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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feminicide and the Necropolitics of Latin American Migration in the United States

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ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the dialectic between the ordinary invisibility of feminicide crimes in the United States and the exceptional visibility of select others. Using analytic perspectives from feminist and anthropological perspectives, it highlights feminicide cases from the rural Midwestern United States and places them in the broader context of the on-going crisis of murdered women in the Americas. It argues that the violent murders of young white college-educated women are used instrumentally to deepen and advance immigration policy against racialized Latin American populations while continuing to render all women vulnerable to lethal intimate partner violence through public erasure and institutional impunity.

Keywords: Immigration, Intimate partner violence, Murdered women, Race, State complicity

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1. Introduction

In February 2024, national and international news heavily reported the murder of 22-year-old nursing student, Laken Riley in the United States. The young woman was jogging in the morning near the University of Georgia when she disappeared. When she did not return from her run, Riley's roommate reported her missing. Approximately one hour later, police found her lifeless body in a nearby forested park area. The suspect arrested in the case was 26-year-old José Antonio Ibarra. Ibarra is a Venezuelan national who entered the United States through the Southern border without official documentation in September 2022. He was detained for shoplifting, released, and living in Georgia about a mile from the crime scene at the time of the

murder (Sayers and Levenson 2024).[1] In November 2024, Ibarra was found guilty of Larken's murder and sentenced to life in prison (Chávez 2024).

The murder of Laken Riley, like the murders of all women whose lives are stolen by deliberate acts of gender violence, are horrifying and call for increased public attention and institutional justice. Unfortunately, most cases of young, murdered women in the United States go unnoticed in the news at national and international levels. Consider for example, the recent murder of 20-year-old Milan Jones, another young nursing student enrolled at Temple University that was covered only by local news around Philadelphia in June 2024. The arrested suspect was her boyfriend, 23-year-old Tymir Lackey, in what authorities called a probable case of "domestic violence" (Wright 2024). A similar lack of media attention in the recent murder of Tai'Vion Lathan, also an aspiring nursing student, provides another stark example. Tai Lathan was a 24-year-old trans woman who was found shot to death in an alley in Baltimore in August 2024. To date, no suspects have been identified or arrested (Elassar 2024). Her murder was not covered widely outside metro-city news in Maryland, although the case was publicized by Human Rights Campaign (Powell 2024).

How do we begin to account for the differences in the attention to and visibility of the murders of these three young women, one white and two Black, who were young and wanted to dedicate their professional lives to the well-being and care of others? What are the consequences of the heightened visibility of a few select murdered women cases and the invisibility of similar crimes against a majority of others? These are the two central questions I attempt to answer in the pages that follow through a qualitative feminist lens that concomitantly centers racialization, racism, and biopower, meaning the institutionalized and selectively deployed power over life and death of collective populations (Foucault 1998) in the United States.

In the pages that follow, I argue that feminicides, the murder of women by men in which gender is a central motivation for the crime, becomes visible in the United States only when young white women's violent deaths are mobilized strategically for necropolitical reasons, more specifically in debates surrounding Latin American migration to the U.S. To put it another way, the murders of individual women who belong to particular identity categories become consistently visible only when their dead bodies are used instrumentally, as semiotic vehicles for the construction of xenophobia and anti-immigrant policies and discourse in the United States. This intersectional necropolitics of racism and xenophobia that highlights cases of white women who are murdered by immigrant men from Latin America simultaneously ignores the alarming numbers of women, white and BIPOC, in the United States who are murdered by former and current husbands, boyfriends. It also simultaneously renders brown bodies of women (and children) often fleeing from violence in Latin America who to enter the US southern border, killable, what Agamben (1998) calls "bare life"—people without social recognition and legal rights.

This argument is developed through the following analytic steps concretized in the cases of three violent deaths of women in the rural Midwestern United States. First, we consider the establishment of feminicide as a legal category in the hemispheric Americas at the beginning of the 21st century and its anomalous, juridical invisibility in the United States. Then the article shows how the invisibility of feminicide crimes happens through semiotic erasure (Gal and Irvine 2019) to render the habitual and patterned murder of women unrecognized in legal systems of justice, unaccounted for in quantitative data, and absent from public discourse as a recognized social and political crisis in the country (French 2024a). This erasure of lethal gender violence is iteratively deepened for murdered women of color, highlighting a systematic instance of what Bonilla-

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Silva (2018) calls "racism without racists," meaning a color-blind structural inequality that privileges whiteness as the norm in the United States. In the case of feminicide, color-blind racism happens through the lack of circulating discourse, images, and concern about murdered women of color in legal, media, and governmental arenas. Racialized cases of feminicide in the United States have come to be deeply implicated in recent debates about immigration from Latin America in powerful political discourse, deployed or erased strategically depending upon the racial identity of the victims and the perpetrators. The article concludes by underscoring the interrelation of lethal gender violence, race, and the mechanisms by which vulnerable women and children are rendered chronically in danger of death in the contemporary US geopolitical landscape centered on migratory flows from the global south to north.

