

US Indicted for Global Nuclear Terror

Plowshares Initiative

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In-depth Report: [Nuclear War](#)

Featured image: Kings Bay Plowshares before their action April 4. (photo: Kings Bay Plowshares)

The Nuremberg Principles not only prohibit such crimes but oblige those of us aware of the crime to act against it. "Complicity in the commission of a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity ... is a crime under International Law." [...]

The ongoing building and maintenance of Trident submarines and ballistic missile systems constitute war crimes that can and should be investigated and prosecuted by judicial authorities at all levels. As citizens, we are required by International Law to denounce and resist known crimes.

- [Kings Bay Plowshares Indictment of US](#) for war crimes, April 4, 2018

On April 4, 2018, [the Kings Bay Plowshares Seven](#), three women and four men, all Catholics, carried out [their faith-based, nonviolent, symbolic action](#), pouring blood on the world's largest nuclear submarine base and indicting the **US for its perpetual crime of holding the world hostage to the terrorist threat of using nuclear weapons**. The US crime that began in 1945 has reached new intensity with **Donald Trump's** years of [casual rhetoric threatening nuclear holocaust](#) on targets from ISIS to North Korea. Every other nuclear-armed state engages in the same criminal threatening every day, but the US has been at it longer and is still the only state to have perpetrated the actual war crimes of not one but two nuclear terror attacks against mostly civilian targets in Japan in 1945.

The target of the Plowshares Seven's radical direct action was the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, home to [eight Trident nuclear submarines](#), each capable of launching nuclear missile strikes anywhere in the world. Each [560-foot-long Trident](#) ballistic missile submarine carries sufficient firepower to attack some 600 cities with more destructive force than destroyed Hiroshima. The "small" warheads on Trident missiles have a 100-kiloton payload, roughly [seven times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb](#). The Kings Bay base covers some 17,000 acres, making it roughly 30 times larger than the principality of Monaco. The base was developed in 1978-79 under President Jimmy Carter, a former nuclear submarine engineer. A prominent Christian protestant all his career, Carter has long made peace with war-making, unlike the radical Catholics in [the Plowshares movement](#) since they hammered and poured blood on nuclear nosecones in 1980 (the first of more than 100 Plowshares actions since then).

On April 4, 2018, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend

Dr. Martin Luther King, Liz McAlister, 78, Stephen Kelly S.J., 70, Martha Hennessy, 62, Clare Grady, 58, Patrick O'Neill, 62, Mark Colville, 55, and Carmen Trotta, 55, entered the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.

Carrying hammers and bottles of their own blood, the seven sought to enact and embody the prophet Isaiah's command to: "Beat swords into plowshares." In so doing, they were upholding the US Constitution through its requirement to respect treaties, international law through the UN Charter and Nuremberg principles, and higher moral law regarding the sacredness of all creation. They hoped to draw attention to and begin to dismantle what Dr. King called "the triple evils" of racism, militarism, and extreme materialism.

- [Kings Bay Plowshares press release](#), May 4, 2018

As darkness fell on April 4, the Plowshares Seven were setting out to commit a classic act of civil disobedience, breaking laws that they saw as unjust in light of a higher law. The description of events that follows here is based on [the government indictment](#) (signed by five lawyers), the [Kings Bay Plowshares account](#), and a conversation with one of the Plowshares Seven, [Martha Hennessy](#), a retired occupational therapist, at her home in Vermont, where she is confined with an ankle bracelet while awaiting trial.

After penetrating the perimeter fence as a group, the seven split up into three groups, headed for three different destinations on the base, and arrived unchallenged.

The nuclear weapons storage bunkers are in a shoot-to-kill zone. McAlister, Kelly, and Trotta managed to unfurl a banner without getting shot, but were quickly arrested. The banner read: "[Nuclear weapons: illegal/immoral.](#)"

The second group, Grady and Hennessy, went to the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic Administration, two large, one-story office buildings out of sight and hearing range from the weapons storage bunkers. Here the scene was more surreal: lights were on in the building, people were working inside, but it was very quiet. Grady and Hennessy were alone in the dark outside for almost an hour. That gave them time to post the Plowshares indictment on the door and rope off the area with yellow crime scene tape. They poured blood on the door and the sidewalk. They spray-painted the sidewalk with "Love One Another" and "Repent" and "May Love Disarm Us All."

