

**Military Resistance 11B17**

**“At A Time When  
Soldiers Kill Themselves  
In Record Numbers – 18  
Veterans Per Day – The  
Armed Forces Spend A  
Fortune On A Drug  
Known To Increase The  
Chance Of Suicide”**

**“The Only Reliable Cure For  
PTSD, According To Research,  
Lies In A Handful Of Specific,  
Short-Term Talk Therapies That  
Dull And Disable The Impact Of  
Its Terrors”**

**“Still, 80 Percent Of Soldiers With PTSD Are Given Psychotropic Drugs, Many Of Which Can Raise The Risk Of Suicide”**

**“I’d Say It Is Near-Criminal To Send Young Men And Women Off To Combat With A 180-Day Supply Of Drugs That Can Cause An Increase In Violent Suicide”**

**“Then They Start Giving You Benzos In High Doses, And That’s Where Things Get Funky”**

“They took a young man who was reacting normally to an abnormal situation – which is war – and they shoved him on an antipsychotic. I watched him become a completely different person. My son ended up gaining 40 pounds from all these medications. His hands were shaking and he said, ‘I feel like a zombie.’ I felt like they were pumping him full of medications and I was watching my son slowly die.”

Dec 2012 By Paul John Scott, Men’s Journal

Before his military doctors were through with him, Spc. Andrew Trotto, a 24-year-old Army gunner, would be on as many as 20 psychiatric medications.

It started in 2008 while he was in Iraq, fighting in Sadr City, at first with difficulty falling asleep, a common problem among soldiers in a combat zone, particularly those, like Trotto, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“For sleep, the first drug they like to go to in Iraq is Seroquel,” says Trotto, of the atypical antipsychotic originally developed to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. “They hand that shit out like Skittles. You get a bottle for 10 days, and if you run out, they give you more.”

His body adapted to the pill over time, and he was soon taking a dose meant for actual psychotics.

**“They had no clue what the hell they were doing,” Trotto says of the doctors at the battalion aid station who prescribed the pills. “They just throw you on a drug, and if it doesn’t work, they throw you on something else. ‘Try this. Try this. Try this.’”**

Though he continued to function in day-to-day combat – nighttime missions clearing houses – his brain was polluted with pharmaceuticals.

### **“I Told Them, ‘You Need To Do Something, Or I Am Going To Take Other People Out With Me’”**

In addition to Seroquel, he was taking Zoloft for anxiety and Vicodin to relieve pain from ruptured disks he sustained falling nine feet off a tank – and he was still being thrown into combat.

“Let me remind you,” he says, “I was a gunner, completely whacked out of my mind. There were quite a few of us on Seroquel and antidepressants.”

Eventually, he says, he began losing it. Looking back, he’s certain it was the drugs that pushed him over the edge.

He started seeing things and hearing voices. While in a warrior-recovery unit in Kuwait, he tried to overdose on the Seroquel but only lay in a stupor for two days undisturbed. One day he locked himself in a Porta-Potty with a loaded M16 in his mouth, but he managed to hold out long enough to seek help.

“I told them, ‘You need to do something, or I am going to take other people out with me.’”

He was sent home to a warrior-transition unit in Colorado, but a year later, he tried to OD in his bathtub.

Trotto’s father says the sergeant who escorted his son back to Colorado had told him “that he watched Andrew go downhill the minute they put him on Seroquel.”

**Specialist Trotto’s deterioration should not have been surprising to anyone who has read Seroquel’s black-box danger label, a warning about the drug’s potential to cause suicidal tendencies in some patients.**

**But Seroquel was only one of several drugs that Trotto was given, both in Iraq and in a Veterans Affairs facility at home, that carry such warnings.**

**Still, despite an unprecedented suicide rate among American servicemen and women – a problem so widespread that Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has called it an epidemic – these same drugs are among the most frequently prescribed medications by the U.S. military and the VA.**

American soldiers (active soldiers as well as retired) have never been more medicated than they are now: In 2010, more than 213,000 service members (roughly 20 percent of active-duty military) were taking medications the military considered “high risk” – from epilepsy drugs to psychiatric pills like Seroquel.

**But what's more incredible is that Seroquel and other antipsychotics are expensive (as much as \$10 a dose) and not proven to be effective in treating the very conditions for which the military and VA most often prescribe them: insomnia and PTSD.**

**But that didn't prevent their use by the military from increasing tenfold between 2002 and 2009.**

The spike in prescriptions, as well as the growing chorus of concern within the military, prompted a high-level memo from Gen. Jonathan Woodson, M.D., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, cautioning military personnel about the use of atypical antipsychotics, specifically Seroquel. "Providers should use caution," he wrote in February 2012, "when these agents are used as sleep aids in service members struggling with substance-use disorders.... Providers should offer service members the lowest risk medication and non-medication therapy options for their symptoms."

But for the many thousands of soldiers who'd already struggled to serve their country in a Seroquel-induced fog, it was too late.

**"The Only Reliable Cure For PTSD, According To Research, Lies In A Handful Of Specific, Short-Term Talk Therapies That Dull And Disable The Impact Of Its Terrors"**

The only reliable cure for PTSD, according to research, lies in a handful of specific, short-term talk therapies that dull and disable the impact of its terrors.

Still, 80 percent of soldiers with PTSD are given psychotropic drugs, many of which can raise the risk of suicide.

Off-label prescribing – the use of prescription drugs to treat ailments other than the ones they've been approved to treat – is widely accepted by the medical community in general, as it is in the military.

**Doctors frequently prescribe drugs as they wish, even if they haven't been proved to work in treating a particular condition, and they prescribe them in combination with other drugs, even when the possible effects of those combinations are unknown.**

"I have a hard time imagining that nine medications are all going to interact together very well," says Patrick Bellon of Disabledveterans.org, an organization that helps vets obtain benefits.