2. Locating Feminicide in the Americas and in United States

Feminicide is unrecognized legally, bureaucratically, and socially in the United States (French 2021), although it is recognized throughout the Western hemisphere and in Europe (French 2024b). The concept feminicide first emerged in contrast to the notion of homicide in the work of South African US-based feminist sociologist Diana Russell. She coined the concept to name the murder of women and girls because they are female (Radford and Russell 1992).

During the early 21st century feminist anthropological scholars, researchers, and activists in Latin America further developed careful analytic and legal attention to the crime of murdered women because of their gendered social identity through analyses of what they call the crime, *feminicidio*, translated as "feminicide" in English (French 2024b). In particular, Mexican feminists' activism, advocacy, and scholarship centered on the alarming number of feminicides of young women working along the US Southern border in urban Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Between 1993 and 2005, over 400 women were found murdered in the area and at least 137 of them showed clear signs of sexual violence. (Washington Office on Latin America 2005). Marcela Lagarde y de los Rios, Mexican feminist anthropologist and activist, highlights the role of state agents in allowing such recurrent high numbers of murdered women to continue without regular investigations, arrests, and convictions by the legal system: "Feminicide occurs when the authorities fail to efficiently carry out their duties to prevent and punish the killing of women and thus create an environment of impunity" (2003, 1). When law enforcement regularly fails to investigate gendered murders of women, arrest suspects, and courts fail to prosecute cases, leaving perpetrators at large, a system of legal and social indifference to the systematic gendered murder of women follows. Accordingly, a legal system that allows feminicides to continue without fear of prosecution emboldens such crimes to continue without consequence. When gender-based murders are unabated, it demonstrates the state's failure to project the rights of women within its borders. From Legarde's cogent perspective then, feminicide includes state complicity and on-going impunity for the systematic murder of women.

Feminist scholars' and activists' bold and persistent advocacy in Latin America has mobilized this understanding of the state's responsibility in gendered murder cases to push for legal recognition and mechanisms in the justice system to prosecute feminicide cases. There have been many successes at this level. Costa Rica became the first country in the world to legally recognize feminicide as a punishable crime in 2007. During the following ten years, 17 Latin American countries (all except Cuba and Haiti) named the crime and developed a juridical process to prosecute the femicide/feminicide against women (Dues and Gonzalez 2018, 32). The United Nations recognizes feminicide as a global crisis that happens in every country of the world (Laurent et al. 2013).

The United States is an exception; feminicide does not exist as a legal category in the country. There is no governmental judicial mechanism to count and track gender-based murder nor is there any systematic prosecution of the crime that remains largely invisible in official public discourse and national politics (French 2024a). Accordingly, there are thousands of unrecognized and unsolved feminicides in the United States. The

unsolved murder of Tammy J. Zywicki in 1992 is a paradigmatic example. We will follow it here in relation to other murders of women that happened in the same rural region of the country where this author lives and works.

Image one: Tammy J. Zywicki

Photo: Courtesy of Tim Shoon

Tammy Zywicki (1971-1992) was on her way to Grinnell College in rural Iowa to begin her senior year as a Spanish major when her car broke down on Interstate 80 outside of Chicago on August 23, 1992. Several witnesses reported seeing Tammy near her car on the side of the west bound road. When she did not arrive at college the following day, her mother, JoAnne Zywicki, called the police to file a missing person's report. Nine days later on September 1, Tammy's body was found wrapped in a red blanket on the side of the road of Interstate 44, some 600 miles from where she was abducted. She was stabbed repeatedly, sexually violated, and dental records were used to identify her body (Boyd 2022).

More than 30 years after Tammy was murdered, not a single suspect has been arrested. The state is implicated as a responsible party in this feminicide, as in thousands of others, that remain unsolved and unprosecuted in the United States. At the time when Tammy's disappearance was reported to police by her mother, they failed to investigate for three days, suggesting that she "probably ran off with her boyfriend," although she did not have one (Riddle 2015). Such framing and negligence by law enforcement underscore how gender and gender roles are central factors in feminicide crimes, which are unexamined officially in the 4,936 known murders of women in the United States in 1992 (French 2024b).

