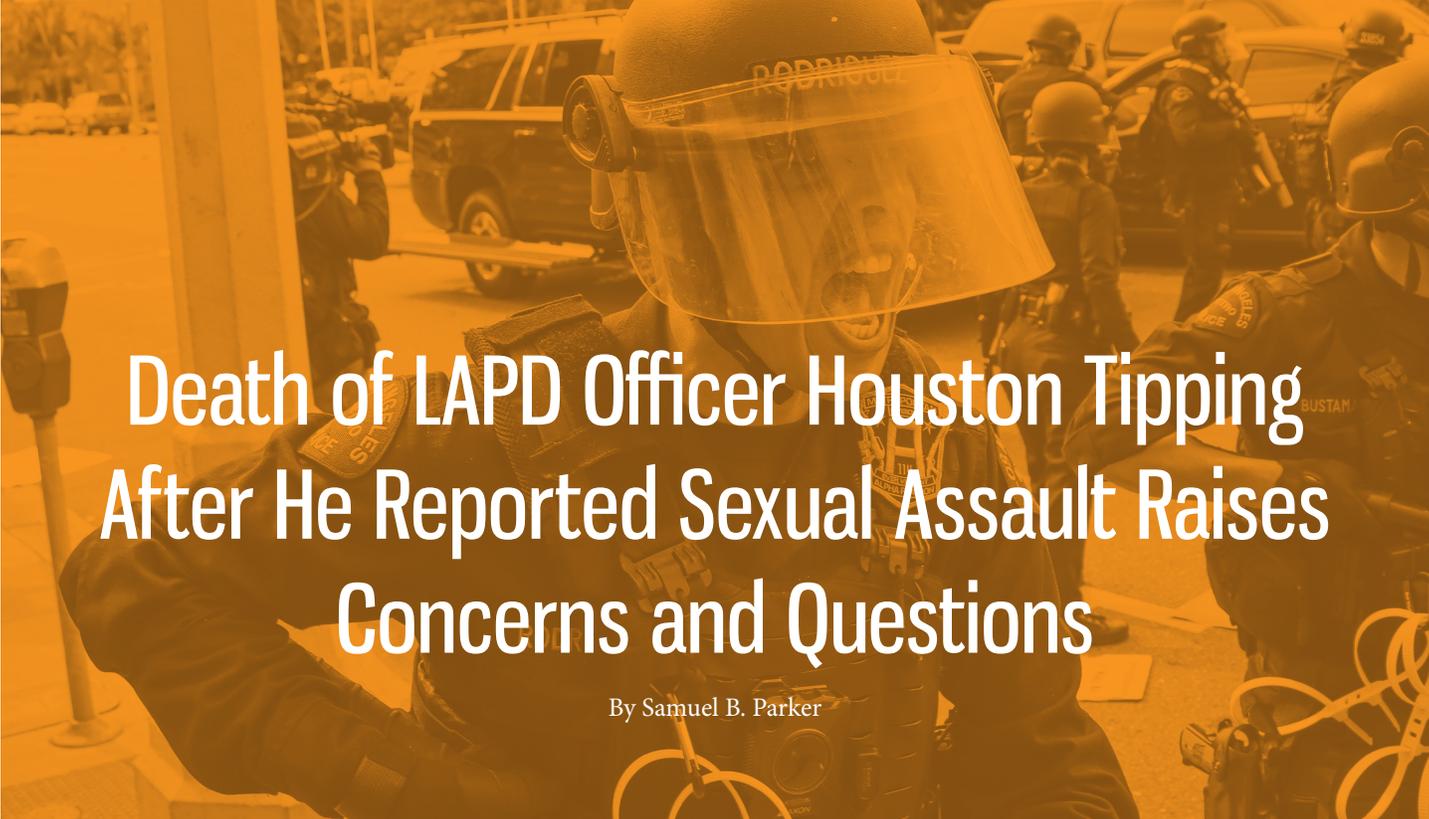
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Death of LAPD Officer Houston Tipping After He Reported Sexual Assault Raises Concerns and Questions

By Samuel B. Parker

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officer Houston Tipping died on May 29, 2022, allegedly as the result of what the department claims was a “training accident” three days earlier.¹ Tipping was participating in a simulated scenario in which he roleplayed as an individual confronting and resisting a bicycle patrol officer; he departed the simulation with injuries consistent with a person who had been “dropped” on his head,² including serious head trauma, a broken neck, paralysis, fractured ribs, and a lacerated liver. He succumbed to these injuries three days later.

This episode was shocking enough and already posed grave questions regarding the training policies and procedures of the LAPD: how on earth does a police officer die while engaged in a bicycle training exercise as basic and routine as this one? But new details have since emerged that cast doubt on the LAPD’s version of events and make Tipping’s death appear possibly more sinister.

Shortly before he was killed, Tipping had reported a sexual assault by several of his fellow officers and was cooperating with a related investigation.³ One of those officers, who is among several accused of gang raping a victim in July of 2021, was reportedly involved in the lethal training accident.⁴

The LAPD launched an internal inquiry,⁵ and promptly determined that the incident was merely an accident. The findings of the inquiry indicate that Tipping was roleplaying opposite an anonymous counterpart, referred to only as “Officer M.” During the training exercise, Tipping and Officer M began “grappling” with one another; they ended up in a position that witnesses described as a “bear hug,” at which point Officer M placed Tipping in a headlock and the two “fell to the floor.”

