

Letters from our readers

26 July 2012

On “The New York Times makes the ‘moral case’ for drones”

Thanks for this excellent article by David Walsh. I do find it shocking, and yet somehow typical, that the NYT can run this sort of piece without any apparent sense of inhibition.

One reason, it occurs to me, is that someone like Scott Shane, who in his articles is a constant spokesman/apologist for the Pentagon, the CIA, or some other defense apparatus, really has no idea at all what it is he is writing about. For that matter, how would any American really understand what a drone is, what it does? What does it look like, sound like, as it hovers overhead, or when it spews out death? What kind of terrible fear does it provoke in people when it appears in the sky?

The most terrifying dystopian fantasies crafted in America often involve future worlds where human beings are under the domination of faceless, unfeeling robots—machines of death that can’t be stopped or reasoned with. Now these nightmare fantasies are real for real people. Yet nobody seems able to make the connection.

I’d say Scott Shane needs to go to Afghanistan, or Pakistan, or Yemen, go where the drones operate around the clock. He needs to run for his life, watch innocent people blown to bits around him, feel real fear, real horror. Then tell his readers about the “morality” of drones.

Andrew A
24 July 2012

On “Fourteen immigrants killed in Texas highway accident”

These accidents happen frequently in the Southwest border regions, you’ve reported in your article. I recall

that in 2003, traffic was backed up on Highway 191 south of Safford, Arizona. A terrible accident had just occurred—a small pickup truck had careened off the road; several people were killed. About twenty immigrants had been packed into a tiny camper—I saw the wreckage and they had been “layered” into the camper on sections of plywood.

Traffic was backed up about a mile, and many of the motorists got out of their vehicles to stretch their legs and talk about the incident. I spoke with one local rancher who owned land directly on the Arizona-Mexico border and had this to say—that he’d discovered American companies were establishing huge manufacturing operations (latifundia) just over the border in Mexico. Why? Cheap labor. He blamed the deaths on those huge companies, because thousands of immigrants from Mexico and Central America showed up at the border, but never found work. Desperate, they felt compelled to seek work in the US illegally. He was grimly sympathetic, but disgusted.

I was reminded of a scene from director John Huston’s adaption of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) from John Steinbeck’s famous novel:

“Look at ‘em! Same yellow handbill—‘800 pickers wanted’. Awright, this man wants 800 men. So he prints up 5,000 of them handbills and maybe 20,000 people see ‘em. And maybe two or three thousand starts moving West account of this handbill. Two or three thousand folks that’s crazy with worry, heading out for 800 jobs! Does that make sense?”

Randy R
Oregon, USA
24 July 2012

On “Crime, punishment and hypocrisy in the Penn State scandal”

Thanks for a timely, well thought out article. As an alumnus myself of Penn State, I appreciate what you've written here on behalf of the students now attending my old alma mater. What hypocrisy, indeed!

Thomas S
25 July 2012

On "Protesters opposing police killing attacked in Anaheim, California"

This has been a great week. I have heard of a man in Oklahoma being released from prison after serving 16 years for rape. A man in Texas was released after serving 25 years for murder. DNA proved that both of them were innocent. Prosecutors withheld testimony that could have proved that they were innocent. There is no way that the prosecutors can be held accountable. With no way to hold these people accountable they can do anything they want. Now is the time to change the laws to hold public servants accountable. From the president on down let us make the penalties twice what they are for violating the public trust (twice what they are for the man on the street). Maybe that would be a way to start getting some honesty in government.

Robert D
Oklahoma, USA
23 July 2012

On "Kitty Wells, 'Queen of Country Music' (1919-2012)"

This review reminds me of why I love the WSWS so much. Kitty Wells exemplifies how every art form, no matter how "non-highbrow", deserves to be taken seriously, and how the best of each kind of creative endeavor deserves to be praised.

Kamilla V
BC, Canada
23 July 2012



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