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Trump admits extrajudicial killing on U.S. soil - and the silence is deafening

written by John Parker
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Michael Reinoehl at a protest in Portland, Ore., August 28, 2020.

It's a slope that increases without notice. Former President George W. Bush started a secret assassination by drone program, run by the CIA. These were overseas, extrajudicial murders of people of color who were never put on trial, who were in targeted countries, including the poorest countries in Africa. The program was majorly expanded by former President Barack Obama, turning the CIA into a semi-military unit of killers, furthering international terror.

The Obama administration also [used drones to kill U.S. citizens](#) abroad without trial, while also grabbing militants off of the streets of foreign cities and imprisoning them

indefinitely. These are all practices that Obama passed on to his successor.

The expansion of killing by drone is the legacy of the two previous presidents, but it has grown greater under the Donald Trump administration.

In the first two years of the Obama administration there were 186 drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan.

In the first two years of Trump there were 238 drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan.

The corporate media long ago stopped reporting on the deadly drone terror. So when an extrajudicial killing occurs in their front yard, there's been hardly a word about it, especially as it was against an activist in the movement against racist police murders, not even when the extrajudicial killing is openly [admitted to by President Trump](#).

"We sent in the U.S. Marshals," Trump said on Oct. 15 about the paramilitary unit that assassinated anti-racist activist Michael Reinhoehl in the Portland, Ore., area. "Took 15 minutes, it was over," he added. "We got him."

Extrajudicial killings are illegal by international law, but their occurrence is frequent by the U.S. "special forces" assassination squads, killer drones and, in this instance, secret paramilitary units that appear to be run out of the White House. It makes Martin Luther King's eye-opening statement about the U.S. being the greatest purveyor of violence abroad even more relevant today regarding domestic targets of its own residents.

As an attempt to refresh our collective knowledge and indignation about these killings, here's an excerpt from the Columbia Human Rights Law Review titled ["When Death Becomes Murder: A Primer on Extrajudicial Killing"](#):

“International law prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of life, which includes extrajudicial killing. This norm is codified in every major human rights treaty and has attained jus cogens status as a non-derogable norm in international law. In the United States ... the definition of extrajudicial killing is based on international law ... these deaths are not lawful. They are inhumane, unnecessary, and illegitimate. They fail to comply with the most basic principles of humanity and offer no due process to victims — no opportunity to defend themselves through the rule of law. Because of this, extrajudicial killings represent an arbitrary deprivation of life. ... Few norms have generated greater consensus.”

On Sept. 3, a secret U.S. Marshals unit in unmarked SUV’s approached Michael Reinoehl while he was in his car. They got out of their SUVs and began shooting and killed him — no trial, no jury. The assassins claimed self-defense, but that was refuted by over two dozen witnesses and now made even more unbelievable by an admittance of Trump that they were told to kill him in cold blood.

What was Reinoehl’s crime? He defended people of color whose lives were in immediate danger from a white supremacist Trump supporter at a protest for Black lives. On Aug. 29, a march against police murder in the city of Portland, Ore., was terrorized by hundreds of white supremacists, who undoubtedly felt justified in their actions by Trump’s encouragement of violent racists. The shooting in Wisconsin of three protesters by a white supremacist caught on tape collaborating with local police had just occurred and so, some anti-racist protesters began carrying legally registered weapons to defend themselves and other protesters. The white supremacists in Oregon were armed with knives and guns, and one felt bold enough to threaten the life of a person of color, but didn’t get the chance to finish — because Reinoehl shot and killed Aaron Danielson, a member of a far-right group called the Patriot Prayer, according to CNN, before he could.

After this, Reinoehl consulted lawyers and was preparing to clear himself legally,

claiming self-defense. In fact, on the day of his fatal shooting, [Vice News showed an interview](#) he'd just given where he stated: "You know, lots of lawyers suggest that I shouldn't even be saying anything, but I feel it's important that the world at least gets a little bit of what's really going on," Reinoehl said. "I had no choice. I mean, I had a choice. I could have sat there and watched them kill a friend of mine of color. But I wasn't going to do that."

After the murder of Reinoehl, Attorney General William Barr triumphantly announced on Sept. 4: ["Agitator removed."](#) President Trump now boasts about the killing in interviews on Fox News and during [a recent campaign speech in North Carolina](#), where he stated: "We sent in the U.S. Marshals. It took 15 minutes [and] it was over. They knew who he was. They didn't want to arrest him, and in 15 minutes that ended."

In Trump's interview with Fox, he stated: "This guy was a violent criminal, and the U.S. Marshals killed him. And I'll tell you something: That's the way it has to be. There has to be retribution."

Local law enforcement involved in the incident in Portland had been deputized as U.S. Marshals and made part of a task force with other federal agents by the U.S. government under an administration that has called for more state violence against protesters defending Black lives.

No such task force had been organized to find those armed white supremacists who terrorize and kill people protesting against racist police killings.

You may be asking, where is the outrage from those politicians and corporate media who tell us every day that this country is the freest in the world, the greatest democracy? Where are the calls for impeachment, the legal proceedings, the arrests for an official extrajudicial killing boasted about on U.S. soil? Clearly this is great ammunition for Biden and his supporters — why wouldn't they use it to expose the

danger of a president who promotes greater state repression and the ideas of racism and fascism?

Yet, the silence of the Democratic Party, even those on Biden's campaign trail — including Kamala Harris, Barack Obama, Bernie Sanders and, of course, candidate Biden himself — is deafening.

This is the silence of the agents of a ruling class that has no objection to Trump's increase in state terror and increased repression even if the ruling class is wary of Trump's unstable response to the unstable economy. That is why the political careers of the politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties have one essential task: make the shocking, the unacceptable, more palatable no matter how evil.

This is why we must continue to mobilize in defense of our lives, no matter who gets in office.