The impact of this fall seems to have broken Tipping’s neck and injured his spinal cord, paralyzing him. The LAPD’s report alleges that, in the process of trying to restore his breathing and pulse, attending officers broke several of Tipping’s ribs. The report makes no mention of the lacerated liver, nor does it explain the presence of what a lawyer for Tipping’s family described as subdural hematomas (bleeding in the brain) on both sides of his head.⁶ The LAPD insists that no footage of Tipping’s death exists.⁷

It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that Tipping could have sustained these injuries simply by falling down. The nature and extremity of the damage to Tipping’s body strongly suggests premeditated violence or, at the very least, deliberate opportunistic force. And if it is true, as Tipping’s attorney Bradley Gage maintains,⁸ that the officer “responsible for hurting Tipping” was named in Tipping’s sexual assault allegations, the incident becomes even more alarming.

Of course, none of these facts constitute conclusive evidence that a crime occurred. Notably, the Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office ruled Tipping’s death an accident.⁹ But two things must be considered regarding this event.

Firstly, a longstanding, albeit informal, tradition of unaccountability exists within American policing. Dubbed the “Blue Wall of Silence,” it entails systemic refusal to report fellow officers for misconduct or to cooperate in any capacity with investigations into police misconduct.¹⁰ Officers who break this code and attempt to hold their peers liable for their misdeeds incur risks that include intimidation, termination of employment, or even imprisonment. Retaliation against officers who violate the Blue Wall of Silence is neither unprecedented nor even particularly rare; the history of

American law enforcement is replete with such cases.¹¹

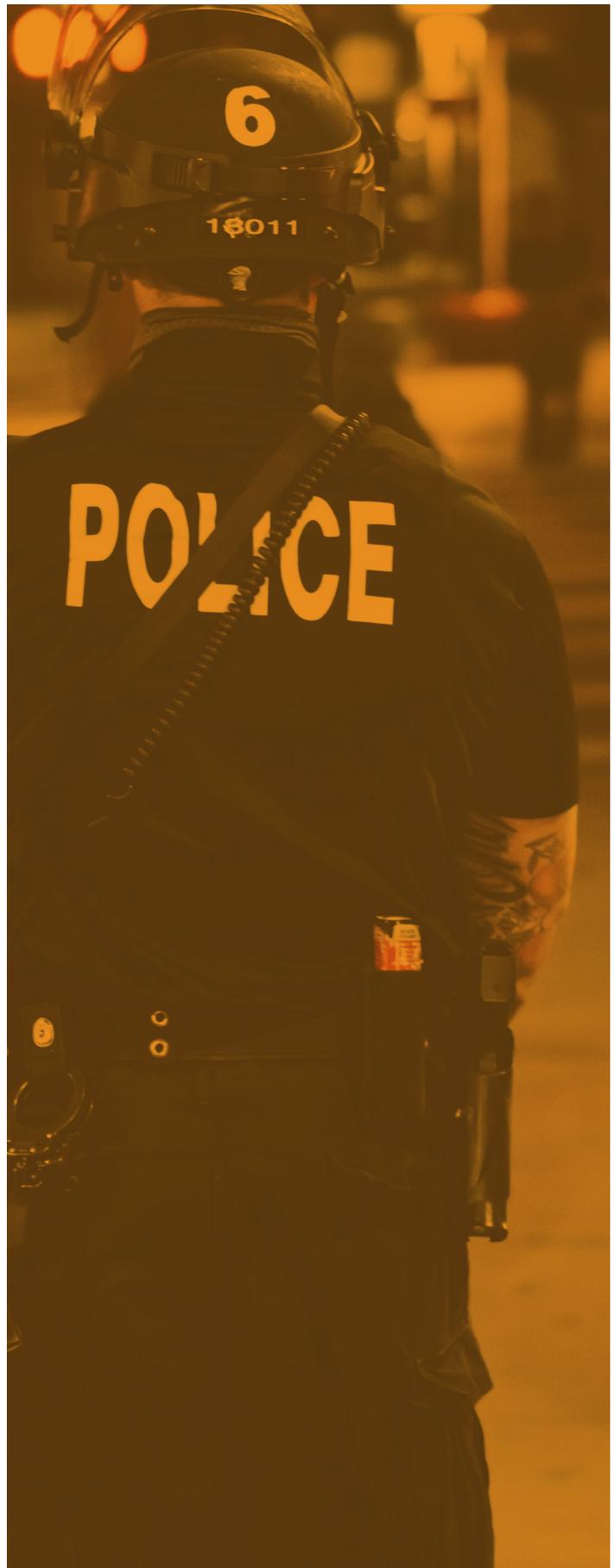
Secondly, a recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Washington found that police killings in the United States are dramatically and perhaps intentionally undercounted.¹² According to the study, more than half of police killings in the last four decades may have been mislabeled and attributed to another cause of death, raising serious questions about the role that medical examiners play in their close collaboration with police departments.¹³

In the wake of Tipping's tragic death, the circumstances surrounding it, and the questions left unanswered by the LAPD's internal inquiry, the city of Los Angeles must direct an independent investigation. A civilian commission recently has been investigating misconduct within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, for example.¹⁴ Similar measures must be taken in order to ensure that members of the LAPD are emboldened to take action against corrupt officers, and are protected from retributive violence when they do.

