

Murder by the Gallon

When you die of dehydration or heat stroke—the most common causes of death among border crossers in southern Arizona—you go insane. Lack of water in your body leads to hypovolemia, insufficient blood in your circulatory system, which dries out your brain. Your skin begins to shrivel, and your body redirects blood away from non-vital organs. Then—without your kidneys working as a filter—your own blood begins to poison you. Without enough water to sweat, your entire body becomes feverish; by then your brain is not only drying out, it is cooking. Severe heat and exertion—because, somehow, you’re still walking north—leads to vomiting, dizziness, disorientation, and the breakdown of the heart muscle. The pain is slow, complete. Your tongue begins to whiten and swell, and you strip off your clothes, stumble through the thorns and shin daggers, until, finally, you prostrate yourself to the blaze of the sun. In the desert, the chain of causation is short—a day without water, then your corpse is torn apart by animal scavengers.

On February 10, 2017, at around 4:15 pm, a white male Border Patrol agent parked his truck in the shadow of a rusted windmill outside of Arivaca, Arizona. He was about two miles, as the crow flies, north of the Mexican border. The temperature was in the mid-eighties. After locking his truck, he walked a few dozen yards down the uneven dirt road before turning into the high grass of a narrow trail. In ten minutes, stopping occasionally to scan the hillsides, he entered into a rocky wash. After about thirty minutes he came to the water cache. At the cache site, just off the thin dirt trail, were eight one-gallon bottles of water set in a row. The supplies were left by humanitarian-aid volunteers. **On the opposite slope they also left a camera, which, when triggered by the agent’s movement, started to record.**

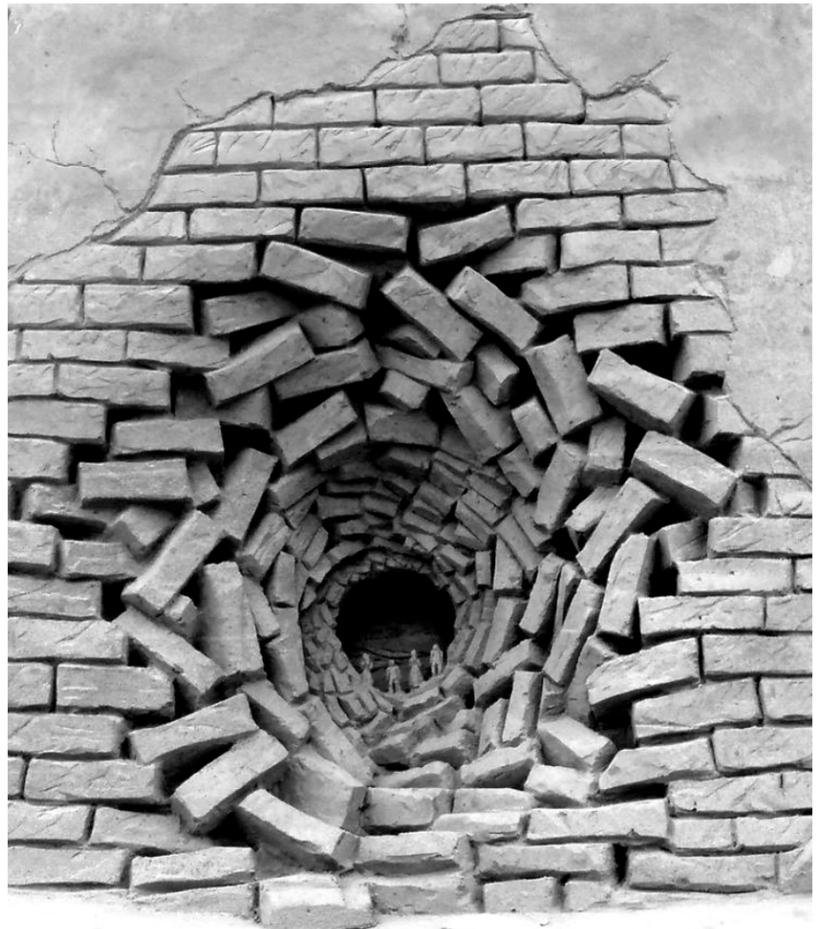
The agent, after scanning the hills, looking up and back down the trail, squatted to inspect the cache. The water bottles had hearts drawn on them, as well as uplifting messages written in Spanish: *Agua Pura, ¡Ánimo! ¡Que Vayan con Suerte!* He shifted his rifle and awkwardly readjusted his squat. Then he took out his knife and began lining up the water bottles. One by one, he stabbed them, sticking in his knife and then pulling it back out along with a little gulp of water. He stabbed all eight bottles. The water bled out, soaking the dirt.

The No More Deaths (NMD) report finds that, over a two-year period in just one small corridor of the Arizona desert, 3,586 water bottles left out for thirsty migrants were vandalized. After conducting a detailed geographical analysis and collecting video evidence, NMD concluded that Border Patrol agents were the most consistent culprit.

