

## Who in the world is the US killing with drones?

by: Darryl W. Perry

For the last several years US government has not only attempted to cover-up the death toll of drone strikes, but often has no idea who is being killed. This may not come as a surprise to some, given that NBC News reported in 2013 that, “[a]bout one of every four of those killed by drones in Pakistan between Sept. 3, 2010, and Oct. 30, 2011, were classified as ‘other militants’... The ‘other militants’ label was used when the CIA could not determine the affiliation of those killed.” That figure does not include those killed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, or any other country in which the US military, or CIA might feel the urge to kill people with unmanned aircraft.

The New York Times reports, “Every independent investigation of the strikes has found far more civilian casualties than administration officials admit. Gradually, it has become clear that when operators in Nevada fire missiles into remote tribal territories on the other side of the world, they often do not know who they are killing, but are making an imperfect best guess.”

Not only have hundreds, if not thousands, of civilians (i.e. people who are not identified as “potential insurgents,” mainly women & children) been killed in these drone

strikes, in January two hostages were killed in a US drone strike against a suspected Al-Qaeda compound in Pakistan. However, it took the US government a couple of months to admit they had killed the hostages. After the admission, the Obama Administration said they would make a payment of compensation to the families of the slain hostages. Jason Ditz of Antiwar.com reports, “While wrongful death compensation isn’t an entirely foreign concept in the West, the White House’s combination of these payments with an insistence that the killings were in accordance with international law likely won’t sit well with many.” Adding, “the families of the slain aid workers are already criticizing the administration for its ‘inconsistent’ response to the initial hostage-taking, and are likely to see the pledge of money as trying to buy their silence on the matter.”

To make things worse, the Administration is likely not going to make any policy changes in regards to the drone wars. Why? According to approval in polls, about two-thirds of the American public support the drone wars, as does a majority in Congress. It’s theoretically possible that those who support the drone war are not aware of the civilian death toll, though it’s possible they simply don’t care.

## The immorality of state-funded capital punishment

by: Darryl W. Perry

In the last 7 months there have been 7 people exonerated from death row who had been incarcerated for at least 25 years.

In September 2014, Henry McCollum and Leon Brown, brothers, were freed after 30 years because of evidence uncovered by the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission. the Death Penalty Information Center reports, “both men are intellectually disabled – McCollum has an IQ in the 60s and Brown has scored as low as 49 on IQ tests. They have maintained their innocence since their trial, saying they were unaware they were signing a confession.”

In November 2014, Ricky Jackson, Wiley Bridgeman, and Kwame Ajamu were exonerated 39 years after their convictions, after the lone witness in their case recanted and said that he did not in fact witness the crime; there was no other evidence linking the three men to the murder.

In March 2015, Debra Milke had all charges from her 1990 conviction dismissed as a result of “egregious” police and prosecutorial misconduct.

In April 2015, Anthony Hinton had the charges against him for 2 murders committed in 1985 dismissed after experts said they could not link the bullets to a gun found

in his home when he was arrested.

According to the Death Penalty Information Center, there have been 152 people exonerated from death row since 1973. Twenty of those individuals were exonerated because of DNA evidence, meaning the other 132 people to be exonerated from death row had been convicted because of false confessions, unreliable witnesses, police misconduct, faulty evidence, etc. This alone should raise some questions not only about the use of the death penalty as a means of punishment, but about the accuracy of the entire justice system. But I digress. Considering that 1,404 people have been executed since 1973, and 152 people have been exonerated in that same time period, it is probable that innocent people have been executed in the name of justice. If only 1 innocent person has been executed for a crime they did not commit, that is enough to oppose state-funded executions; because state-funded executions use tax-payer dollars to carry out a punishment that some find objectionable.

However, is it really justice to carry out a punishment years after an offense was committed? One maxim of common law is “justice delayed is justice denied.” I contend that such delayed punishment, as we see in cases

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by: Darryl W. Perry

There have been several recent scandals involving the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Secret Service. While these agencies are not directly connected at times they do work together. For instance, the DEA and Secret Service were working together to investigate the Silk Road, and one agent from each department was arrested and charged with wire fraud and money laundering related to their malfeasance in the investigation.

But that's just an isolated incident, right? Wrong. Time reported last year about 9 high profile Secret Service screw-ups and scandals dating back to 1964; however I'll only list the most recent three (from their report). In 2014 "three agents were sent home from a trip to the Netherlands after getting drunk the night before the President was set to arrive.