The drugs didn't interact well for Ronald Bruce Wedderman, 55, a National Guard staff sergeant who fought in Iraq in 2005.

When he returned home to Biloxi, Mississippi, Wedderman's VA doctors prescribed him the antidepressant Trazodone for sleep, on top of Prozac.

He says the combination was nearly lethal. “At one point I had two pistols raised to my head on the beach. Somebody called the police. They found me yelling and screaming at people and waving my guns.”

**Wedderman has not taken Trazodone again, and he hasn't tried to kill himself, either.**

### **“I'd Say It Is Near-Criminal To Send Young Men And Women Off To Combat With A 180-Day Supply Of Drugs That Can Cause An Increase In Violent Suicide”**

The causes of suicide are complex, and no single factor is to blame for the rise in self-harm.

To their credit, the military and the VA have launched a help line, funded studies, advocated for talk therapies, researched alternative methods, and hired thousands of new mental-health professionals.

**But they have yet to question a glaring contradiction at work when a soaring number of veterans and soldiers are taking medications that come with suicide warnings.**

It's a group of drugs that include antidepressants, benzodiazepines, anticonvulsants, and certain atypical antipsychotics like Seroquel.

**Dr. Peter Breggin, a psychiatrist who testified before Congress about veterans' medication and suicide in 2010, says, “I'd say it is near-criminal to send young men and women off to combat with a 180-day supply of drugs that can cause an increase in violent suicide.”**

The problem may not be obvious to the military, but it is starting to look crazy to everyone else.

“I had a real shit fit with the Army,” says Andrew Trotto's mother, Gina Doyle.

“This was the all-American kid. He never had psychiatric problems or problems with suicide.

“They took a young man who was reacting normally to an abnormal situation – which is war – and they shoved him on an antipsychotic. I watched him become a completely different person. My son ended up gaining 40 pounds from all these medications. His hands were shaking and he said, ‘I feel like a zombie.’ I felt like they were pumping him full of medications and I was watching my son slowly die.”

While the military is doling out all kinds of psychiatric drugs, none is more troubling than the atypical antipsychotics – blockbuster drugs with names like Seroquel, Risperdal, Zyprexa, Geodon, and Abilify.

According to 2010 Department of Defense records, about 11,000 active-duty troops were on Seroquel. Since 2001, the VA has spent more than \$1.5 billion and the Department of Defense more than \$88 million on two atypicals alone, Seroquel and Risperdal.

Pharmacologically, atypical antipsychotics are sedatives.

At high doses, they tamp down the activity of brain chemicals, including dopamine, histamine, and serotonin, driving a small percentage of users into deep torment.

The name for this effect is akathisia. "It's an inner agitation that's often accompanied by a lot of pacing," says Breggin.

"The agitation is so horrifying that it commonly causes people to feel suicidal. It's like being tortured from the inside out."

When they don't make you agitated, Breggin says, "these drugs produce an indifference, a lack of feeling for others or oneself." In fact, you could attribute that indifference as the drugs' primary effect.

"They suppress empathy, and when you suppress empathy, you create a great chance of violence to other people or yourself."

**According to Dr. David Healy, an influential author, psychiatrist, and founder of the drug-side-effects database RxISK.org, in clinical trials, 33 patients taking atypical antipsychotics killed themselves, compared with zero patients taking sugar pills.**

### **"Then They Start Giving You Benzos In High Doses, And That's Where Things Get Funky."**

Sergeant Boone Cutler, who was stationed in Sadr City, doesn't think Seroquel made him suicidal, but he believes it made him agree to take drugs that did make him suicidal.

**"They give it to guys with PTSD because it makes them compliant," he says of Seroquel.**

**"Then they start giving you benzos in high doses, and that's where things get funky."**

Cutler, 41, was hospitalized with traumatic brain injury, PTSD, and multiple orthopedic issues at Walter Reed in 2006, and later demanded he be taken off his combat cocktail.

Today Cutler hosts a radio show called Tipping Point With Boone Cutler, where he hears from vets who are angry about the use of medication for PTSD.

**"When you take a war fighter who has PTSD and traumatic brain injury, which is very common, and you give them benzodiazepines...it makes you very reactive, and you don't think things through."**

During a protest rally this fall in Phoenix, Iraq veteran John Keith, 35, dumped a box of the medications he'd been on in the middle of the street.

"I said, 'This is what your tax dollars are paying for.'"

Keith's 17-drug cocktail began in 2007 with three or four medications.

"At first they give you one or two or three, and you try those for a couple of weeks. You are listening to a doctor say, 'This will help you,' and you are in such a bad place you will take anything.

**"But they keep giving you more and more, and by the end of it, you're on 17 medications."**

In a single visit, a VA doctor put Keith on Seroquel and the antidepressants Trazodone and Zoloft, all of which come with suicide warnings.

**He woke from a blackout to learn he had temporarily lost his mind. "I called my doctor up and said, 'I just threw my friend's furniture off a third-story balcony.' She said, 'Well, just cut the new pills in half.'"**

He blacked out, was hospitalized, and when he got out, he says a nurse tried to offer him four tickets to the (Texas) Rangers game, "special tickets where I could meet all the players," he recalls.

For a combat veteran who gets a nervous feeling in crowds, the offer was risible.

"I'm like, 'Why would I want to go to a baseball game when I hate being around people?'

They've got nobody to say, 'You can't give somebody more than eight drugs.'"

