

By David Swanson

From [War is a Crime](#) | Original Article

A psychologist who played a key role in a U.S. torture program said on a [video](#) yesterday that torture was excusable because blowing up families with a drone is worse (and nobody's punished for that). Well, of course the existence of something worse is no excuse for torture. And he's wrong that no one is punished for drone murders. The protesters are. Latest example:

"Missouri judge convicts and sentences two peace activists for protesting drone warfare at Whiteman Air Force Base.

"Jefferson City, MO—On December 10, a federal magistrate found Georgia Walker, of Kansas City, MO and Chicagoan Kathy Kelly guilty of criminal trespass to a military installation as a result of their June 1 effort to deliver a loaf of bread and a citizens' indictment of drone warfare to authorities at Whiteman AFB. Judge Matt Whitworth sentenced Kelly to three months in prison and Walker to one year of supervised probation.

"In testimony, Kelly, who recently returned from Afghanistan, recounted her conversation with an Afghan mother whose son, a recent police academy graduate, was killed by a drone as he sat with colleagues in a garden. "I'm educated and humbled by experiences talking with people who've been trapped and impoverished by U.S. warfare," said Kelly. 'The U.S. prison system also traps and impoverishes people. In coming months, I'll surely learn more about who goes to prison and why.'

"During sentencing, prosecution attorneys asked that Walker be sentenced to five years of probation and banned from going within 500 feet of any military base. Judge Whitworth imposed a sentence of one year probation with a condition that Walker refrain from

approaching any military base for one year. Walker coordinates an organization that provides re-entry services to newly released prisoners throughout Missouri. Noting that the condition to stay away from military bases will affect her ability to travel in the region, Walker expressed concern that this condition will limit her work among former prisoners.

"Kelly's work as a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence places her alongside people in a working class neighborhood of Kabul. She said that the day's proceedings offered a valuable opportunity to shed light on experiences of Afghan families whose grievances are seldom heard. At the conclusion of the sentencing, Kelly said that every branch of U.S. government, including the judicial branch, shares responsibility for suffering caused when drones target and kill civilians."

On December 3, Mark Colville, a protester of drone murders at Hancock Air Base in New York, was sentenced to a one year conditional release, \$1000 fine, \$255 court costs, and to give a DNA sample to NY State. "This sentence was a great departure from what Judge Jokl threatened to give Mark," said Ellen Grady. "We are relieved that the judge did not give him the maximum and we in the courtroom were very moved by Mark's powerful statement to the court. May the resistance continue!"

This was Colville's statement in court:

"Judge Jokl:

"I am standing here before you tonight because I tried to intervene on behalf of a family in Afghanistan whose members have experienced the unspeakable trauma of witnessing loved ones being blown to pieces, murdered by hellfire missiles fired from remote control aircraft like those flown from the 174th Attack Wing at Hancock Airbase. I stand here, under judgement in this court, because a member of that family, Raz Mohammad, wrote an urgent plea to the courts of the United States, to our government and military, to stop these unprovoked attacks on his people, and I made a conscientious decision to carry Mr. Mohammad's plea to the gates of Hancock. Make no mistake: I am proud of that decision. As a husband and father myself, and as a child of God, I do not hesitate to affirm that the actions for which I stand subject to punishment in this court tonight were responsible, loving and nonviolent. As such, no sentence that you pronounce here can either condemn me or deligitimize what I've done, nor will it have any impact on the truth of similar actions undertaken by dozens of others who are still awaiting trial in this court.

"The drone base within your jurisdiction is part of a military/intelligence undertaking that is not only founded upon criminality, but is also, by any sober analysis, allowed to operate beyond the reach of law. Extrajudicial killings, targeted assassinations, acts of state terrorism, the deliberate targeting of civilians- all of these crimes form the essence of the weaponized drone program that the United States government claims to be legal in its prosecution of the so called "war on terror". Recent studies have shown that for every targeted person killed in a drone strike, twenty eight people of undetermined identity have also been slaughtered. The military admits to employing a mode of operation called "double-tapping", in which a weaponized drone is directed back to strike a target a second time, after first responders have arrived to help the wounded. Yet never has any of this been subject to congressional approval or, more importantly, to the scrutiny of U.S. courts. In this case, you had the opportunity, from where you sit, to change that. You've heard the testimony of several trials similar to mine; you know what the reality is. You also heard the desperate plea of Raz Mohammad, which was read in open court during this trial. What you chose was to further legitimize these crimes by ignoring them. The faces of dead children, murdered by our nation's hand, had no place in this court. They were excluded. Objected to. Irrelevant. Until that changes, this court continues to take an active, crucial role in condemning the innocent to death. In so doing, this court condemns itself.

"And I think it's fitting to end with the words of Raz that were sent to me this afternoon on behalf of his sister, widowed after a drone attack killed her young husband:

"My sister says that for the sake of her 7 year old son, she doesn't want to bear any grudges or take revenge against the U.S./NATO forces for the drone attack that killed his father. But, she asks that the U.S./NATO forces end their drone attacks in Afghanistan, and that they give an open account of deaths cause by drone attacks in this country."

Plans are being made for big national protests at Shaw Air Base in South Carolina (dates to be determined) and at Creech Air Base in Nevada (that one March 1-4).

Actions at Hancock Air Base in New York are [ongoing](#) , as at Beale in CA and Battle Creek, MI.

Want to get involved in opposing drone murder?

Sign BanWeaponizedDrones.org

Organize with KnowDrones

Support Voices for Creative Nonviolence

[Get your city or state to oppose drones](#) .

[Get anti-drone shirts, stickers, hats, etc.](#)

Brian Terrell, who has spent 6 months behind bars already for opposing murder by drone, offers some useful insights in an article called [Redefining "Imminent"](#).

So does a victim's child in [My father was killed by a computer, says 7 year old Afghan child.](#)

As does drone murder protester Joy First in [What Happens When You Talk With Americans About Drone Murders.](#)

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