In 2013, two agents were removed from Presidential security detail after sending sexually inappropriate emails to a colleague, which was uncovered when one of the agents was discovered trying to forcefully enter a woman's

by: Darryl W. Perry

The 2016 Presidential election is still about 18 months away, yet the debates are becoming subject to debate. This is due partly to the proposed lawsuit by the Our America Initiative against the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), the early start of the 2016 campaign season, and an announcement by the CPD that the Commission will seek input "on various elements of the debates, including the criteria used to determine who will be invited to debate, what formats will be used, and ways to enhance these civic forums."

The first question to ask is: who is the CPD, and why do they control the Presidential debates? First, some back story on Presidential debates. The first Presidential debates were held in 1960 between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy, and were held in the studios of television stations affiliated with CBS, NBC & ABC. In 1976, after a "16 year period in which there were no public presidential debates, the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) sponsored three presidential debates." The League of Women Voters continued sponsoring debates through 1984, and in 1987 pulled their sponsorship "because the demands of the two campaign organizations would perpetrate a fraud on the American voter." LWV

## Abolish the DEA & Secret Service

hotel room after forgetting a bullet inside.

In 2012, eight agents were fired after it emerged that they had allegedly solicited prostitutes while on an on-duty trip to Colombia." And according to the Department of Homeland Security, there were 824 cases where Secret Service officials were cited for misconduct from 2004 to 2013. On top of that, a Secret Service agent was recently arrested for attempting to break into his ex-girlfriend's apartment while carrying his firearm.

Now, let's look at the DEA. A report from earlier this year showed that ten DEA agents were involved in "sex parties" in which Columbian drug cartels provided the prostitutes. These parties mostly took place in government leased properties, which may have compromised classified information. The report that revealed that information also found 26 allegations involving DEA agents soliciting prostitutes abroad between 2009 and 2012, and "found that the DEA lacks clear policy on whether to report alleged misconduct to headquarters and the DEA provides

supervisors discretion when deciding whether to do so." Additionally, the DEA has been alleged to have helped a single drug cartel smuggle billions of dollars of drugs between 2000 and 2012.

You might be thinking, this is just a few bad apples; but remember the entire statement about bad apples: a few bad apples spoils the bunch. The "few bad apples" in the DEA and Secret Service, not to mention the "bad apples" in the FBI, CIA, TSA, other federal law enforcement agencies, as well as state and local law enforcement agencies, have definitely spoiled the bunches. Aside from the fact that the DEA should not even exist, the level of corruption alone should be enough to convince anyone that the agency should be abolished. The same can be said for the Secret Service: the level of corruption alone should be enough to convince anyone that the agency should be abolished. Because remember, those few bad apples have already spoiled the bunch, so removing the bad apples will not unspoil the bunch!

## Debating the CPD

President Nancy M. Neuman added, "It has become clear to us that the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity and honest answers to tough questions."

Enter the CPD. The CPD was formed in 1987 to "ensure, for the benefit of the American electorate, that general election debates are held every four years between and among the leading candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States." The CPD also claims it "is not controlled by any political party or outside organization and it does not endorse, support or oppose political candidates or parties." However, no one except a former chair of the Democratic National Committee or Republican National Committee has chaired the CPD since its formation. Additionally, the selection criteria for candidates, at least 15% support across five national polls, can be seen as de facto support for the two major parties. Not to mention the fact that details of the debates, including question topics, are planned in advance with input from the candidates. It's difficult for any candidate to achieve 15% support when they're not even mentioned by the pollsters. In fact, the only time any candidate other than a Republican or a Democrat was involved in the CPD debates was independent candidate Ross Perot in 1992.

Since the 15% requirement was adopted by the CPD in 2000, there have been a few of organizations formed to advocate, or host, debates that included minor party and independent candidates. Some of these organizations wish to add a single candidate to the CPD debates, while others have actually hosted debates with multiple candidates. Of course, the Republican and Democratic Party nominees declined their invitations.

But, how many candidates is too many, and how should the invited candidates be selected? These are the questions that supporters of expanded debates don't agree on. However, the consensus for inclusion in Presidential debates seems to be that any candidate on enough ballots to theoretically win an Electoral College majority should be invited to a Presidential debate. If there are to only be three debates, I would go one step further to include any candidate that is on the ballot or is a certified write-in candidate in enough states to theoretically receive an Electoral College majority. In 2012 and 2008, this would have added 4 candidates to the debate. It's a small step in the right direction in allowing multiple ideas in the arena of political debate.