**Since getting off the drugs and forming an organization to help vets manage their paperwork, Keith has processed more than a thousand veterans' disability claims.**

**He says, "I have never seen a veteran who is or was on less than five medications.**

"Doctors do not practice in a vacuum; they are fed a consistent stream of misinformation from the drug companies promoting these medicines. As Healy argues in his book *Pharmageddon*, physicians learn about drugs through a closed, proprietary clinical-trial system in which manufacturers fund, design, manipulate, and own the vast majority of drug trials – trials they can alternately choose to hide or promote as they wish.

Dr. Robert Rosenheck, who has worked extensively within the Department of Veterans Affairs, describes off-label use in the VA as "quite high."

**"The rules around truth-in-marketing have allowed drug companies to publish scientific articles saying various things," he says. "They can hand out articles that encourage doctors to believe things the FDA does not approve."**

**The DOD could fix the problem by banning off-label prescribing, but it won't.**

**“Off-label use of psychotropic medications is common, legal, and within the standard of care,” says Capt. Michael Colston, M.D., in an email.**

The Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, which advises the federal government, sees it differently.

“If airline travel were like health care,” its panel wrote, “each pilot would be free to design his or her own preflight safety check, or not to perform one at all.”

Andrew Trotto is now off every one of the drugs he was once prescribed by military and VA doctors. He went off the pills in 2011, with the help of cannabis and an aid dog, and is even planning on going back to school.

He hit the gym and lost the 40 pounds he'd gained, but he can't lose the other effects of war: the ringing in his ears, the traumatic brain and back injuries.

**But, he says, “I can wake up in the morning and not be a total zombie. There are no more suicidal or homicidal ideations. I still have my problems with PTSD – anger issues, nightmares, and flashbacks.**

**“But I am able to deal with them and control them a lot better than I could while on the medication.”**

His time in uniform and its aftermath have left him bitter about the military and the drug industry.

**“I do everything holistic now. I calm myself by sitting in the sauna. I will not go to a doctor and take the pills.”**

**MORE:**

**“The Veterans Affairs Department Has Agreed To Pay A Former Navy Corpsman \$100,000”**

**“The Department Failed To Properly Monitor And Prescribe Medications To Her Sister, A 37-Year-Old Veteran Who Overdosed On A Prescription Drug”**



# **“Kelli Marie Grese Received Multiple Refills — At Least 900 Pills’ Worth — Within A Two-Month Period Of A Drug She Had Used To Attempt Suicide Three Times”**

Feb 20, 2013 By Patricia Kime, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Veterans Affairs Department has agreed to pay a former Navy corpsman \$100,000 to settle a lawsuit alleging the department failed to properly monitor and prescribe medications to her sister, a 37-year-old veteran who overdosed on a prescription drug in November 2010.

Darla Grese filed a \$5 million lawsuit against VA last year after learning that Kelli Marie Grese received multiple refills — at least 900 pills’ worth — within a two-month period of a drug she had used to attempt suicide three times in the past eight months.

“Anything I can do to call attention to this issue, I will,” Grese said.

Kelli Grese’s battle with mental illness began in 1996, when she was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Her voluntary separation from the Navy in 1997 appeared to exacerbate her mental health condition and she eventually sought treatment at VA for symptoms of anxiety, depression and insomnia.

She received a prescription for clonazepam, meant for short-term treatment of anxiety, and Adderall, a stimulant normally prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

VA records show the Adderall triggered psychosis, a rare but known side effect.

She then was prescribed Seroquel, an antipsychotic, to combat the psychosis. But she also suffered from a substance abuse disorder and became adept at bouncing among VA doctors and civilian physicians to acquire medications.

Her first overdose with Seroquel was in March 2010.

The lawsuit noted that Darla Grese tried several times to intervene with Kelli’s doctors.

**“I don’t understand how a physician can write a prescription for 450 pills and two months later write another prescription for 450,” she said. “Something’s broken. The system is broken.”**

As part of the settlement, VA admits no wrongdoing or responsibility in the case.


Still, Darla Grese said that the settlement “makes a huge statement.”

"I think the money they poured into defending the case and agreeing to the settlement speaks volumes," she said.

Grese said she plans to continue advocating for veterans care by volunteering with charities Kelli supported, including Veterans' Hope.

"I want to honor her memory and keep helping veterans," she said.

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**



Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

## MILITARY NEWS

**U.S. Wars Since 2011 Leave 225,000  
Dead, Cost \$4.4 Trillion**

23 Feb 2013 AFP

U.S. wars launched since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, have left 225,000 dead and cost up to \$4.4 trillion, according to a new study by university researchers.

The study published by Brown University this week focused on the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and counter-terrorism campaigns in Pakistan and Yemen, which came in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

The authors argued that governments almost always go to war underestimating the potential duration and costs of a conflict while overestimating “the political objectives that can be accomplished by the use of brute force.”

The study said “an extremely conservative estimate” of the casualty toll was about 225,000 people killed and 365,000 wounded in the wars so far.

The number of soldiers killed comes to 31,741, including about 6,000 Americans, 1,200 allied troops, 9,900 Iraqis, 8,800 Afghans, 3,500 Pakistanis as well as 2,300 U.S. private security contractors, it said.

The civilian toll was much higher, with an estimated 172,000 dead, including about 125,000 Iraqis, 35,000 Pakistanis and 12,000 Afghans, it said.

The study acknowledged that estimating the number of dead was difficult, particularly the toll for insurgents, putting the number at between 20,000 to 51,000 insurgents killed.

The report found that 168 reporters and 266 humanitarian workers were among the dead since the United States launched its “war on terror” after 9/11.

The wars also have triggered a massive flow of refugees and displaced persons, with more than 7.8 million displaced, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan, it said.

The study estimated the financial cost of the wars at a minimum of \$3.7 trillion and up to \$4.4 trillion, which represents about a quarter of the country’s current debt.

