

Drone Whistleblower Daniel Hale Is a Truth-Teller in a Time of Systemic Deceit and Lethal Secrecy

by *Jeremy Scahill*, published on *The Intercept*, July 30, 2021

✘ Since the arrest and indictment of Daniel Hale on charges that he leaked the documents that formed the basis for The Intercept's series "The Drone Papers," as well as documents about the government's secret watchlisting system, I have wanted to speak publicly about this unjust prosecution. However, due to security concerns, legal advice, and a desire not to hinder, in any way, Hale's defense or to aid the government in its disgraceful prosecution, I have been unable to do so. Now that the circumstances have changed, I am able to share some aspects of my thoughts. In doing so, I am speaking only for myself and not for The Intercept or anyone else.

Daniel Hale is a man of tremendous conscience, courage, and moral clarity. It is an abomination that this brave whistleblower has been sentenced to nearly four years in prison after being convicted of exposing the horrors of the U.S. drone assassination programs, the killing of civilians, and the Kafkaesque "terror" watchlisting system run by the government.

President Barack Obama's Justice Department did not prosecute Hale, but the Trump administration dug up the case and threw the book at Hale in an obvious ploy to stanch leaks about President Donald Trump and his corrupt administration. The indictment Trump's prosecutors crafted was a dishonest piece of political propaganda intended to criminalize Hale and

attack the freedom of the press.

The initial threat of decades in prison against Hale was a cudgel deployed by prosecutors in an effort to break Hale's spirit and to frighten other prospective whistleblowers. That President Joe Biden's Justice Department continued this prosecution instead of dropping the Trump administration's case serves as an ominous reminder that the war on whistleblowers is a permanent fixture of the U.S. system. The use of the Espionage Act by successive administrations to prosecute whistleblowers is an affront to basic liberties and the constitutional rights of the accused, as it prevents people of conscience from presenting a real defense before a judge or jury. Its use to target dissent, independent journalism, and whistleblowing is an authoritarian weapon masquerading as a law, and it should be abolished.

In 2013, Daniel Hale and I were separately invited to speak at a public forum alongside a Yemeni American activist in Washington, D.C., about drone strikes and the murderous U.S. war in Yemen. As I listened to Hale speak that day, he struck me as a deeply moral person who was profoundly grappling with the role he had played in a lethal global system of assassination. I found him to be a thoughtful, sincere, caring person with an inherent degree of selflessness and honesty rare in our society. Hale appeared to be viscerally struggling with the nature of the work that he had done on behalf of the U.S. government and the horrors he had witnessed.

The Trump Justice Department indictment against Hale was anemic in its "evidence" and replete with innuendo and circumstantial events dishonestly crafted and presented as a substitute for facts. The government spied on Hale and manipulated his communications to paint a grossly distorted picture of his character and motivations that served the prosecutors' campaign to railroad him.

It has been particularly disheartening to see people

purporting to support Hale repeating Trump Justice Department assertions as established fact. There have been a lot of lies told about what happened in this case – in the Trump Justice Department indictment, by the prosecutors, on social media, and, unfortunately, in some news reports. Contrary to what the judge and prosecutors in this case stated and implied, it is evident that Hale was not motivated by trying to impress a journalist or anyone else. Hale was motivated by love of his fellow humans and by a deep and abiding sense of duty – duty to protect the innocent and the defenseless, as well as dedication to a sense of morality none of his detractors come close to matching. He is a noble teller of truths in a time of systemic deceit and lethal secrecy.

Among the “crimes” that Hale was convicted of are the following: revealing that, at times, nearly nine out of 10 people killed in so-called targeted strikes by the U.S. are not the intended targets; exposing the complicity of top U.S. government officials in a secret kill chain that decides who should be assassinated by drone strike; exposing that the U.S. government officially labels unknown people it kills as “enemies killed in action” unless they are posthumously proven to have been civilians; and exposing the secret watchlisting rulebook used to label people, including U.S. citizens, as “known or suspected terrorists” without evidence that they did anything wrong.

Daniel Hale should be pardoned and released, and the government should pay him restitution for the trauma it has inflicted on him for daring to speak out, at great personal risk, for the victims of wars and extrajudicial assassinations funded by U.S. taxpayers. He deserves the gratitude of good people everywhere for his courage, bravery, and sacrifice. It is a grave injustice that a man who blew the whistle on the killing of civilians is in jail and that those who murder them receive medals or appear as pundits on cable news.