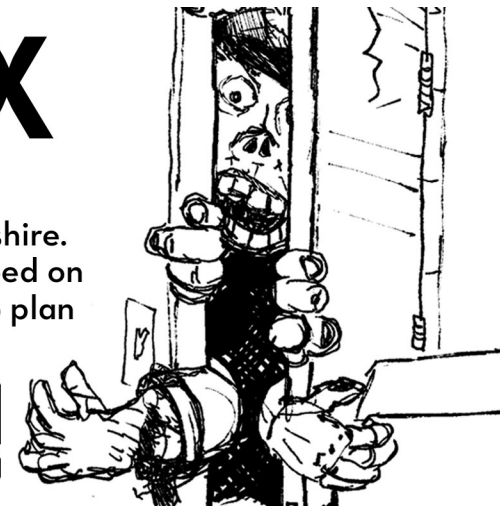


# SURVIVOR MAX

by Davi Barker

11-year-old Max is surviving an undead plague alone in New Hampshire. Slow-moving and non-thinking, the "lamebrains" hunt the living to feed on their flesh. He must apply his Porcupine Freedom Scouts training to plan his escape, but first he must prove that he's too smart to die.

SurvivorMax.com



by: Sandy Pierre

## Sticks and Stones

Sticks and stones may break my bones  
But words will never hurt me  
American kids learn this rhyme early on. (Do other cultures have a comparable nursery rhyme? I’d be interested to find out.) I just looked up Sticks and Stones on Wikipedia. Interestingly, it points out that the rhyme reflects the common law of civil assault, “which holds that mere name-calling does not give rise to a cause of action, while putting someone in fear of physical violence does”. It ties in nicely with the Non-Aggression Principle (NAP), the foundational precept of libertarian philosophy. The NAP states that each person has the right to do as he wishes, so long as he doesn’t aggress against others. Aggression is defined as the initiation of force or fraud.

Another thing Wikipedia points out is that there are two versions of the rhyme. In the version above, the second line is “But words will never hurt me”. In the other it’s “But words will never harm me”. To me the distinction is so subtle as to have passed right by me. But a fellow writer pointed it out to me, and upon further reflection, there is indeed a difference in meaning between the two. “Hurt” generally refers to “bodily injury or pain”. “Harm”, on the other hand, can refer to physical injury or mental damage.

The reason this nursery rhyme is on my mind is because I’ve recently witnessed several incidents where good people, who are also fine libertarians, have gone at each others’ throats verbally. I’ve allowed myself to become embroiled in one or two such verbal “bar brawls”. I also observed someone with whom I was romantically involved publicly talk about me in, shall we say, and ungentlemanly manner. And just now, after reading what is, hands down, the nastiest discussion thread I’ve ever seen in my eight+ years on social media, I’ve decided I don’t believe in the NAP anymore.

Let me clarify what I mean. I’m not suggesting that any form of speech should be illegal. It’s just that I no longer believe that the NAP alone is sufficient upon which to base a free human society. Not by a long shot.

Something I’ve struggled with for many years is a tendency to over-sensitivity. I allow myself to care too much what other people think, or don’t think, about me. I’ve attempted to overcome this weakness by reminding myself of the “Four Agreements” outlined in a New Age-y but quite wise little book by Don Miguel Ruiz. The Four Agreements are as follows:

1. Be impeccable with your word.
2. Don’t take anything personally.
3. Don’t make assumptions.
4. Always do your best.

It’s incredible how much territory these four simple rules cover, and how much pain you can eliminate from your own life if you live by them.

Forgive me if it seems like I’ve gone off on a tangent, but I believe this is relevant to my original point. The children’s rhyme that ends with “words can never hurt me” (the rest is implied: unless I allow them to do so), and the second of the Four Agreements, “Don’t take ANYTHING personally”, remain true. However, like the NAP, they are insufficient.

### Words to Harm

Words have meaning, and they are spoken with intent. If another person makes horribly insulting, nasty, degrading remarks, about you or someone you care about, in a clear attempt to hurt and humiliate, they may be unsuccessful in causing you mental anguish. But the fact remains that they were trying to do so.

It seems strange to me that the NAP focuses solely on physical force, when an assault with words can hurt so much worse, and linger so much longer (in some cases, forever). A simple slap in the face or punch in the jaw may be momentarily painful, may even leave a bruise or a broken bone... but bruises fade, bones mend. The pain caused by words can last a lifetime. And once said, words can never be unsaid.