The researchers arrived at a much larger figure than the Pentagon’s previous estimates, as they included spending by the Department of Homeland Security to counter terrorist threats, government projections for spending on wounded veterans through 2051 and war-related funds from the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The U.S. government has previously cited the price tag for the wars at about one trillion dollars.

“Our estimate is larger because we include more than the direct Pentagon appropriation for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the larger global war on terror,” said the study.

“Wars always cost more than what the Pentagon spends for the duration of the combat operation.”

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE  
BLOODSHED  
THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WAR**

**FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

**“The Pathway Of Tyrants Lies  
Over Volcanoes”**

**“Oppression, Organized As Ours Is,  
Will Appear Invincible Up To The  
Very Hour Of Its Fall”**

**“Those Who Enslave, Rob, And Torment  
Their Cooks, May Well Expect To Find  
Death In Their Dinner-Pots”**



**Your fathers have said that man's right to liberty is self-evident. There is no need of argument to make it clear. The voices of nature, of conscience, of reason, and of revelation, proclaim it as the right of all rights, the foundation of all trust, and of all responsibility. The sun in the sky is not more palpable to the sight than man's right to liberty is to the moral vision.**

**Not all the skill of politicians, North and South, not all the sophistries of Judges, not all the fulminations of a corrupt press, not all the hypocritical prayers, or the hypocritical refusals to pray of a hollow-hearted priesthood, not all the devices of sin and Satan, can save the vile thing from extermination.**

**May 1857 By Frederick Douglass, Speech on the Dred Scott Decision [Excerpt]**

**Dred Scott v. Sandford was a decision by the United States Supreme Court, 1857, written by Chief Justice Taney, ruling that people of African descent imported into the United States and held as slaves (or their descendants, whether or not they were slaves) were not protected by the Constitution, and that "The negro has no rights which the white man is bound to respect."**

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While four millions of our fellow countrymen are in chains--while men, women, and children are bought and sold on the auction-block with horses, sheep, and swine--while the remorseless slave--whip draws the warm blood of our common humanity--it is meet that we assemble as we have done to-day, and lift up our hearts and voices in earnest denunciation of the vile and shocking abomination.

It is not for us to be governed by our hopes or our fears in this great work; yet it is natural on occasions like this, to survey the position of the great struggle which is going on between slavery and freedom, and to dwell upon such signs of encouragement as may have been lately developed, and the state of feeling these signs or events have occasioned in us and among the people generally.

It is a fitting time to take an observation to ascertain where we are, and what our prospects are.

To many, the prospects of the struggle against slavery seem far from cheering.

Eminent men, North and South, in Church and State, tell us that the omens are all against us.

Emancipation, they tell us, is a wild, delusive idea; the price of human flesh was never higher than now; slavery was never more closely entwined about the hearts and affections of the southern people than now; that whatever of conscientious scruple, religious conviction, or public policy, which opposed the system of slavery forty or fifty years ago, has subsided; and that slavery never reposed upon a firmer basis than now.

Completing this picture of the happy and prosperous condition of this system of wickedness, they tell us that this state of things is to be set to our account. Abolition agitation has done it all.

How deep is the misfortune of my poor, bleeding people, if this be so! How lost their condition, if even the efforts of their friends but sink them deeper in ruin!

Without assenting to this strong representation of the increasing strength and stability of slavery, without denouncing what of untruth pervades it, I own myself not insensible to the many difficulties and discouragement that beset us on every hand. They fling their broad and gloomy shadows across the pathway of every thoughtful colored man in this country.

For one, I see them clearly, and feel them sadly. With an earnest, aching heart, I have long looked for the realization of the hope of my people. Standing, as it were, barefoot, and treading upon the sharp and flinty rocks of the present, and looking out upon the boundless sea of the future, I have sought, in my humble way, to penetrate the intervening mists and clouds, and, perchance, to descry, in the dim and shadowy distance, the white flag of freedom, the precise speck of time at which the cruel bondage of my people should end, and the long entombed millions rise from the foul grave of slavery and death.

But of that time I can know nothing, and you can know nothing. All is uncertain at that point.

One thing, however, is certain; slaveholders are in earnest, and mean to cling to their slaves as long as they can, and to the bitter end.

They show no sign of a wish to quit their iron grasp upon the sable throats of their victims.

Their motto is, "a firmer hold and a tighter grip" for every new effort that is made to break their cruel power.

The case is one of life or death with them, and they will give up only when they must do that or do worse.

In one view the slaveholders have a decided advantage over all opposition.

It is well to notice this advantage--the advantage of complete organization.

They are organized; and yet were not at the pains of creating their organizations.

The State governments, where the system of slavery exists, are complete slavery organizations.

The church organizations in those States are equally at the service of slavery; while the Federal Government, with its army and navy, from the chief magistracy in Washington, to the Supreme Court, and thence to the chief marshalship at New York, is pledged to support, defend, and propagate the crying curse of human bondage.

**The pen, the purse, and the sword, are united against the simple truth, preached by humble men in obscure places.**

This is one view.

It is, thank God, only one view; there is another, and a brighter view.

David, you know, looked small and insignificant when going to meet Goliath, but looked larger when he had slain his foe.

The Malakoff [a fortress in Russia stormed by French soldiers] was, to the eye of the world, impregnable, till the hour it fell before the shot and shell of the allied army.

**Thus hath it ever been.**

**Oppression, organized as ours is, will appear invincible up to the very hour of its fall.**

Sir, let us look at the other side, and see if there are not some things to cheer our heart and nerve us up anew in the good work of emancipation.

**Take this fact--for it is a fact--the anti-slavery movement has, from first to last, suffered no abatement.**

**It has gone forth in all directions, and is now felt in the remotest extremities of the Republic.**

**It started small, and was without capital either in men or money. The odds were all against it.**

**It literally had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.**

There was ignorance to be enlightened, error to be combatted, conscience to be awakened, prejudice to be overcome, apathy to be aroused, the right of speech to be secured, mob violence to be subdued, and a deep, radical change to be wrought in the mind and heart of the whole nation.