Jeremy Scahill is a Senior Correspondent and Editor-at-Large at *The Intercept*. He is an investigative reporter, war correspondent, and author of the international best-selling books, *“Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield”* and *“Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army.”*

Forty-five Months in Prison for Drone War Whistleblower Daniel Hale

Statement on The Nuclear Resistor

On July 27, Daniel Hale was sentenced to 45 months in prison, having pled guilty in April to one count of violating the Espionage Act.

The 33-year-old Air Force veteran first spoke out publicly against drone warfare in 2013, and later shared government documents that blew the whistle on secret watchlists, targeted drone killings, and other abuses in the “War on Terror.” The information Hale shared revealed gross human rights violations in the preparation of target lists for deadly attacks where 90% of the people killed were not the intended targets. In 2014, his home was raided by the FBI. Documents and electronic devices were seized, but he was not arrested until May, 2019. He was charged with five counts of violating the Espionage Act. Hale changed his plea last March, days before his scheduled trial.

Jesselyn Radack, an attorney who has advised Daniel Hale, told *CovertAction Magazine* that Hale changed his plea because he “would not have received a fair trial because the arcane Espionage Act does not allow for a public interest defense. Meaning, Hale’s motive of wanting to inform the public could not be raised as a defense to the charge of disclosure of information.”

Before his sentencing, Hale’s supporters released this 11-page hand-written letter to Judge Liam O’Grady. It is a moving, deeply personal account of how his conscience, “once held at bay, came roaring back to life,” leading to today’s sentencing.

Hale made a brief statement in court today before he was sentenced, saying: “I believe that it is wrong to kill, but it is especially wrong to kill the defenseless.” He said he shared what “was necessary to dispel the lie that drone warfare keeps us safe, that our lives are worth more than theirs.”

More information about Daniel Hale is at <https://standwithdanielhale.org/>.

SUPPORT DANIEL HALE

CodePink, which organized the 2013 conference on drone warfare where Daniel Hale first spoke out and apologized for his role in drone attacks, has launched a petition to President Biden to Pardon Daniel Hale. Sign here.

U.S. peace activists have held signs and banners in support of Daniel Hale at drone bases and elsewhere in the days leading up to sentencing, and other friends and supporters were present in the courtroom. People are invited to participate in a week of actions in solidarity with Daniel Hale from July 28 – August 3 (see announcement below).

While Hale will soon be moved to a federal prison, letters of support can now be sent to:

Daniel E. Hale
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Correspondence must be in blue or black ink on white paper.

In 2014, Air Force veteran Daniel Hale blew the whistle on secret watchlists, targeted drone killings, and other abuses in the War on Terror. The information Hale shared revealed gross human rights violations in the preparation of target lists for deadly attacks where 90% of the people killed were not the intended targets. He was charged under the Espionage Act and pled guilty to one count.

People throughout the U.S. went to federal buildings, drone bases, public squares and elsewhere in the week following his sentencing with signs and banners expressing solidarity with and support for Daniel Hale.

Please take pictures and post them far and wide on social media using the hashtag #FreeDanielHale

Remember to let local media know of your plans, and send them a press release with photos afterwards.

- * Whistleblowing is Not a Crime
 - * President Biden: Pardon Daniel Hale
 - * Free Daniel Hale – Exposed Killer Drone Crimes
 - * Thank You, Drone War Whistleblower Daniel Hale
 - * Exposing War Crimes is not a Crime
 - * Daniel Hale – Hero, not Criminal
 - * We Stand With Daniel Hale, Killer Drone Whistleblower
 - * Stop the Killing, Stop the Terror, Stop the Drones
-

Why was Daniel Hale Silenced? Daniel Hale Must be Pardoned!

Statement by Ban Killer Drones Coalition

We raise our voice in deep concern on the silencing and imprisonment of Daniel Hale. Daniel Hale did not commit a crime.

It is outrageous that Daniel Hale was charged, prosecuted and sentenced to 45 months in Federal prison for exposing a criminal program. Daniel Hale should be pardoned!

Daniel Hale leaked documents that revealed extremely high civilian death rates in U.S. drone attacks. The 33-year-old Air Force veteran first spoke out publicly against drone warfare in 2013. Daniel Hale's whistleblowing also uncovered secret U.S. watch lists, Presidential drone kill lists, and other criminal and unethical aspects of the U.S. deployment of killer drones.