No justice or peace can prevail in American policing while the Blue Wall of Silence still stands.

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The Wisdom to Quit While Ahead: The Case for a Cease-Fire in Ukraine

By John Whitehead

Editor's note: This article was originally published on October 9, 2022, on the Rehumanize Blog. More recent developments in the Russo-Ukrainian War may not be reflected here.

Two dramatic developments have recently changed the now seven-month-long war between Ukraine and Russia. First, the Ukrainians counter-attacked against the Russian military forces occupying eastern regions of their country, re-taking significant territory and inflicting a major defeat on the Russians.

Second, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced his response to this set-back on September 21. He is calling up Russian reservists to increase the troops available to fight in the war. Also, he announced Russian support for referendums in the occupied eastern Ukrainian territories about those territories' future fate. Such presumably mock referendums have provided the justification for Russia's more recently announced annexation of these territories. Most disturbing, Putin made a veiled but unmistakable threat to use nuclear weapons in response to "a threat to the territorial integrity of our country and to defend Russia and our people."¹

These developments drastically increase the dangers created by the already-high-stakes Ukraine war. The most prudent response is to freeze the conflict by seeking an immediate cease-fire.

Putin's recent speech sends several important and ominous signals. Despite Russia's limited success in conquering Ukraine, the war's cost in Russian lives, the Ukrainians' recent successes, and the evident unpopularity of calling up more Russians to fight in the war, he is not yet willing to admit defeat.²

The Russian annexation of regions of eastern Ukraine, combined with the threat to use nuclear weapons to defend Russian territory, implies that Putin is willing to resort to nuclear weapons to avert defeat in Ukraine.³ Moreover, given Ukrainian military successes and the uncertain impact that calling up more Russian troops will have on the war in the near future, Putin may face the choice be-

tween accepting defeat and resorting to the nuclear option sooner rather than later.⁴

The Russian setbacks that have led to Putin's recent escalation may also make him more open to compromise, however. While Putin was reportedly unwilling to accept a diplomatic solution in the war's early days, perhaps because he expected an easy Russian victory, the war's dismal consequences may have changed his attitude.⁵

The most realistic diplomatic option at this stage is a simple cease-fire that stops fighting along the current division of territory between Ukrainian and Russian forces. A more permanent agreement that settles the underlying conflict or leads to complete Russian withdrawal from Ukraine seems highly unlikely, especially in light of Russia's formal annexation of parts of eastern Ukraine. A cease-fire will make the Ukraine war a frozen-but-unresolved conflict comparable to the Korean War.⁶

Ukraine and its western allies, including the United States, should propose a cease-fire to Russia. The United States and the other allies should also discourage the Ukrainians from both trying to take back all of Russian-occupied Ukraine and launching strikes against Russian territory (as the Ukrainians apparently have done).⁷ To this end, the western allies should curtail military aid to Ukraine that could be used for taking back more Ukrainian territory or striking Russia.

Such an approach might understandably dismay even peace activists. Russia has committed the massive injustice of invading Ukraine. The Russian military has reportedly caused tremendous suffering to Ukrainians, from indiscriminate attacks on civilians to torture and sexual violence, including against children.⁸ How can leaving Russia in partial control of Ukrainian territory be accepted, especially when a decisive victory seems possible for Ukraine?

These are legitimate concerns. They must be balanced against the tremendous risk of continued fighting provoking Russian nuclear escalation, however. For Ukraine and its allies to simply press on

with the war — in the hope that Putin is bluffing and will not follow through on his nuclear threats if he continues to lose — is not a responsible policy. At worst, such a policy could lead to far more people suffering and dying.⁹