Even in winter in the Sonoran Desert there is almost no water. For a three-day walk—which is the shortest most migrants will make—it is impossible to carry sufficient water. Medical experts recommend, for these conditions, at least one and a half gallons per day. For a three-day walk, that’s almost forty pounds of water. Throw in food and clothes, and a migrant would have sixty pounds on their back, which, given the terrain, is unfeasible. Many carry one or two gallons. Most become desperately, dangerously thirsty after about two days of walking. Some fare worse. If they don’t find water, they are in danger of heat exhaustion, severe dehydration, and death.

The risk isn’t happenstance: US Border Patrol policy intentionally pushes migrants into crossing in regions where they are more likely to suffer and die. An analogous policy in the interior of the country would be rerouting a sidewalk to force pedestrians to hazard straight across a busy highway, and chasing them with armed helicopters as they do so.

A human right so inherent that it need not be articulated—or so one would think—is the right to water. The agent stabbing water bottles in the desert doesn’t come close to his victims, even though his actions (in concert with broader Border Patrol policy) results in the deaths of border crossers. His actions thus share something with those labeled as crimes against humanity—they are crimes against a people, or the idea of a people, and are motivated by political ideology. **-Continues on Page 15**



WALLS MUST FALL

As Palestinians in Gaza started the #GreatReturnMarch, migrants from Central America started their march towards the U.S.

From Palestine,

as part of a people whose majority is refugees and displaced persons because of Israel’s ongoing ethnic cleansing of our lands, we want to extend our solidarity.

We want to tell you that we are in struggle together with you.

We salute your March of the over 1500 migrants that challenge US racist and exclusivist migration policies that stop the people from crossing borders, depriving them of their basic rights to freedom of movement and rights as refugees. We recognize that most of you have been forced to leave your homes because of US foreign policies and oppressive political regimes backed by the United States and, we add, Israel as the one state that has since the seventies until today militarily and politically backed each and every coup, dictatorship and anti-peoples regime in Latin America.

As Palestinians we feel deeply connected to your experiences.

70 years ago, our Nakba (catastrophe) began when Israel established itself on the mass ethnic cleansing of our people and over half of our people have been, often at gunpoint, forced out of their homes and their lands for Israel to establish its apartheid regime. Since 1948 when entire villages were fleeing Israeli military aggression and massacres, until today, Israeli policies of occupation and colonization continue to expel our people by taking our lands and destroying our communities. Israeli repression, including ongoing invasions, night raids and large scale incarceration, aims to make live impossible. Half of the Palestinian male population passes at least once through Israeli prisons.

Israel has built an up to 8 meter high Wall around Gaza to besiege its population and around the West Bank villages and towns our people so that today we are allowed to access and use only 13% of our historic homeland.

"Wall" Continues on Page 16

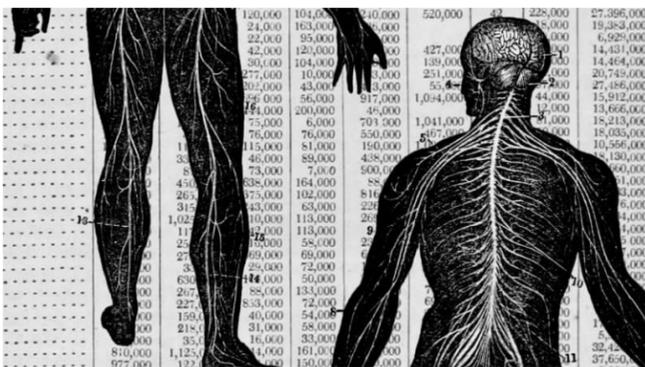
“Is curing patients a sustainable business model?” -Goldman Sachs analysts ask

One-shot cures for diseases are not great for business—more specifically, they’re bad for longterm profits—Goldman Sachs analysts noted in an April 10 report for biotech clients.

The investment banks’ report, titled “The Genome Revolution,” asks clients the touchy question: “Is curing patients a sustainable business model?” The answer may be “no,” according to follow-up information provided.

Analyst Salveen Richter and colleagues laid it out:

The potential to deliver “one shot cures” is one of the most attractive aspects of gene therapy, genetically engineered cell therapy, and gene editing. However, such treatments offer a very different outlook with regard to recurring revenue versus chronic therapies... While this proposition carries tremendous value for patients



and society, it could represent a challenge for genome medicine developers looking for sustained cash flow.

For a real-world example, they pointed to Gilead Sciences, which markets treatments for hepatitis C that have cure rates exceeding 90 percent. In 2015, the company’s hepatitis C treatment sales peaked at \$12.5 billion. But as more people were cured and there were fewer infected individuals to spread the disease, sales began to languish. Goldman Sachs analysts estimate that the treatments will bring in less than \$4 billion this year.

“[Gilead]’s rapid rise and fall of its hepatitis C franchise highlights one of the dynamics of an effective drug that permanently cures a disease, resulting in a gradual exhaustion of the prevalent pool of patients,” the analysts wrote.

The report noted that diseases such as common cancers—where the “incident pool remains stable”—are less risky for business.

To get around the sustainability issue overall, the report suggests that biotech companies focus on diseases or conditions that seem to be becoming more common and/or are already high-incidence. It also suggests that companies be innovative and constantly expanding their portfolio of treatments. This can “offset the declining revenue trajectory of prior assets.” Lastly, it hints that, as such cures come to fruition, they could open up more investment opportunities in treatments for “disease of aging.”

**-Beth Mole
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