Since the Nuremberg Tribunal we have been taught that "just following orders" is not a defense. Soldiers, even in time of war, have a moral obligation to oppose illegal orders in every possible way, especially the killing, for any reason, of non-combatants.

Daniel Hale revealed that a U.S. government "kill chain" targeted its victims for extrajudicial execution based on minimal evidence and that, in one 5 month period in Afghanistan, 90% of the people killed in drone attacks were not the intended targets. NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden explained that that showed that the majority of those killed were "innocents, bystanders, or not the intended target. We couldn't have established that without Daniel Hale's voice." Daniel Hale felt a responsibility to oppose these criminal acts.

With much publicity we are told that U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq are withdrawing. But attacks on defenseless civilians through U.S. drone wars and economic sanctions are intensifying.

Daniel Hale felt deeply that the people in the U.S. have a right to know the crimes committed in their names.

We also have a responsibility to raise our voices in opposition to these continuing wars and to the sentencing of Daniel Hale.

The war criminals who authorize the use of thousands of drone strikes and other criminal killings should be prosecuted.

Sign the Petition for a pardon for Daniel Hale:

<https://www.codepink.org/danielhale>

Initial signers of the above statement:

- CODEPINK
- Ban Killer Drones
- International Action Center
- Peace Action New York State
- "Rising Together!"
- Upstate NY Coalition to End the Wars and Ground the Drones
- Wisconsin Coalition to End the Wars and Ground the Drones
- Brandywine Peace Community, Philadelphia
- Occupy Beale Air Force Base
- The Nuclear Resister
- Fellowship of Reconciliation USA
- Veterans for Peace New York City Chapter 34
- United National Antiwar Coalition

US Government Seeks Harshest Sentence Ever In Leak Case Against Drone Whistleblower

by *Kevin Gosztola*, published on *The Dissenter*, July 20, 2021

The United States government urged a federal court to sentence drone whistleblower Daniel Hale to at least nine years in prison for disclosing documents to a reporter.

Prosecutors maintained Hale joined the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) to steal classified information so he could *“ingratiate himself”* with journalists. They even submitted secret evidence for the court alleging the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) *“distributed”* two of the documents in a *“guidebook for its followers.”*

“For those like Hale, who unilaterally decide to disclose classified information, the existence of criminal penalties that are theoretically harsh but practically lenient is not sufficient,” prosecutors declare in their sentencing memorandum [PDF]. *“It is particularly important to deter those who, like Hale, might be tempted to gain access for the sole purpose of disclosing it. Such individuals must see that using positions in the intelligence community for self-aggrandizement will be harshly punished.”*

“A significant sentence is necessary to demonstrate that the unauthorized disclosure of classified information is a serious crime with significant consequences,”

prosecutors add.

Hale was part of the drone program in the U.S. Air Force and later worked at the NGA. He pled guilty on March 31 to one charge of violating the Espionage Act, when he provided documents to Intercept co-founder Jeremy Scahill and anonymously wrote a chapter in Scahill's book, ***The Assassination Complex: Inside the Government's Secret Drone Warfare Program.***

He was taken into custody and sent to the William G. Truesdale Detention Center in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 28. A therapist from pretrial and probation services named Michael violated patient confidentiality and shared details with the court related to his mental health.

Hale is scheduled to be sentenced in the Eastern District of Virginia on July 27, and the sentencing memorandum from the U.S. government reflects the vindictive posture of prosecutors, particularly since he pled guilty.

 **DEFENDING RIGHTS & DISSENT**

US GOVERNMENT SEEKS HARSHTEST SENTENCE EVER IN LEAK CASE AGAINST DRONE WHISTLEBLOWER DANIEL HALE

Kevin Gosztola
The Dissenter
Jul. 20, 2021



WAR DAY 7249

HALE WAS PART OF THE DRONE PROGRAM IN THE U.S. AIR FORCE AND LATER WORKED AT THE NGA. HE PLED GUILTY ON MARCH 31 TO ONE CHARGE OF VIOLATING THE ESPIONAGE ACT, WHEN HE PROVIDED DOCUMENTS TO INTERCEPT CO-FOUNDER JEREMY SCAHILL AND ANONYMOUSLY WROTE A CHAPTER IN SCAHILL'S BOOK, THE ASSASSINATION COMPLEX: INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT'S SECRET DRONE WARFARE PROGRAM. HALE IS SCHEDULED TO BE SENTENCED IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA ON JULY 27, AND THE SENTENCING MEMORANDUM FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REFLECTS THE VINDICTIVE POSTURE OF PROSECUTORS, PARTICULARLY SINCE HE PLED GUILTY.