In addition to words that are spoken with the primary intent of causing emotional pain, there are words that, if spoken, can forever alter another’s life. They may be 100% true, but they are the verbal equivalent of neutron bombs and should be wielded with terrible care. This is a concept which numerous libertarians I’ve known over the years seem to have trouble with. Just because something is true doesn’t mean you should say/write it!

Here are just a few examples, taken both from my own life, and the lives of friends, of things that, once said or read, can alter another’s perception and thereby change their life forever:

You’re a lousy singer/writer/artist/actor/mother/\_\_\_\_fill in the blank with your own vulnerable point\_\_\_\_

- I don’t trust you anymore
- I haven’t loved you for years
- I cheated on you
- Your partner cheated on you
- The child you thought was yours... isn’t

Libertarians tend to be an intellectual bunch. A disproportionate number have the Myers-Briggs personality type INTJ, which is relatively uncommon in the population at large. So why does a group of people who not only focus on the intellectual realm, but pride themselves on doing so, downplay or dismiss the lethality of the weapon which is the spoken or written word?

### Words to Manipulate

Another manner in which words can be used as weapons is lying. Again, it’s the intent that is at issue here. The intent of lying is to willfully manipulate someone by feeding them information which the liar knows to be false. I looked up the definition of fraud to confirm that not all acts of lying constitute a NAP violation: “deceit, trickery, sharp practice, or breach of confidence, perpetrated for profit or to gain some unfair or dishonest advantage.” There are many ways to lie that don’t qualify as fraud. A classic example is “No, honey, that doesn’t make you look fat!”. And there are many motivations for lying which aren’t so much nefarious as pitiable: fear; a desire to avoid confrontation; a desire to present yourself to others as more impressive or desirable than you actually are.

Being lied to may cause you to take an action you otherwise wouldn’t have, or to avoid taking an action you really should have much sooner. Catching someone lying to you may very well forever change your assessment of that person’s character and influence how you decide to

interact with them going forward.

### Words to Persuade

Words are also used to persuade. In fact, this is a necessity in a society based on non-aggression. People don’t all want the same things, and in order to come to agreement without the use of violence, it’s necessary to convince them to change their minds, or at least to acquiesce to your own desires even if they continue to disagree with you. There’s not necessarily anything nefarious about persuasion.

The dividing line between persuasion and emotional manipulation is a bit fuzzy, though. I once experienced what I considered to be a truly sleazy sales pitch where the woman doing the hard sell on me repeatedly probed to discover my emotional weaknesses, then claimed that the seminar she was selling would fill all the gaps in my life.

**Protip:** just because something doesn’t violate the NAP doesn’t mean it’s not a shitty thing to do.

According to Wikipedia, the Sticks and Stones rhyme dates to the mid-nineteenth century. But there’s a much older expression that spans many cultural traditions and nicely encapsulates the spirit of the NAP and then some, not restricting itself only to the realm of force and fraud: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Again, I’m not suggesting that any form of speech, including lying, insulting, manipulating, or the most egregious statements of racism/sexism/bigotry, should be illegal. I believe everyone should be free to say whatever he wants, even to be the biggest asshole he can be. But that doesn’t mean I want to hang around you, even if you do honor the NAP assiduously. It takes much more than that to be a decent human being.

Here’s a helpful Buddhist expression: “before you open your mouth, think 1) is it true and 2) is it helpful.”

Republished from ShireLibertyNews.com  
Sandy Pierre has 15 years of experience writing and managing projects for libertarian organizations. She relocated to New Hampshire as a participant in the Free State Project in 2005 and has held leadership roles in a number of New Hampshire-based groups, including the Free State Project, the Merrimack Valley Porcupines, the Libertarian Party of New Hampshire, and the New Hampshire Liberty Alliance. Sandy has appeared on the TV show the Libertarian Alternative and spoke at the Middlebury Institute’s First North American Secessionist Convention.

## Death Penalty

continued from page 1

of those on death row, is in fact cruel and unusual punishment, and I dare say: torture. It forces the person, who may or may not have committed the crime, to wonder “is today the day I find out when I die?” Just as it would be considered cruel and unusual to punish a 35 year old man for an offense he committed when he was 5 years old, it should be equally cruel and unusual to withhold punishment for some length of time after a conviction. If justice is the goal of capital punishment, then a delayed punishment can not be construed to be justice! Again, I point to the likelihood of innocent people being executed, the Death Penalty Information Center lists 25 people as either executed but possibly innocent or as having been posthumously pardoned, in one case the pardon came 94 years after execution. It is statistically probable that other innocent people have been executed, and that makes state-funded capital punishment immoral!