



# Desert Voices

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## Nevada National Security Site Will Court Prosecute Justice Activists Instead of NNSS?

By Brian Terrell

(Adapted From Article @ WarIsaCrime.org)

On Indigenous People's Day, formerly known as Columbus Day, October 8, 2018, Nye County Sheriff's deputies ended a three decades old policy concerning arrests of peace activists at the NNSS. Two months earlier NDE was warned that protesters who enter the site and can present government issued ID will be given a warning ticket the first time and issued real citations if they repeat. Those who are apprehended without ID will be arrested, transported to jail in Pahrump and charged as trespassers. Permits issued by the National Council of the Western Shoshone will no longer be honored. This crackdown is due, according to the deputy who spoke to NDE members, to pressure from the National Nuclear Security Administration of the US Department of Energy that operates the site.

With faithful regularity, NDE has continued its vigils, prayers and protests at the NNSS several times each year, usually with some of us detained by the deputies and released after presenting permits from the Western Shoshone. Our annual fall event, Justice for Our Desert, includes a prayerful procession into the site and this time, three members of the NDE governing council were taken into custody. Two of us, Mark Kelso of Las Vegas and Brian Terrell (me) from Maloy, Iowa, were released with warnings after we presented our driver's licenses. Marcus Page-Collonge of Calaveras County, California was taken to jail in Pahrump and was bailed out that evening. Trial for his alleged crime is set for December 3. At trial, the State of Nevada will need to prove that the property Marcus went on to is that "of Nevada National Security Site," an allegation that will not be verified easily.

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## Justice For Our Desert: JFOD

By Katherine Parent

"I'm 500% supportive of protest," our Las Vegas Lyft driver growled as we described our first time performing and protesting with NDE at Justice for Our Desert, "but that's just stupid. Why would you protest something like nuclear weapons that you can never change?"

SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE and I are performance artists rooted in Minnesota, where our community struggles against forces of corporate greed and environmental racism that threaten the entire Mississippi watershed. During JFOD we met courageous people who, like us and our neighbors, are calling for changes that many people dismiss as impossible. So impossible that for some, simply thinking about them brings up fear and anger. "What do you think will happen if we disarm?" our driver continued. "You think those other countries won't slaughter us, like we did to them?"

Like the Lyft driver, I grew up at the supposed end of the Cold War, but I've feared nuclear waste and war my whole life. Stories of the horrors perpetrated by Americans in Hiroshima and Nagasaki seared their way into my childhood nightmares, more real and lasting than any monster under the bed. There were plenty of adults who told me that nukes and imperialism were necessary evils and that dismantling them would only unleash greater terrors—bedtime stories of denial and despair.

That is why it was so powerful to visit JFOD this fall and learn from brave people who tell a different story, who believe that it is not just possible but imperative to end our country's nuclear and imperial addictions. As we held hands in the desert, singing with a small crowd of people from across the country, I was moved by the faithfulness of generations of witnesses who have cried out for peace, the land, and future generations. Thank you for fighting so hard for all of us, and for continuing to imagine a different story.

## NDE will be hiring an Outreach Director

At the recent Council meeting of NDE's Board we recognized the need for a national outreach project to supplement our local work in Nevada. This four-hour per week paid position is mobile with some time each year at the NDE Office in Las Vegas, Nevada.

If you would like to help inspire people of faith, justice and peace to focus good prayer energy against drone violence at Creech and against nuclear violence at the NNSS, then let us know!

The **Outreach Director** will be educated regarding the ongoing works of war at the Nevada National Security Site and at Creech AFB, site of drone warfare, and the progress of activities at the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. This person would carry on in the long tradition of NDE to teach about nonviolence framed by the timeless truths of interfaith prayer-activism and social justice involvement. This is an opportunity for you to help galvanize the movement for a nuclear free future and an end to automated warfare!

The **Outreach Director** conducts targeted outreach at colleges and schools, and general outreach regarding what happens in Nevada. Primary focus is in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.

The **Outreach Director** will build and maintain relationships with non-governmental organizations, colleges and schools, and community leaders to increase participation in our events in Nevada. Her work will complement the current **Event Coordinator's** work.

For Full Information email Ming:  
[rkmlai@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:rkmlai@NevadaDesertExperience.org)

Your application packet can be sent by postal mail to:  
Nevada Desert Experience 1420 W Bartlett Ave.,  
Las Vegas, NV 89106, or emailed to the above address.



### COURT TO PROSECUTE ACTIVISTS—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The NNSS posts billboard sized “NO TRESPASSING” signs claiming the land as theirs, but the Western Shoshone have never ceded their sacred land to the government. By any measure, the land is theirs and it is the NNSS who is the trespasser, not Marcus **nor any of the thousands of activists arrested there** in the past.

The NNSS is not only occupying land that is not theirs, it is operating a criminal enterprise there. Nye County authorities could use their time more productively addressing these crimes against humanity than harassing law abiding protesters. This site is the place on the planet that has suffered more atomic blasts than any other and so will be poisoned for countless centuries, even if Yucca Mountain (at the western edge of the NNSS) does not finally become the repository for nuclear reactor waste. While there have been no actual detonations there since 1992, there are still “subcritical” tests done and there is still testing done to determine the viability of the United States’ aging nuclear arsenal. Plans also still exist to resume testing full-scale nukes at the NNSS, should any US President order such. The NNSS is operated not only in violation of the Treaty of Ruby Valley with the Newe/Shoshone Nation but against the United Nations Charter and other international agreements that according to the US Constitution are supreme law of the land. The United States has refused to vote with the world community when the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017, that will make it a crime to “develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.”