'They Just Don't Want To Play Ball'

Prosecutors refused to dismiss four additional charges but declined to request a trial on those charges. They left open the possibility of going to trial if they are unsatisfied with the harshness of the sentence. And they now manipulate Hale's guilty plea in their argument for severe punishment in order to render it insignificant.

"[Hale] apparently does not accept that the documents that he provided to reporter had the potential to cause such 'serious' or 'exceptionally grave' damage to the national

security,”

prosecutors contend.

“To trigger a reduction in offense level for acceptance of responsibility, a defendant must establish that he has accepted responsibility for all of the charged criminal conduct in the count of conviction (and, of course, all related conduct).”

Prosecutors indicate they would accept a sentence of seven years and 3 months if Hale admitted his whistleblowing risked “serious” or “exceptionally grave” damage to U.S. national security.

In other words, they do not believe Hale’s guilty plea is good enough to receive a sentence of five years or less, and they have trapped a conscientious and vulnerable individual in a damned if you do, damned if you don’t situation.

Hale could try and withdraw his guilty plea and go to trial, but Judge Liam O’Grady may not allow it. Or he could plead guilty and accept the documents risked “serious” or “exceptionally grave” damage, even though he does not believe that is the truth of what happened.

Either way, Hale is likely to receive the most harsh sentence for an unauthorized disclosure of information ever issued against a former U.S. government employee or contractor.

CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou was targeted in the Eastern District of Virginia with an Espionage Act prosecution under President Barack Obama. He eventually pled guilty to violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in order to ensure he only went to prison for 30 months.

“In every other case, including mine, part of the deal was you’ll take the plea to the one charge in exchange for all

the other charges being dropped. That's what everybody else does, except of course, for [CIA whistleblower] Jeffrey Sterling, who went to trial,"

Kiriakou contended.

"They just don't want to play ball, and they're placing the blame on Daniel."

"That doesn't make sense because he's agreed to plead guilty to the most serious charge with the expectation that the other charges would be dismissed. And they're not willing to negotiate in good faith,"

Kiriakou added.

'This Makes Me Sick To My Stomach'

U.S. prosecutors submitted secret "evidence" to the judge, which they refuse to declassify for the public. The submission is part of an "internet compilation" that they claim was "designed to assist ISIS fighters avoid detection and targeting." It allegedly included parts of two documents disclosed by Hale.

Hale never transferred or provided documents directly to any ISIS member or any person claiming to be associated with the militant group. Prosecutors are further criminalizing him because terrorists have access to the internet just like all citizens of the world do.

The sentencing memorandum invokes the cases of NSA whistleblower Reality Winner and FBI whistleblower Terry Albury, which both ended in plea agreements. Winner was sentenced to 63 months. Albury was sentenced to 48 months.

"Like Hale, Winner disclosed information classified at the 'Top Secret' level. Unlike Hale, Winner disclosed only a

single document," the memo states. "Albury was sentenced for retaining 50 classified documents and transmitting some of them to a reporter – but none of the documents Albury disclosed was classified above the 'Secret' level."

"Hale stole documents from NGA on at least seven different dates over a four-month period, and his thefts were the result of a plan premeditated long before that," the memo argues.

Winner's sentence was, at the time, the harshest sentence ever issued against a former government employee or contractor. To act like it was fair and should be a base line for leak prosecutions going forward is extraordinary.

Billie Winner-Davis, the mother of Reality Winner, reacted, "This makes me sick to my stomach to think that they are using Reality's sentence to punish Daniel Hale even more severely."

"Watching what the government did to my daughter and the way that they destroyed her life completely has shown me just how cruel our government can be. From what I know about Daniel's case, he has also suffered so much already from this experience."

"Through my experience with Reality, I've come to believe that only violent offenders and those who are a true danger to our society should be imprisoned,"

Winner-Davis shared.

"To imprison those who work to protect us and give us the truth is an injustice. I pray he does not get sentenced to prison."

"There are so many other ways that our government could work with him. [Daniel's] already shown in the last five years that he is no threat to anyone."

But the U.S. government seems to view Hale's case as an opportunity to move away from sentences that are not cruel enough to make an example out of "leakers."

"We recognize that sentences imposed in some past 'leak' cases were not commensurate with the government's view of the seriousness of the defendants' conduct, or nearly serious enough to deter others from engaging in similar conduct,"

prosecutors declare, referring to Sterling's case.