This great work, under God, has gone on, and gone on gloriously.

Amid all changes, fluctuations, assaults, and adverses of every kind, it has remained firm in its purpose, steady in its aim, onward and upward, defying all opposition, and never losing a single battle.

Our strength is in the growth of anti-slavery conviction, and this has never halted.

There is a significant vitality about this abolition movement. It has taken a deeper, broader, and more lasting hold upon the national heart than ordinary reform movements. Other subjects of much interest come and go, expand and contract, blaze and vanish, but the huge question of American Slavery, comprehending, as it does, not merely the weal or the woe of four millions, and their countless posterity, but the weal or the woe of

this entire nation, must increase in magnitude and in majesty with every hour of its history.

From a cloud not bigger than a man's hand, it has overspread the heavens.

It has risen from a grain not bigger than a mustard seed. Yet see the fowls of the air, how they crowd its branches.

Politicians who cursed it, now defend it; ministers, once dumb, now speak in its praise; and presses, which once flamed with hot denunciations against it, now surround the sacred cause as by a wall of living fire.

Politicians go with it as a pillar of cloud by day, and the press as a pillar of fire by night. With these ancient tokens of success, I, for one, will not despair of our cause.

Those who have undertaken to suppress and crush out this agitation for Liberty and humanity, have been most woefully disappointed.

Many who have engaged to put it down, have found themselves put down.

The agitation has pursued them in all their meanderings, broken in upon their seclusion, and, at the very moment of fancied security, it has settled down upon them like a mantle of unquenchable fire.

Clay, Calhoun, and Webster each tried his hand at suppressing the agitation; and they went to their graves disappointed and defeated.

Loud and exultingly have we been told that the slavery question is settled, and settled forever.

You remember it was settled thirty-seven years ago, when Missouri was admitted into the Union with a slaveholding constitution, and slavery prohibited in all territory north of thirty-six degrees of north latitude.

Just fifteen years afterwards, it was settled again by voting down the right of petition, and gagging down free discussion in Congress.

Ten years after this it was settled again by the annexation of Texas, and with it the war with Mexico.

In 1850 it was again settled. This was called a final settlement. By it slavery was virtually declared to be the equal of Liberty, and should come into the Union on the same terms. By it the right and the power to hunt down men, women, and children, in every part of this country, was conceded to our southern brethren, in order to keep them in the Union.

Four years after this settlement, the whole question was once more settled, and settled by a settlement which unsettled all the former settlements.

**The fact is, the more the question has been settled, the more it has needed settling.**



The space between the different settlements has been strikingly on the decrease.

The first stood longer than any of its successors.

This last settlement must be called the Taney settlement. We are now --the second, ten years--the third, five years--the fourth stood four years --and the fifth has stood the brief space of two years.

This last settlement must be called the Taney settlement.

We are now told, in tones of lofty exultation, that the day is lost all lost and that we might as well give up the struggle. The highest authority has spoken. The voice of the Supreme Court has gone out over the troubled waves of the National Conscience, saying peace, be still.

This infamous decision of the Slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court maintains that slaves are within the contemplation of the Constitution of the United States, property; that slaves are property in the same sense that horses, sheep, and swine are property; that the old doctrine that slavery is a creature of local law is false; that the right of the slaveholder to his slave does not depend upon the local law, but is secured wherever the Constitution of the United States extends; that Congress has no right to prohibit slavery anywhere; that slavery may go in safety anywhere under the star-spangled banner; that colored persons of African descent have no rights that white men are bound to respect; that colored men of African descent are not and cannot be citizens of the United States.

You will readily ask me how I am affected by this devilish decision--this judicial incarnation of wolfishness?

My answer is, and no thanks to the slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court, my hopes were never brighter than now.

I have no fear that the National Conscience will be put to sleep by such an open, glaring, and scandalous tissue of lies as that decision is, and has been, over and over, shown to be.

The Supreme Court of the United States is not the only power in this world. It is very great, but the Supreme Court of the Almighty is greater.

Judge Taney can do many things, but he cannot perform impossibilities. He cannot bale out the ocean, annihilate the firm old earth, or pluck the silvery star of liberty from our Northern sky. He may decide, and decide again; but he cannot reverse the decision of the Most High. He cannot change the essential nature of things--making evil good, and good evil.

Happily for the whole human family, their rights have been defined, declared, and decided in a court higher than the Supreme Court. "There is a law," says Brougham, "above all the enactments of human codes, and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, man cannot hold property in man."

**Your fathers have said that man's right to liberty is self-evident. There is no need of argument to make it clear. The voices of nature, of conscience, of reason, and**

**of revelation, proclaim it as the right of all rights, the foundation of all trust, and of all responsibility.**

**Man was born with it. It was his before he comprehended it. The deed conveying it to him is written in the center of his soul, and is recorded in Heaven.**

**The sun in the sky is not more palpable to the sight than man's right to liberty is to the moral vision.**

To decide against this right in the person of Dred Scott, or the humblest and most whip-scarred bondman in the land, is to decide against God. It is an open rebellion against God's government. It is an attempt to undo what God has done, to blot out the broad distinction instituted by the Allwise between men and things, and to change the image and superscription of the everliving God into a speechless piece of merchandise.

Such a decision cannot stand. God will be true though every man be a liar. We can appeal from this hell-black judgment of the Supreme Court, to the court of common sense and common humanity. We can appeal from man to God. If there is no justice on earth, there is yet justice in heaven. You may close your Supreme Court against the black man's cry for justice, but you cannot, thank God, close against him the ear of a sympathizing world, nor shut up the Court of Heaven.