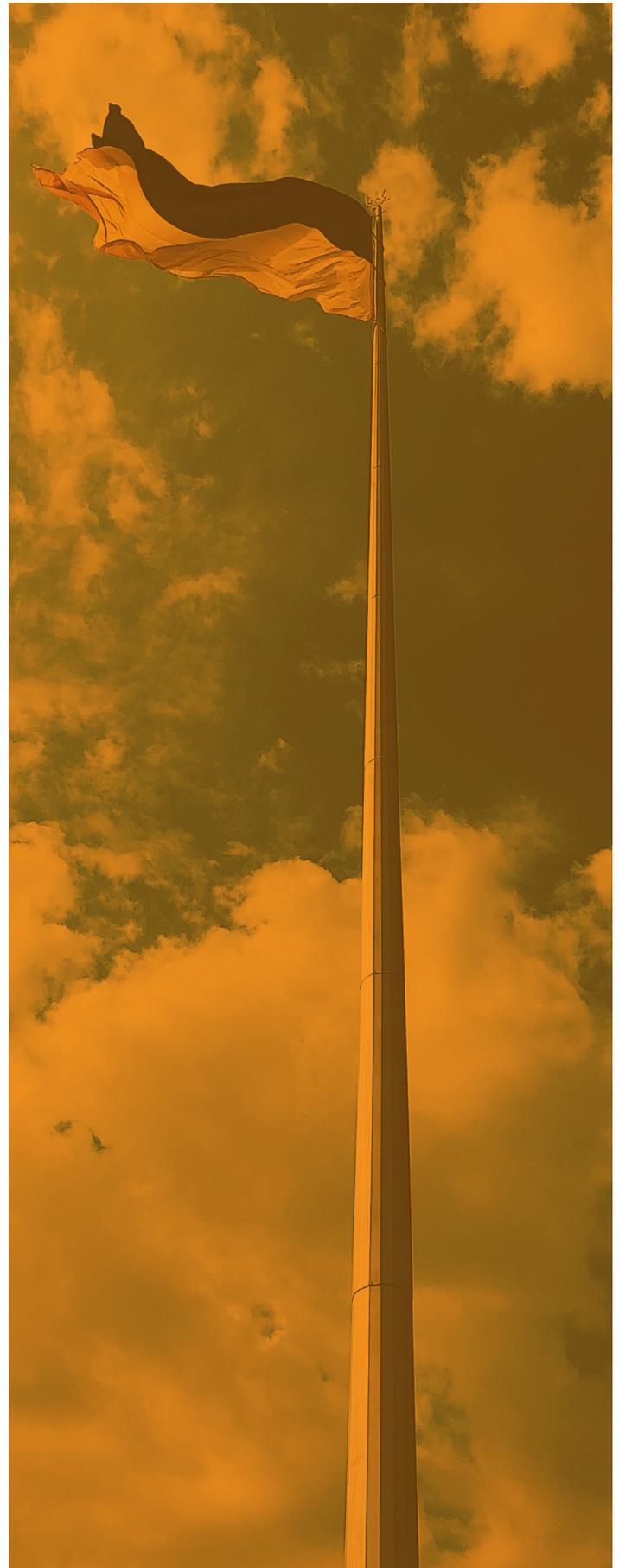
Trying to halt the war now is a more prudent policy, bitterly disappointing though it may be. Doing so is not “appeasement.” Ukraine, with western support, has successfully defended most of its territory from invasion. Russia is worse off now than before it invaded Ukraine. Russian casualties from the war are unknown but have likely been quite high. Russian aggression has prompted economic sanctions on Russia while also leading Finland and Sweden to seek NATO membership, thus expanding the network of European countries allied against Russia.¹⁰

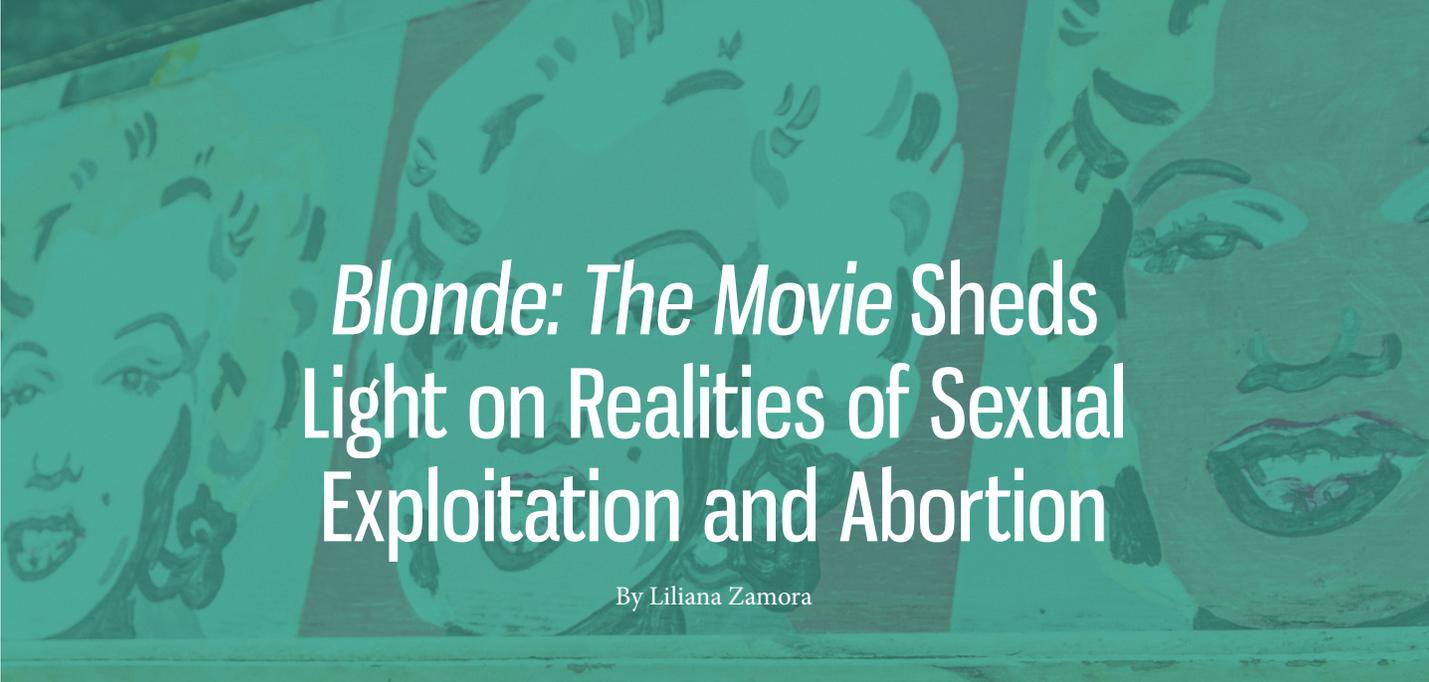
In this context, it is not appeasing Russia for Ukraine and the western allies to refrain from pressing their advantage by pushing Putin into an ever-more-desperate situation. As the saying goes, sometimes discretion is the better part of valor.