While the state failed and continues to fail in recognizing, prioritizing, and prosecuting feminicide crimes in the United States, on very few occasions the disappearance and murder of select women comes to national attention in the media. In this way, Tammy's abduction and feminicide is also illustrative of this article's concerns with how feminicide intersects with color-blind racism. When Tammy disappeared, a nation-wide hunt for her began in the media; her image rightly circulated everywhere in efforts to find her. Her abduction made national news as did the discovery of her murder. On the anniversary of her death decades later, the national popular magazine, *People*, recently covered her unsolved murder in 2021 (French 2021) as did CBS News Chicago in 2023 (Edwards, Harrington, and Van Sickle 2023). Tammy's memory and justice for her murder are still culturally visible—as they should be. This is often not the case for other murdered women. When violent feminicides by unknown perpetrators strike young, white, middle-class students, the individual

murders matter socially. They are visible in the media as individual, horrific cases. However, these individual cases are not recognized as connected to the murder of other young women because of the patterned, gendered aspects of the crime that make them feminicides (French 2021). The structural threads of connections among power, state negligence, and men's domination over women's bodies remain largely invisible (French 2024a) as do the even higher number murdered Black, Indigenous, and Latina women in the United States (Petrosky et al. 2017). Women's race intersects with the visibility of their gendered murders by men.

3. A Tale of Two (Possible) Feminicides and Color-Blind Racism

The way that race impacts crucial and necessary media attention to young women who lose their lives violently is laid bare in the cases of the violent deaths of Mollie Tibbets (1998-2018) and Sadie Alvarado (1998-2018), two violent deaths of young women in the same region of the country. Mollie Tibbets' and Sadie Alvarado's lives and deaths were separated only by a few miles and a few days in Iowa, a rural state with a total population of 3.2 million people, 89 percent of whom are white (United States Census 2024). The differences in visibility and framing of their deaths, by which I mean the implicit expressions which set paths for habitual and naturalized interpretations of race that are central to contemporary structures of inequality in the US (Bonilla-Silva 2018: 54), bring into the fore some of the mechanisms by which color-blind racism functions in the United States in ways that intersect with gender-based violence (GBV).

When considered from an intersectional feminist approach that brings gender and class into an analysis of race in feminicides, we see how the violent deaths of young, educated white women, especially at the hands of men of color are circulated widely across the nation. At the same time, women of color who die under violent and suspicious circumstances, even at the hands of a white partner, remain in the shadows of reporting and public attention. In other words, the whiteness of young women who are victims of murder remains a naturalized public concern when men of color are implicated in the crime.[2] These individual murders are conceptually kept apart from the broader crisis of feminicides for all women who are most likely to be killed by a romantic partner (Petrosky et al. 2017), especially vulnerable to these crimes are women of color in the United States. The specific coverage around the deaths of Mollie and Sadie demonstrates these trends.

Like Tammy Zywicki, Mollie Tibbetts was a young, beautiful, white college student who disappeared along a road in the rural United States, this time in Iowa, near interstate 80. Mollie, like Laken Riley whose feminicide marks our entry point into this analysis, left the house for a run in the early evening. When she did not show up for work the next day, on July 18, 2018, her family called police to report her missing. The search quickly became a national concern, including robust coverage on national news and billboards posted along highways in neighboring states in attempts to find her. During the 33 days that Mollie was missing, a reward of $300,000 was offered and over 2,300 people provided information to police to no avail (Donavan 2018).

CBS reporter Adriana Diaz highlighted the national attention given to Mollie's case, at the same time questioning the lack of attention to thousands of missing people in the United States who remain mostly unknown. In her interview with Mollie's father, Rob Tibbetts explained how his anguish become a national sentiment: "You know, as somebody put it, it's [Mollie's case] the all-American girl who lives in a Norman Rockwell community, in love with the boy next door, vanishes into thin air, and so 'poof,' it does not make sense" (CBS Mornings 2018). In other words, the circumstances of Mollie's disappearance and her "All-American" identity were at the core of the justly intense concern for her well-being across the country. Whiteness is the taken-for-granted norm in the cultural notion of the "all-American" girl (Frankenberg 1993). Mollie, like Tammy Zywicki, was a young, white, smart, educated woman with a bright future that someone

[2] There is a long history of public concern about the possibility of sexual violence against white women by men of color in the context of slavery, abolition, and lynching in the United States that is outside the scope of this article and merits further discussion and analysis.

violently extinguished. These all-to-regular violent and unexplained murders of "all-American girls" has become what Alice Bolin calls an American obsession with "dead girls" in literature and popular culture: "It's clear we love the Dead Girl, enough to rehash and reproduce her story, to kill her again and again, but not enough to see a pattern" (2018: 2).