All that is merciful and just, on earth and in Heaven, will execrate and despise this edict of Taney.

If it were at all likely that the people of these free States would tamely submit to this demoniacal judgment, I might feel gloomy and sad over it, and possibly it might be necessary for my people to look for a home in some other country.

But as the case stands, we have nothing to fear.

In one point of view, we, the abolitionists and colored people, should meet this decision, unlooked for and monstrous as it appears, in a cheerful spirit.

This very attempt to blot out forever the hopes of an enslaved people may be one necessary link in the chain of events preparatory to the downfall and complete overthrow of the whole slave system.

The whole history of the anti-slavery movement is studded with proof that all measures devised and executed with a view to ally and diminish the anti-slavery agitation, have only served to increase, intensify, and embolden that agitation.

This wisdom of the crafty has been confounded, and the counsels of the ungodly brought to nought.

It was so with the Fugitive Slave Bill. It was so with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; and it will be so with this last and most shocking of all pro-slavery devices, this Taney decision.

When great transactions are involved, where the fate of millions is concerned, where a long enslaved and suffering people are to be delivered, I am superstitious enough to

believe that the finger of the Almighty may be seen bringing good out of evil, and making the wrath of man redound to his honor, hastening the triumph of righteousness.

The American people have been called upon, in a most striking manner, to abolish and put away forever the system of slavery. The subject has been pressed upon their attention in all earnestness and sincerity. The cries of the slave have gone forth to the world, and up to the throne of God.

This decision, in my view, is a means of keeping the nation awake on the subject. It is another proof that God does not mean that we shall go to sleep, and forget that we are a slaveholding nation.

Step by step we have seen the slave power advancing; poisoning, corrupting, and perverting the institutions of the country; growing more and more haughty, imperious, and exacting. The white man's liberty has been marked out for the same grave with the black man's.

The ballot box is desecrated, God's law set at naught, armed legislators stalk the halls of Congress, freedom of speech is beaten down in the Senate. The rivers and highways are infested by border ruffians, and white men are made to feel the iron heel of slavery.

This ought to arouse us to kill off the hateful thing. They are solemn warnings to which the white people, as well as the black people, should take heed.

If these shall fail, judgment, more fierce or terrible, may come.

**The lightning, whirlwind, and earthquake may come.**

**Jefferson said that he trembled for his country when he reflected that God is just, and his justice cannot sleep forever.**

**The time may come when even the crushed worm may turn under the tyrant's feet. Goaded by cruelty, stung by a burning sense of wrong, in an awful moment of depression and desperation, the bondman and bondwoman at the south may rush to one wild and deadly struggle for freedom.**

**Already slaveholders go to bed with bowie knives, and apprehend death at their dinners.**

**Those who enslave, rob, and torment their cooks, may well expect to find death in their dinner-pots.**

The world is full of violence and fraud, and it would be strange if the slave, the constant victim of both fraud and violence, should escape the contagion.

He, too, may learn to fight the devil with fire, and for one, I am in no frame of mind to pray that this may be long deferred.

Two remarkable occurrences have followed the presidential election; one was the unaccountable sickness traced to the National Hotel at Washington, and the other was the discovery of a plan among the slaves, in different localities, to slay their oppressors.

Twenty or thirty of the suspected were put to death. Some were shot, some hanged, some burned, and some died under the lash.

One brave man owned himself well acquainted with the conspiracy, but said he would rather die than disclose the facts. He received seven hundred and fifty lashes, and his noble spirit went away to the God who gave it.

The name of this hero has been by the meanness of tyrants suppressed. Such a man redeems his race. He is worthy to be mentioned with the Hoffers and Tells, the noblest heroes of history.

**These insurrectionary movements have been put down, but they may break out at any time, under the guidance of higher intelligence, and with a more invincible spirit.**

**The fire thus kindled, may be revived again; the flames are extinguished, but the embers remain; one terrible blast may produce an ignition, which shall wrap the whole South in wild conflagration.**

**The pathway of tyrants lies over volcanoes; the very air they breathe is heavy with sorrows; agonizing heart-throbs convulse them while sleeping, and the wind whispers death as over them sweeping.**

**By all the laws of nature, civilization, and of progress, slavery is a doomed system.**

**Not all the skill of politicians, North and South, not all the sophistries of Judges, not all the fulminations of a corrupt press, not all the hypocritical prayers, or the hypocritical refusals to pray of a hollow-hearted priesthood, not all the devices of sin and Satan, can save the vile thing from extermination.**

**MORE**

## **Frederick Douglass 1852**

**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

**“Daniel Taylor--A Black Chicagoan Who Has Spent More Than Half Of His Life In Prison For A Crime He Couldn't Have Committed”**

**“An Enlarged Arrest Report And Bond Slip Showing Taylor Was Arrested Two Hours Before The 8:45 P.M. Murders, And Was Not Released Until 10 P.M.”**

**“Police Officers From The Station Testified In Taylor's Defense”**

February 21, 2013 by Mark Clements, Socialist Worker

Daniel Taylor was police custody when a November 1992 double murder took place in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood--but cops and prosecutors accused him of being involved anyway, and sent him to prison for it.

Twenty years later, Mark Clements, a victim of police torture and wrongly convicted himself, tells the story of an innocent man who is *still* in jail.

\*\*\*\*\*

The state of Illinois has been labeled the wrongful conviction capital of the U.S., and when you read about the case of Daniel Taylor--a Black Chicagoan who has spent more than half of his life in prison for a crime he couldn't have committed--you'll understand why.

In 1992, Taylor was 17 years old and a resident of the Maryville youth shelter. He was known to police to be a gang member.