American citizens should contact President Biden by phone and email and their representatives in the House and Senate to urge the United States to seek a cease-fire (and to continue arms control negotiations with Russia).¹¹ Reaching a cease-fire now may prevent nuclear catastrophe later.

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Blonde: The Movie Sheds Light on Realities of Sexual Exploitation and Abortion

By Liliana Zamora

On September 28th 2022, Netflix, along with Plan B Entertainment, released a movie based on *Blonde: A Novel* by Joyce Carol Oates. This novel and its film adaptation are an interpretation of the tragic and violent life of Marilyn Monroe. In *Blonde: The Movie*, Monroe is shown to have a traumatic childhood, as she is abandoned by her father and is both physically and verbally abused by her mother. Monroe's childhood subsequently affects her whole adult life, as she searches for the love that she was never given as she grew up. As portrayed in the film, Monroe is sexually exploited multiple times as she works to be accepted into roles that would further her acting career. This film depicts her forceful drugging and coercion into having sexual relations with men who did not have her consent.

Monroe is also shown to have multiple consensual relationships with different men. During her relationship with her first boyfriend, Monroe becomes pregnant. Although initially joyful and excited, she begins to picture herself becoming a mother, and, influenced by her traumatic experiences of her own mother, she decides to arrange an abortion. After changing her mind and regretting that decision, Monroe is forced to have an abortion by the people in the Hollywood industry. Later in her life on the screen, she finds out she is pregnant again by a different man — this time her husband. Monroe, unfortunately, suffers a miscarriage. Later in *Blonde: The Movie*, Monroe is drugged and then forced to have another abortion against her will after becoming pregnant by a third man, who did not care to have the baby. In this film, Monroe experiences horrific violence and trauma from being sexually manipulated, drugged against her will, and forced to murder her own babies.

While the original novelist, Joyce Carol Oates, wrote this story mostly based upon fiction and alleged rumors of Monroe's life, this account is not far from the truth for women who have been

victims of such violent and horrific acts. Women in the entertainment industry often feel forced to accept sexual advances in professional environments in order to further their careers. Women are frequently coerced or forced to kill their unborn children in the name of convenience and image. In the film, Monroe is shown having a poor and unstable childhood with no support or stable love; this causes a toxic foundation for relationships throughout her life. Monroe, often against her own will, remains stuck in a cycle of abuse.

In the film, Monroe appears to have had two abortions in total, both against her own will. Monroe did not have a say in those violent acts against her body. Abortion is often painted as empowering, but such a perspective ignores the horrific realities of the abortion industry. Coerced abortion is a real phenomenon, and it is the complete opposite of empowerment. Women in these situations are left isolated, depressed, and scarred from the traumas that surround having an abortion. But the women who experience coerced abortions after sexual exploitation are not alone. They are not unloved or unworthy because of what has happened to them. These vulnerable women are intrinsically valuable and worthy. Their babies are not forgotten and were not an inconvenience for existing. The worth of these babies is not lessened by the violence that is forced upon them.

Whether all these events happened in Marilyn Monroe's real life or not, *Blonde: The Movie* sheds light on the violence committed against women and their bodies and against their unborn babies and their bodies. May we support women and be advocates for their empowerment, and may we defend all human life. May we stand for the human rights of the most vulnerable and abused. And any time we encounter a woman or baby who has unfortunately experienced these horrific acts, may we show them authentic love and support.



Nuclear Weapons, or How I Learned to Keep Worrying and Detest the Bomb

By Sean Wild

A practice common in schools across America during the 1950s was to perform what was known as “duck-and-cover” drills. For those not familiar with the practice, these drills required students to quickly crawl under their desks. The drills were done as practice for a protective measure in the event of a nuclear attack. At the time, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was in full swing. The United States had first built atomic bombs in 1945, and in 1949, the Soviet Union had successfully detonated its first atomic weapon.¹

Though these duck-and-cover drills seem a bit farcical now, the fear of an imminent nuclear attack was in the air and people felt the need to do something to prepare. Today, the Cold War has ended and those drills are in the past. However, the threat of a nuclear weapon being used remains. The need for disarmament is not an idealistic carryover from a bygone age, but an imperative for the welfare of the world.

Currently, nine countries possess nuclear weapons.² Current U.S. policy puts the responsibility of deciding if or when to use nuclear weapons solely on the president.³ U.S. policy also states that the United States may use nuclear weapons in response to a non-nuclear attack.⁴ Presumably such a decision would not be taken lightly and would hopefully be used only as a last option. Still, with only a single finger on “the button,” the risks remain highly dependent on whose hand that finger is attached to.

Looking at the state of things, the immediate decommissioning of all nuclear weapons would be an unlikely first step in a project of total disarmament. Nevertheless, several policies could be put in place to reduce the likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe.