"We cannot justify or explain such sentences, but only point out that a past court's failure to recognize the significance of the need to deter similar behavior by other individuals should not induce this court to make the same mistake."

Sketching A Caricature Of A Conscientious Young Veteran

The sentencing memorandum sketches a caricature of Hale as a young man who "jumped at the chance" to "fraternize" with Scahill and his colleagues. They take a chat message out of context and suggest he "looked up to [journalists] like rock stars" and wanted to become a journalist to "speak truth to power" while "hav[ing] great sex all the time and mak[ing] just enough to live but not too much that [he] [became] a part of the upper crust."

To this idea that Hale "ingratiated himself" with journalists and wanted to become a rock star reporter, Noor Mir, one of his closest friends, replied,

"Anyone who knows Daniel knows that he puts himself last in every situation, focused entirely on helping those who are in need, have been silenced, or suffered insurmountable harms. This is a gross mischaracterization of his character to all those that know him to be humble and moral to a fault."

It was difficult for Hale to speak in public, according to Mir. When he participated in a “*drone summit*” organized by CODEPINK, which Mir was involved in organizing, he “prepared for a long time and was very nervous. But he also knew that there were family members of victims of drone strikes in the audience from Yemen, who had witnessed the injustices of which he spoke.”

Media outlets, who did not know Hale’s identity, referred to Hale as the “*second Snowden*,” a nod to NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden.

The Oscar-winning documentary “*Citizenfour*” about Snowden featured a scene where journalist Glenn Greenwald revealed details about Hale to Snowden. Scahill spoke about Hale toward the end of the film.

If Hale wanted to be a “*rock star*” journalist, he could have used all of that as a springboard and fled the country to some place where he could speak out more.

Yet a recent feature story on Hale by New York magazine reporter Kerry Howley makes clear, “*Nearly no one knew who Second Snowden was then or for years afterward.*” He grew a “*ZZ Top beard*” during the COVID-19 pandemic (after his trial was delayed). He wore donated clothing, and friends “*pressed him to go public with the story of how and why*” he disclosed documents. “*But Daniel maintained that in talking about himself he would be taking the spotlight from victims of the drone war.*”

Even after an intervention was staged at a tavern in Washington, D.C. in November 2020, and his friends insisted he tell his story so the prosecution’s story did not go unchallenged, Hale still waited until early April to talk with a reporter.

Kiriakou said the thought that Hale wanted to “*ingratiate himself*” to journalists is so ridiculous that it’s laughable.

"They said the same thing about me. That I was trying to ingratiate myself with journalists and to seek a career as a commentator with ABC News,"

Kiriakou recalled.

"Nothing could have been further from the truth. I had a job that was paying me four times what ABC News offered me. I didn't need a job from ABC News. I never sought a job at ABC News."

All anybody had to do was look at Kiriakou's bank account that was empty to see the prosecutors were pushing a false narrative, he added.

Like Kiriakou described, this has become fairly standard. The U.S. prosecutors try to *"make the defendant look like a narcissist."* They maintain *"it's all about fame, and it's all about the money. And they just ignore the facts."*

After Hale returned from his Air Force deployment in Afghanistan, Howley reported, *"He wanted to go to school, and for this he needed money, and as an analyst with a security clearance, money was easily made."*

"Six months after meeting Scahill, Daniel had left the Air Force and started working for Leidos, a company that makes more than \$10 billion a year in revenue by convincing the federal government of its utility. He said he would only do it for six months, a promise he kept."

Hale did not work at the NGA to steal classified documents. He worked for the intelligence agency because he needed to pay for a college education.

Why Daniel Hale Deserve Gratitude, Not Prison

by *Kathy Kelly* published on *Countercurrents*, July 07, 2021

"Pardon Daniel Hale."

These words hung in the air on a recent Saturday evening, projected onto several Washington, D.C. buildings, above the face of a courageous whistleblower facing ten years in prison.

The artists aimed to inform the U.S. public about Daniel E. Hale, a former Air Force analyst who blew the whistle on the consequences of drone warfare. Hale will appear for sentencing before Judge Liam O'Grady on July 27th.

The U.S. Air Force had assigned Hale to work for the National Security Agency. At one point, he also served in Afghanistan, at the Bagram Air Force Base.

"In this role as a signals analyst, Hale was involved in the identifying of targets for the US drone program,"

notes Chip Gibbons, policy director for Defending Rights and Dissent, in a lengthy article about Hale's case.