**According to police records, at 6:30 p.m. on November 16, 1992, he was arrested for disorderly conduct--officers from District 23 claimed they witnessed him**

**causing a street disturbance. He was put in a lockup and not released until he posted a bond.**

**He didn't emerge from jail until after 10 p.m.**

**At 8:43 p.m., while Taylor was behind bars, a double murder was committed in the Uptown neighborhood.**

The apartment where the two victims were found dead was known by neighbors to be connected to drugs and prostitution.

Police quickly identified a man named Dennis Mixon as having been involved in the murders--an eyewitness said she saw Mixon among a group of men leaving the scene after the shootings. Even so, Mixon wouldn't be arrested until the following March.

Around two weeks later, police arrested 15-year-old Lewis Gardner and 19-year-old Akia Phillips on drug charges.

During interrogation, the two teenagers confessed to being lookouts when the murders were committed, and named six others they said we're involved, one of them being Daniel Taylor.

At 2 a.m. the next morning, police roused Taylor from his sleep at a Department of Children and Family Services group home and took him to the police station at Belmont and Western.

**Taylor initially denied any knowledge of the crime, but later gave detectives a confession that ran to 27 pages. No advocate for the teenager was present during the interrogation--Taylor says he was handcuffed to a chair, struck with a flashlight and threatened with worse unless he confessed.**

Taylor later said he decided to tell the detectives what they wanted to hear, putting together details of the crime from their questioning--and from Akia Phillips's statement, which the cops gave him to read.

**In his false confession, Taylor said that he had held down one of the victims while she was shot.**

Taylor was put in a lineup, and the witness who saw four men come out of the building after the shootings said she had seen Taylor around the neighborhood, but not the night of the murders.

**She later told Chicago Tribune reporters that police pressured her to identify Taylor and several other suspects, but she refused.**

Nevertheless, the cops had Taylor's confession. He was charged with murder, as a juvenile. The jury voted to convict him and his co-defendants, and he was sentenced to life in prison.

**Incredibly, the court heard evidence proving Taylor couldn't have participated in the murders.**

According to Tribune reporter Steve Mills:

“Taylor’s lawyer, Nathan Diamond-Falk, showed jurors an enlarged arrest report and bond slip showing Taylor was arrested two hours before the 8:45 p.m. murders, taken to the now-shuttered Town Hall police station at Halsted and Addison Streets, and was not released until 10 p.m.

Police officers from the station testified in Taylor’s defense, but the testimony was less than robust in part because Taylor’s lawyer did not have all of the documents generated in the case.”

Basically, prosecutors claimed that the arrest report and bond slip were wrong, and that police at the Town Hall station were covering up for having released Taylor from custody early.

The confession by Taylor proved he was involved, they claimed.

Yet we now know--after revelations about police torture under former Commander Jon Burge, but also about coerced confessions in many other circumstances--that Chicago cops specialized in getting suspects, many of them young, poor and African American, to confess to crimes they didn’t commit.

In this particular murder case, all eight defendants made confessions that implicated the others, but seven of the eight--all except for Mixon--have since maintained their innocence.

Prosecutors at the trial could have questioned the confessions or stopped the drive to put Taylor and the other men behind bars, but they were politically ambitious--Thomas Needham, for instance, became a top aide to former Mayor Richard Daley, then a top Police Department lawyer and now is in private practice--and wanted the convictions more than they wanted justice.

The story of Taylor’s life also shows why he might have confessed falsely--his childhood years were vulnerable. Taylor’s mother was addicted to drugs and lost custody of her son. “Being in the state, having no family that’s your blood, it gets to you sometimes,” he said of his life in the DCFS group home to Steve Mills. “It’s almost like jail. It’s not really home.”

Taylor turned to the Vice Lords about three months before he was arrested for the murder--his friends were Vice Lords, he said, so it made sense to him to join them. he sold drugs, mostly small amounts of cocaine and marijuana--which is how Taylor came to be known to police patrolling in the Uptown area.

**In February of last year, further evidence of Taylor’s innocence came to light--files obtained by the Illinois Attorney General show that the assistant state’s attorney who took Taylor’s confession had been informed at the time by police that Taylor had been in lockup, but this documentation was concealed from the defense.**

Taylor is currently represented by Karen Daniel of the Northwestern University School of Law’s Center on Wrongful Convictions. Daniel has filed a new petition arguing that

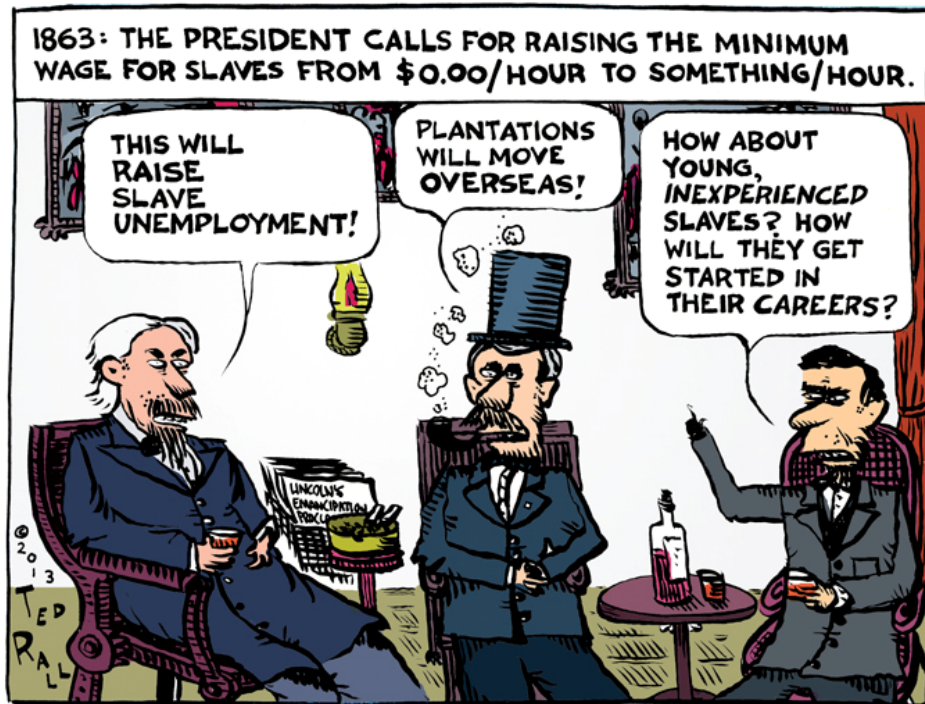
Taylor is innocent and should be released immediately or granted a new trial, based on the evidence concealed by prosecutors for two decades.