Adopting a “no-first-use” policy could be the first step to taking the use of nuclear force off the table in most situations.⁵ This type of policy, as the name would imply, commits a country to never being the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

Treaties and more diplomatic solutions could be revisited and hashed out, always keeping in mind that it is vital both for all countries party to treaties and for the entire planet that any potential nuclear attack be avoided.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) first signed in 1968, committed several countries with nuclear weapons to not aid other countries in the acquisition or production of such weapons.⁶ Most countries that today possess nuclear weapons – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – have signed the NPT. As the treaty states: “Each nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly.”⁷

However, three countries that possess nuclear weapons – Israel, India, and Pakistan – have declined to take part in the NPT. North Korea, which once signed the agreement, withdrew in 2003.⁸ Iran pursuing nuclear programs, despite signing the NPT, is also a concern.

In 2015, an agreement between Iran and several other nations was adopted. The treaty committed Iran to limiting its development of materials that could be used to make nuclear weapons. The deal was based on the promise of Iran to limit work that could potentially lead to the development of nuclear arms, including restrictions on creating and possessing enriched uranium, in exchange for the lifting of U.S. and EU-imposed economic sanctions. The United States pulled out of the deal in 2018, however, which gave Iran the opportunity to expand their nuclear-related activities.⁹ Negotiations have been in the works to strike a new deal, though they have been unable to come to a productive agreement as of yet.¹⁰ There have been other important international nuclear treaties, including the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), an agreement between the United States and Russia to limit both nations’ nuclear forces.¹¹

With much ambiguity about what the future holds, finding and taking steps to disarm the world of nuclear weapons remains necessary for the safety and well-being of all across the planet.

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“Sacrificed in the Name of Global Power”: How US Nuclear Policy Harmed Native American Nations

By John Whitehead

The lethal effects of nuclear weapons in wartime are well known. What is less appreciated is how nuclear weapons can kill and hurt people in other ways, through their production, their testing, and the waste they create.

The United States’ creation of its vast nuclear weapons arsenal has harmed many beyond the tens of thousands of people killed by the wartime use of nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The harm caused by US nuclear weapons production and testing has frequently fallen on oppressed and vulnerable people. With grim symmetry, many of these victims of US nuclear policy have been members of the original victims of US foreign policy, Native American nations.

Over the decades, Native American nations have variously been forced from their land so that land could be used for nuclear-related activities; have had their health and lands damaged by the production of nuclear weapons; have been harmed by nuclear testing; and have had their land targeted for nuclear waste disposal.

Dispossessed of Land. The original US effort to build nuclear weapons, the Manhattan Project, involved appropriating areas within the United States for Project activities.

One such area was Hanford, a small town in southeastern Washington close to the Columbia River.¹ Hanford was also home to the Wanapum Nation, while the Nez Perce, Yakama, and Umatilla Nations used the Columbia River basin for fishing and other purposes. Nez Perce elder Veronica Taylor recalled Hanford as being “kind of like a farmer’s market, where people came and traded goods and materials and foods with each other.”²

In 1943, General Leslie Groves, the Manhattan Project’s head, decided Hanford would be the location of nuclear reactors to produce plutonium, one of the elements used to make nuclear weapons. The residents of Hanford and a neighboring town were required to relocate. Although white residents were given some compensation for the military takeover of the area, Native Americans were not.³ Rex Buck, Jr., a Wanapum Nation member whose family was displaced by the Manhattan Project, says his relatives received the vague explanation “that in order to protect the United States of America, they were going to do something here.”⁴

Harmed by Weapons Production. Both during the Manhattan Project and afterwards, building nuclear weapons has generally required the metal uranium. Uranium can serve as the “fuel” to

power a nuclear weapon or can be used in a nuclear reactor, such as those built at Hanford, to create the other fuel for nuclear weapons, plutonium.⁵ Mining and processing uranium is a dangerous process, though, because of the potential for exposure to radioactive or otherwise toxic material.

US nuclear weapons production drew on uranium mined from land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah that belonged to the Navajo Nation. Such uranium mining, which lasted from World War II until the 1980s, also employed Navajo as workers. Miners received little protective gear, however, and uranium debris created from the mining would contaminate Navajo communities, including water supplies.⁶

Industrial refining of uranium also harmed the Navajo Nation. Radioactive waste produced by refining (or “milling”) uranium in the southwest contaminated water in Navajo land. An especially severe 1979 incident led to 94 million gallons of waste spilling into a local river; some drinking water subsequently had radioactivity levels 7,000 times the accepted legal limit.⁷ In the decades following the start of uranium mining on their land, cancer rates doubled within the Navajo Nation.⁸

Contamination occurred at Hanford as well. The former home of the Wanapum and others ultimately became the site of nine nuclear reactors. The Hanford reactors produced plutonium for the “Fat Man” bomb dropped on Nagasaki and for subsequent bombs built during the Cold War.⁹ Hanford’s nuclear activities also produced significant amounts of radioactive or otherwise hazardous waste that contaminated the land and the Columbia River.¹⁰ Decades after the last Hanford reactor shut down in 1987, the area was still undergoing environmental clean-up operations and waste was still contaminating the Columbia.¹¹

Members of Native American nations lament this contamination of land so important to them. Taylor says that many of her fellow Nez Perce “don’t want to come over here and dig roots anymore [in the Hanford area] because of...what has happened to the ground.” Gabriel Bohnee of the Nez Perce Nation’s Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Office comments, “The environment was sacrificed in the name of global power.”¹²