*"Hale would tell the filmmakers of the 2016 documentary *National Bird* that he was disturbed by 'the uncertainty if anyone I was involved in kill[ing] or captur[ing] was a civilian or not. There's no way of knowing.'"*

Hale, thirty-three, believed the public wasn't getting crucial

information about the nature and extent of U.S. drone assassinations of civilians. Lacking that evidence, U.S. people couldn't make informed decisions. Moved by his conscience, he opted to become a truth-teller.

The U.S. government is treating him as a threat, a thief who stole documents, and an enemy. If ordinary people knew more about him, they might regard him as a hero.

Hale was charged under the Espionage Act for allegedly providing classified information to a reporter. The Espionage Act is an antiquated World War I era law, passed in 1917, designed for use against enemies of the U.S. accused of spying. The U.S. government has dusted it off, more recently, for use against whistle blowers.

Individuals charged under this law are not allowed to raise any issues regarding motivation or intent. They literally are not allowed to explain the basis for their actions.

One observer of whistleblowers' struggles with the courts was himself a whistleblower. Tried and convicted under the Espionage Act, John Kiriakou spent two and a half years in prison for exposing government wrongdoing. He says the U.S. government in these cases engages in "*charge stacking*" to ensure a lengthy prison term as well as "*venue-shopping*" to try such cases in the nation's most conservative districts.

Daniel Hale was facing trial in the Eastern District of Virginia, home to the Pentagon as well as many CIA and other federal government agents. He was facing up to 50 years in prison if found guilty on all counts.

On March 31, Hale pled guilty on one count of retention and transmission of national defense information. He now faces a maximum of ten years in prison.

At no point has he been able to raise before a judge his alarm about the Pentagon's false claims that targeted drone

assassination is precise and civilian deaths are minimal.

Hale was familiar with details of a special operations campaign in northeastern Afghanistan, Operation Haymaker. He saw evidence that between January 2012 and February 2013,

“U.S. special operations airstrikes killed more than 200 people. Of those, only 35 were the intended targets. During one five-month period of the operation, according to the documents, nearly 90 percent of the people killed in airstrikes were not the intended targets.”

Had he gone to trial, a jury of his peers might have learned more details about consequences of drone attacks. Weaponized drones are typically outfitted with Hellfire missiles, designed for use against vehicles and buildings.

Living Under Drones, the most complete documentation of the human impact of U.S. drone attacks yet produced, reports:

“The most immediate consequence of drone strikes is, of course, death and injury to those targeted or near a strike. The missiles fired from drones kill or injure in several ways, including through incineration, shrapnel, and the release of powerful blast waves capable of crushing internal organs. Those who do survive drone strikes often suffer disfiguring burns and shrapnel wounds, limb amputations, as well as vision and hearing loss.”

A new variation of this missile can hurl about 100 pounds of metal through the top of a vehicle or building; the missiles also deploy, just before impact, six long, whirring blades intended to slice up any person or object in the missile's path.

Any drone operator or analyst should be aghast, as Daniel Hale was, at the possibility of killing and maiming civilians through such grotesque means. But Daniel Hale's ordeal may be

intended to send a chilling message to other U.S. government and military analysts: keep quiet.

Nick Mottern, of the Ban Killer Drones campaign, accompanied artists projecting Hale's image on various walls in D.C. He engaged people who were passing by, asking if they knew of Daniel Hale's case. Not a single person he spoke with had. Nor did anyone know anything about drone warfare.

Now imprisoned at the Alexandria (VA) Adult Detention Center, Hale awaits sentencing.

Supporters urge people to "*stand with Daniel Hale.*" One solidarity action involves writing Judge O'Grady to express gratitude that Hale told the truth about the U.S. use of drones to kill innocent people.

At a time when drone sales and usage are proliferating worldwide and causing increasingly gruesome damage, President Joe Biden continues to launch killer drone attacks around the world, albeit with some new restrictions.

Hale's honesty, courage, and exemplary readiness to act in accord with his conscience are critically needed. Instead, the U.S. government has done its best to silence him.

A version of this article appeared in The Progressive Magazine.

Kathy Kelly (Kathy.vcnv@gmail.com) is a peace activist and author who helps coordinate a campaign seeking an international treaty to ban weaponized drones (bankillerdrones.org)

***Featured Image:** Projection on a wall in DC, ~Nick Mottern