When they were done, they joined the third group, Colville and O'Neill, at the Trident D5 Monuments, [a sculptural, phallic celebration of nuclear weapons delivery systems](#). There the Plowshares splashed blood on the base logo and the Navy seal. They draped the monument in yellow crime scene tape. They pried back-lit blue letters off the monument. They hung a banner paraphrasing Martin Luther King's admonition that "[the ultimate logic of racism is genocide.](#)" The banner read: "The Ultimate Logic of Trident is Omnicide." People drove by as they worked, but no one stopped. After about an hour, security officers arrived and very politely, full of Southern good manners, handcuffed the four and took them into custody at a base facility sometime after midnight.

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised about the hills. All nations shall stream toward it.... He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares; and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.” – Book of Isaiah, 2:2-4

According to Kings Bay Base [spokesman Scott Bassett](#), the Plowshares Seven were quickly transferred to the civilian county jail. Bassett said there were no injuries and that no military personnel or “assets” were in danger. He said the incident was still under investigation, but “At no time was anybody threatened.”

Mainstream media seem to have treated the bleeding of the submarine missiles as a one-day story of little import, or ignored it entirely. The Navy was treating it as a trivial case of trespass and vandalism. Georgia officials filed charges along the same lines. But by the time the Plowshares Seven had been [in county jail for a month](#), someone had decided to make a federal case of it.

The [federal indictment of May 2](#) is a squalid bit of legalism at its most dishonest. The seven-page charge tries to have it both ways, making out a trespass/vandalism case while suppressing what makes it actually worthy of federal prosecution (albeit not of these defendants). No wonder it took five lawyers to conjure up a redundantly iterated charge of conspiracy to trespass and “willfully and maliciously destroy and injure real and personal property” of the US Navy. The charge is naked of any hint of a motive, and for good, sordid, corrupt prosecutorial reason. The motive calls into question the legality of the base, the submarines, the nuclear weapons, and the right of the US to keep the rest of the world under perpetual threat of annihilation. The feds have a long history of [keeping that argument out of court](#) by any means necessary.

Prosecutorial deceit is further illustrated by the indictment’s corrupt selection of the alleged overt acts by the defendants. The indictment charges all seven with acts some of them could not possibly have committed. And for all their wordy whining about property being damaged or defaced, the lawyers conspire not to mention any yellow crime tape, or banners, or – most importantly – the defendants’ blood. “A True Bill” the document is called on the page where five federal lawyers signed, if not in contempt of court, surely in contempt of truth and justice.

But that’s where this case is headed, down the rabbit hole of police state justice, if the government has its way. The Plowshares Seven, all presently proceeding without attorneys of their own, will attempt to argue a necessity defense – that whatever illegal actions they have taken were necessary to prevent a greater harm, in this case nuclear destruction. That case is so patently obvious, the government has never dared to let it be argued (in other countries it has led to some acquittals). Mostly miscarriages of justice like this go on in the shadows, without media attention, without regard to who is president or which party is in power. Anyone who looks carefully soon realizes this is true. In late 2008, [Martha Hennessy wrote from England](#):

I can’t write about my journey coming here to participate in the Catholic Worker Farm community without considering the context of our current world situation. The global financial markets teeter on the brink of chaos, and the US presidential race nears Election Day. It feels as though those who are aware of what is happening are holding their collective breath while others toil on in pain and oblivion. I completed early voting before leaving the States but I am always left with a feeling of having blood on my hands, trying to be a

“responsible” citizen in a so-called democracy. The recent American bailout of the corporate criminals is a theft from the people who need housing, healthcare, and education. The horrific war that has been visited on the Iraqi people has turned on its perpetrators. And now people of faith who mount nonviolent protest to these atrocities are being branded as “terrorists” by the domestic security apparatus. How to maintain faith, hope and love with such dark times ahead?

Hennessy and two others are out on bail, but electronically shackled. The other four remain in federal prison in the usually appalling conditions the US justice system deems appropriate, or at least profitable. The prosecutors opposed any bail for any of them. A motions hearing is scheduled for early August, when all seven will seek release to allow them to prepare for trial, representing themselves. No trial date has yet been set. The defendants face potential sentences of 5 to 20 years each. They used their own blood to symbolize redemption and repentance in the shadow of nuclear holocaust. For that, these seven nonviolent Catholics have put themselves at the mercy of a “Christian” nation whose deepest belief is in its own exceptionalism, immersed in a permanent war economy heading toward omnicide, which can’t come soon enough for apocalyptic dominionoids who figure their souls are saved so let’s get it on. In a sane world, wouldn’t that be enough for jury exclusion?

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This article was originally published on [Reader Supported News](#).

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