Harmed by Nuclear Testing. Most Cold War-era testing of nuclear weapons by the United States occurred at what was known as the Nevada Test Site, located about 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas.¹³

The test site is also located on the territory of the Shoshone Nation, which shares land with Nevada and Idaho.¹⁴ From the 1950s to the 1990s, over 900 nuclear weapons tests were carried out on Shoshone land.¹⁵ Ian Zabarte, the Principal Man of the Western Bands of the Shoshone Nation, comments that this US nuclear testing made the Shoshone “the most bombed nation on earth.”¹⁶

Nuclear testing, especially above-ground testing, creates huge amounts of dangerous radioactive fallout.¹⁷ A 2009 study estimated 620 kilotons of fallout affected Nevada, Arizona, and Utah during the decades of US nuclear testing. The Shoshone would have been especially vulnerable to fallout, as they hunt and eat the region’s wildlife and would ingest contaminated meat that way.¹⁸

Zabarte notes that multiple members of his extended family have had cancer and other health problems; one uncle died from cancer. Regarding the tests’ fallout, he comments, “The pine trees we use for food and heating were exposed, the plants we use for food and medicine were exposed, the animals we use for food were exposed. We were exposed.”¹⁹

Targeted for Nuclear Waste Disposal. The nuclear weapons-related activities that exposed Native Americans and their land to so much harm have left a legacy. More than 500 abandoned uranium mines remain on Navajo land and continue to pose dangers.²⁰ Only a few years ago, the EPA reported that contaminated groundwater at Hanford continues to be a hazard.²¹

Another aspect of this legacy is government and corporate efforts to store nuclear waste on Native American lands. Such lands presumably have been targeted partly because environmental regulations are weaker in Native American lands and partly because the poverty and relative lack of political power among Native American nations makes them less able to resist further contamination of their land. They have resisted, however, and such resistance continues today.²²

One ongoing struggle is over efforts to turn Yucca Mountain, on Shoshone land in Nevada, into a storage site for nuclear waste. The Shoshone, as well as the state of Nevada, have resisted this plan.²³ Preventing waste stored in the mountain from contaminating the environment would require installing titanium drip shields so water does not corrode the storage containers—and then maintaining such protection for centuries. As Zabarte comments, “Are we going to trust [that] America is going to be around to put in drip shields in 100 years?”²⁴

The Biden administration also currently opposes the Yucca Mountain plan. The danger that nuclear waste will be stored there remains a real possibility, however, until Congress passes appropriate laws preventing nuclear waste from being stored on Native American lands.²⁵

Beyond preventing nuclear waste dumping, other specific public policy steps could help lessen the damage to Native American nations from US nuclear activities:

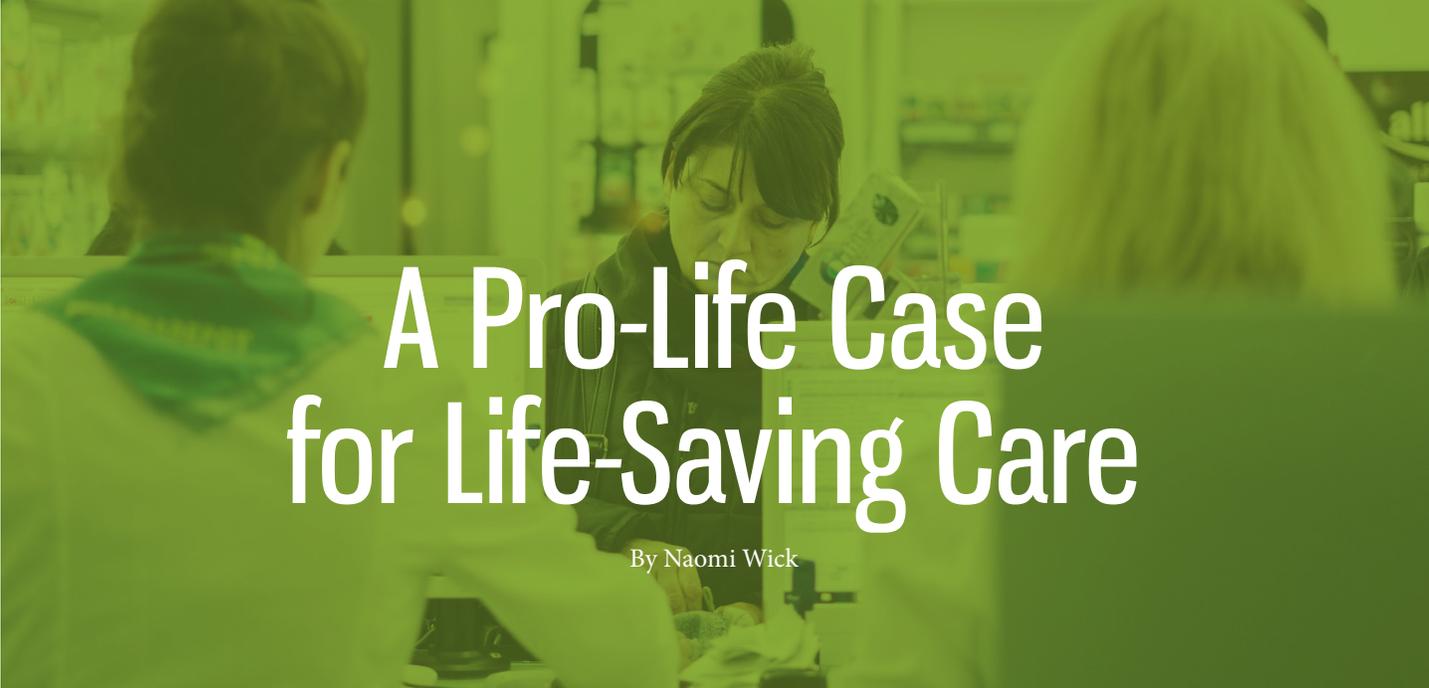
- Existing hazardous sites, such as uranium mines or the Hanford site, need to be adequately cleaned and contained. For more information on efforts to address uranium mines, see the work of the organization Clean Up the Mines.
- Compensation to those harmed by nuclear testing and uranium mining should be expanded. A federal bill (H.R.5338/S.2798) introduced in 2021 aims to do this.