If on December 3, Judge Gus Sullivan of the Beatty Township Justice Court rules according to the law he is sworn to uphold, Marcus will be found not guilty of trespassing and the District Attorney will be admonished never to file such obviously frivolous charges in that court again. Justice, however, is rarely seen in our courts and this reasonable outcome is not expected, at least not the first time such a case is heard there in more than 30 years. But, what if in the coming months, dozens, hundreds, even thousands show up at the Test Site as in the past, packing the Beatty Township Justice Court, and the Nye County Jail while we are at it? As Marcus tells us, “All humans in Nevada and Shoshone territory who care

about the future of life on earth are responsible to reverse the momentum of nuclear weapons, waste, mining and milling, to end the nuclear violence represented here at the NNSS!"

A modest proposal: We invite all friends to join all or part of NDE's annual Sacred Peace Walk, April 13-19, this coming year, walking 60 miles from Las Vegas, past the killer drone center at Creech Air Force base to the historic Peace Camp, ending on Good Friday at the gates of the Nevada National Security Site. Then, with the largest number of resisters we can raise and with the permission of the Western Shoshone National Council, we enter their sacred land together!

While this "arrest" will no longer be the ritual without consequences that it has been, even in the new regime each one should be able to calculate the personal sacrifice each is ready and able to take. First, anyone can participate in a meaningful way without crossing the line, each person adding to the strength of the whole action with no risk of arrest. Second, anyone entering the site with a Western Shoshone permit AND a photo ID such as a driver's license, who has not already been issued a warning (that's only me and Mark Kelso so far), will likely be processed quickly and released with a warning. Third, anyone entering with the Western Shoshone permit as their only ID should expect a Sheriff-sponsored ride to Pahrump and to be booked into the jail there. Marcus was held on \$500 bond, but who knows what they will do if there is a crowd of us? Bailing out or not may be another option for each to consider. If we are held over, it is likely that a judge will let us out on Monday, either with time served or with a trial in the near future.

"Filling the Jails" is a time-honored American tradition that has been an integral part of every successful movement for social progress, and the stakes have never been higher. Thirty years ago, overwhelming numbers helped end prosecutions of protesters at the Test Site and contributed to implementing the global ban on full-scale testing of nuclear weapons. What we demand now is so much more than this. There are no promises of outcome beyond educated guesses in this proposal. It would be a step in faith, but one that these dangerous times demand of at least some of us, and the more who show up, the more fun it will be!



Sady & Marcus hold the same sign, facing south, near Peace Camp, NV

## Honor The Integrity of Creation Despite 75 Years of Nuclearism

*The international movement to abolish nuclear weapons has a rich history, and we can celebrate the goodness of nonviolent people power in preventing global destruction of habitat (via nuclearism and drone warfare). Yet there's a tremendous amount of work we face now and forever in resisting these works of war. We need to keep inspiring each other, and to that end, as we approach humanity's 75<sup>th</sup> year of the nuclear age (1945 to 2020) NDE prepares a special event almost two years from now.*

*Our interfaith movement started in 1981 by working for a unique Lenten event in 1982 so that we could honor the courageous nonviolent spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi on his 800<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. His modern followers have tried in myriad ways to uphold the integrity of creation, which has been horribly violated by the nuclear weapons cycle since 1951, and in this century drone warfare has likewise desecrated multiple watersheds (i.e. where pilots premeditate their murders and where their bombs land).*

*The highest number of Justice activists—both secular and religious—were mobilized to come to this awesome Great Basin Desert for direct action to stop the violence between 1986 and 1994. In those eight years there were 536 nuclear abolition peace demonstrations held at the bomb testing range. At that time Nye County made over 15,000 arrests.*

**Save the date: Saint Francis' Day is October 4<sup>th</sup>** which is also the annual Keep Space for Peace Week. **From October 2-4, 2020 c.e.** NDE will host a weekend event featuring workshops, music, speakers, dance, direct action and many prayers for justice and peace in this terrorized territory. Join us for the weekend!

Corbin Harney (one of our past faith leaders) predicted the NNSS would shut down if only 40,000 people would gather at the NNSS together for justice's sake. Another past faith leader (Dan Berrigan) said that good things start small and get smaller.

We invite all of you to come work, pray, sing, learn and demonstrate 22 months from now—advancing the cause of nuclear abolition and the end to drone warfare.

**Join the movement; take action locally, come together, breathe together, and email us or call us!**  
**info@NevadaDesertExperience.org 702-646-4814**

**NevadaDesertExperience.org**  
**1420 W Bartlett Ave**  
**Las Vegas NV 89106**

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Nuclear Issues Study Group and NDE volunteers with Robert & Evy @ Creech.

### **UPCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS (some in Vegas)**

Call NDE for more info (702.646.4814), or email: [info@NevadaDesertExperience.org](mailto:info@NevadaDesertExperience.org)

**January 21, 2019:** NDE's Float in the MLK Jr Day Parade, Las Vegas, NV

**March 15-18, 2019:** Pacific Life Community retreat/prayer-action in California

**April 13-19, 2019:** Sacred Peace Walk from Vegas to the NNSS  
(See article on Page 1)

**April 22, 2019:** Easter Monday Release From Jail (**potential, not able to confirm!**)

**Sept 28-29, 2019:** Justice For Our Desert (See this year's report-back on Page 1)

**THE FOLLOWING YEAR... A VERY BIG EVENT FOR NDE:**

**SAVE THE DATE: October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

(See box on Page 3)

### **Tree-Free Paper**

It's not kenaf, it's not cotton, it's not recycled tree-flesh, it's not hemp—it's TreeZero, 100% tree-free sugarcane waste fiber you are holding in your hands. This paper is advertised "Carbon Neutral" too, in its production, which is just another part of NDE's efforts to reduce our environmental footprint. Next year this company will provide larger format paper, so for now we tape two pieces of 8.5x11 paper together!