There is no doubt that Daniel Taylor is innocent of the crime he has spent more than 20 years in prison for. Yet he must keep waiting to find out if the current Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez will correct this injustice and free him.

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS





# **Gun Control Was – Historically – About Repressing Blacks: “The KKK Began As A Gun-Control Organization”**

February 20, 2013 Washingtons Blog [Excerpts]

UCLA Constitutional law professor Adam Winkler – whose commentary has been featured on CNN, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, and numerous other outlets, and who is a contributor to The Daily Beast and The Huffington Post – notes (via the Wall Street Journal):

“(The history of gun control in America) was a constant pressure among white racists to keep guns out of the hands of African-Americans, because they would rise up and revolt.”

“The KKK began as a gun-control organization.

“Before the Civil War, blacks were never allowed to own guns. During the Civil War, blacks kept guns for the first time – either they served in the Union army and they were allowed to keep their guns, or they buy guns on the open market where for the first time there’s hundreds of thousands of guns flooding the marketplace after the war ends.

“So they arm up because they know who they’re dealing with in the South. White racists do things like pass laws to disarm them, but that’s not really going to work. So they form these racist posses all over the South to go out at night in large groups to terrorize blacks and take those guns away.

“If blacks were disarmed, they couldn’t fight back.”

Brendan O’Neill notes at the Guardian:

“For years – for two centuries, in fact – gun control was a largely Right-wing, reactionary campaign issue, not a Left-wing one. The fact that it has now been adopted by Leftists is very revealing indeed.

Before the 1980s, Right-wingers and racists were the most vocal in demanding that the states in America should strictly circumscribe gun ownership.

Where the revolutionary government of 1791 made the second amendment to the US Constitution, which insisted on the right of the citizenry to bear arms as a safeguard against tyrannical government, successive legislators and campaigners who were freaked out by the prospect of former slaves getting hold of guns called for a rethink of this fundamental liberty.

“So after the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831, when a band of black rebels shot at white slave owners and freed their slaves, the state of Tennessee altered its constitution.

“Where once it had guaranteed that ‘the freemen of this state have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defence’ post-Nat Turner it said ‘the free white men of this state have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defence’”.

“Throughout the 1800s, states passed gun-control laws that were fundamentally racist. So, panicked by the prospect of more black rebellions against white landowners, the North Carolina Supreme Court passed a statute in 1840 that said: “If any free negro, mulatto, or free person of colour shall wear or carry about his or her person, or keep in his or her house, any shotgun, musket, rifle, pistol, sword, dagger or bowie-knife... he or she shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and may be indicted therefore.”

“In the 1890s, Florida also passed race-specific gun-control laws.

“Then, in 1941, a judge in Florida’s Supreme Court called the laws into question when he overturned the conviction of a black man for carrying a handgun without a permit. He overturned the conviction, he said, because this law ‘was passed for the purpose of disarming the negro labourers ... and to give the white citizens in sparsely settled areas a better feeling of security. The statute was never intended to be applied to the white population and in practice has never been so applied.’

“In the modern period, too, there was a hugely reactionary bent to gun-control campaigns.

“In the early 20th century new laws, such as the 1911 Sullivan Law in New York City, were passed to prevent the huge influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe from getting their hands on guns. As Gary Kleck puts it in his book *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America*, gun control was anything but a liberal cause: ‘In the 19th and early 20th century, gun-control laws were often targeted at blacks in the south and the foreign-born in the north.’”

**And avid gun control advocate Robert Sherrill notes in his book, *The Saturday Night Special*:**

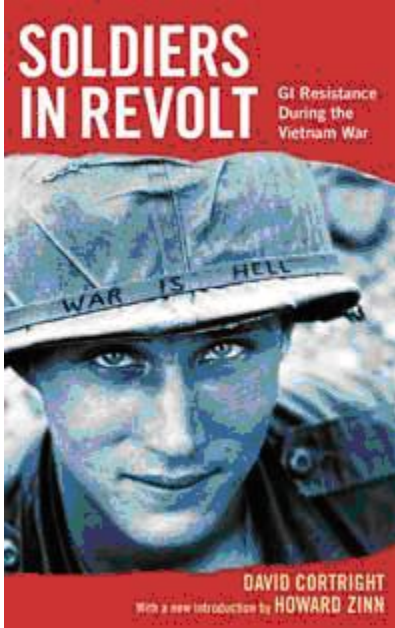
**“The Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed not to control guns but to control blacks, and inasmuch as a majority of Congress did not want to do the former but were ashamed to show that their goal was the latter, the result was that they did neither.**

**“Indeed, this law, the first gun-control law passed by Congress in thirty years, was one of the grand jokes of our time.”**

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## **FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY:**

# A Vietnam Veteran Describes The Strategy And Tactics Used By Troops To Stop An Imperial War



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