Please consider contacting your representatives in the House and Senate to urge them to support efforts to prevent nuclear waste storage on Native American land, to clean up existing hazardous sites, and to provide compensation to those harmed by various aspects of nuclear weapons production.

The terrible harm US nuclear policy has caused to Native American nations is part of a long history, both of the United States’ many injustices toward these nations and of nuclear-armed nations building up their own power at the expense of more vulnerable people.²⁶ Weapons of mass destruction and racial injustice are intertwined threats to life.

Notes

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A Pro-Life Case for Life-Saving Care

By Naomi Wick

Navigating the world ‘post-Roe’ looks different for a lot of people. For some, there’s little or no change in the day-to-day activities of life. For activists involved in the abortion debate, the decision has elicited either joy or anger: pro-lifers celebrated the news, while pro-choicers took to the streets in protest. For some, however, a post-Roe world means rebooking physician appointments after the pharmacy denies standard medications, even for those who are not pregnant.¹

While the statement “Abortion is Healthcare” may be dubious, there’s no doubt that prescription drugs such as methotrexate, when used to treat illness, are healthcare. Amidst many states enacting laws against chemical abortion pills, some of the chemicals that factor into ending the life of a prenatal child are lifesaving for treating certain illnesses. Mifepristone, or RU486, is one of the key players in a non-surgical (chemical) abortion, while is deadlly for preborn babies, it is useful in treatment for Cushing’s syndrome.² For people with Cushing’s syndrome, RU486 is used to reduce cortisol production. If left untreated, people with Cushing’s syndrome or disease face a myriad of symptoms, some of which can lead to additional lasting health problems.

Methotrexate is an anti-rheumatic drug that is used to treat an assortment of ailments, from Rheumatoid Arthritis to certain types of cancer. Chemotherapy is, by definition, an umbrella term that describes drug treatment to kill cancerous or otherwise harmful cells in the body. There’s an assortment of drugs used for this treatment plan, and all of them can be harmful to a preborn child if the mother undergoes treatment during her pregnancy.³ However, their use may still be permissible; according to the ethical criteria

of the principle of double effect, if the intention behind the treatment is to save the mother’s life, then even though her child may be harmed in the process, the primary good effect of saving the life of the mother outweighs the unintended harm to her child.

In other words: under the Consistent Life Ethic, all human lives are equally precious. As human beings, the preborn should be protected — but a preborn child’s protection from harm should not impose a death sentence upon their mother. With that foundational understanding, the principle of double effect justifies any medical treatment that targets a physical disease or illness threatening the life of the mother, even if it might result in the loss of a pregnancy.⁴

Doctors don’t approach prescription medicines lightly, and they factor in a combination of lifestyle and possible side effects for their patients. Even still, some patients in conservative states say that their doctors are choosing not to prescribe medications that may

potentially harm a preborn child, even if the patient is not pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant. There must be solutions to these new predicaments; for example, instead of patients showing up to the pharmacy only to be declined necessary prescriptions, office managers should make time to call

As human beings, the preborn should be protected — but a preborn child’s protection from harm should not impose a death sentence upon their mother.

the patients that may be affected by new regulations before the patients take the time and energy to visit the pharmacy. People living with chronic illnesses don’t always have the flexibility to go back and forth between doctors offices, pharmacists, insurance companies, and back to the doctor again to troubleshoot medication disruptions. As pro-lifers, we have to be compassionate to these struggles as we seek to build a world beyond Roe, where both the born and preborn are protected. Women who use these medicines

to lead healthy lives should have full support from their physicians. Patients — specifically those suffering from invisible illnesses — have long since needed to be their own advocates. This is the undue burden, the excess effort in achieving fair and uncompromised healthcare to lead long, healthy lives. What would the world look like if pregnant women didn't have to consider the stigma of seeking treatment for their medical conditions? What would the world look like if pregnant women had full support from their doctors and specialists, from their churches, community, family, friends?

The loss of a preborn baby is always a tragedy, whether accidental or intentional. That being said, a woman facing significant medical challenges needs and deserves support and understanding from those around her. Following criteria of the principle of double effect, it is permissible for a pregnant woman to undergo chemotherapy, or medication for Cushing's Syndrome, or treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis. Lay aside from the ever-present fear mongering from pro-abortion media sources that claim pro-life people only care about babies before they are born, and let's truly "love them both."

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