While the search continued for Mollie Tibbetts, local news in Iowa announced that the body of another young woman was found along a rural road on August 4, 2018. The few local and on-line headlines are telling. State news reported: "The Body of a white [sic] woman in her 20s discovered in rural Lee County is not Mollie Tibbetts, officials say" (Gehr 2018). Here, the dead woman is raced incorrectly. National coverage hardly existed; when it did, on-line platforms replicated a similar framing: "Woman's Body Found in Lee County, Iowa is Not Mollie Tibbetts" (heavy.com 2018). The victim remains unnamed; only acquiring social recognition in relation to Tibbets's absence.

Necropolitics, a politics centered on work of death linked to race, according to Mbembe structures life in the contemporary nation-state (2020, 66). The efficacy of modern necropolitics is marked on the lifeless body stripped of its subjectivity and identity, as we see in the case of the second young woman whose body was found on a rural road in Iowa. Indeed, the leading fact about the nameless deceased woman discovered along a rural road was that she was not Mollie Tibbetts, an object defined only in relation to another dead woman.

So began the erasure of the life and death of Sadie Alvarado, whose last name begins to point to a Latinx identity often racialized in the United States. The 20-year-old work-class woman left a social gathering with her boyfriend, Damian Hamman, in the evening of August 4, 2018. He claimed the couple began fighting in the car he was driving when Sadie suddenly jumped from the car as it was moving full speed down a dark road. Sadie was unable to tell her version of the story because she died. Hamman then continued 45 miles home without stopping and only returned to the scene of the fight the next day to look for his partner (Bauer 2018).

The lack of coverage at the national level and lack of scrutiny around Sadie's suspicious death brings into focus the ways that the untimely loss of young women of color is of little social importance in the media, even as her father called attention to the suspicious nature of Sadie's fate, in much the same way Mollie's father did. Ruben Alvardo questioned:

You just see her jump out and you go on for 45 miles, home? And you come back, what, 12 hours later looking for her? So yeah, I'm a little angry…Maybe she was a little injured. Maybe she needed some help. Maybe she would've still been here, still be here with us. That's the thing I don't know. That's what I want to know (Bauer 2018).

Public apathy about this suspicious death is deepened by the political reality that feminicide is not recognized as a legal category in the United States and such potential crimes when a man violently injures or murders his female partner are misrecognized as instances of some personal issue of domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

Domestic violence is a form of feminicide precisely because gender roles and relationships are at the core of a man killing a woman with whom he is romantically involved (French 2024b); as such they are crimes of collective concern and institutional responsibility. The intersection of feminicide with race in the United States is laid bare in a recent Center for Disease Control study that found half of all "homicides" of women recorded in the US from 2003 to 2014 were committed by an intimate partner with higher rates among Black and Native women (Petrosky et al. 2017). To put it another way, women of color are more likely than white women to be victims of feminicide committed by their intimate partners, not random strangers, who are men. These are the trends in the United States as well as other parts of the world (United Nations 2012). Nevertheless, as we will see below, the immigration status of the alleged perpetrators becomes an ideological focal point when young white women's dead bodies are mobilized for a politics of exclusion and domination around issues of migration.

4. Necropolitics, Murdered Women, and the Latin American Immigration Debate

Having examined the ways that feminicide is an invisible legal and social crime in the United States and outlined some of the ways that color-blind racism privileges whiteness and structures media attention around missing and murdered young women, we now turn to consider in what contexts individual feminicides become momentarily visible and to what ends. I posit that the invisibility of feminicide in the US political and social landscape becomes *temporarily suspended* only when the bodies of particular murdered women are used for strategic and repressive political ends, a decidedly necropolitical project. In the work of disciplining life, death, and the human body for sustaining power in the politics of the nation-state (66), Mbembe underscores that race is the central organizing and constitutive social category for those who can be killed and those who are allowed to live (6). Applying his theory to the specifics of the US nation-state, white women's dead bodies from feminicide crimes are mobilized after their deaths *as instruments* for the further articulation of racist and xenophobic state practices against vulnerable immigrant BIPOC bodies from Latin America. To put it another way, in much the same way that Snorton and Haritaworn (2013) argue that trans women of color come to matter only in the afterlife of their murder, an intersectional understanding of the gendered racialization of all women's bodies means that feminicides of young white women become material tools to deepen racism and xenophobia while ignoring the persistent and overwhelmingly large threat all women face for being murdered by their husbands and boyfriends. In fact, from 2018–2021, 3,991 female victims of intimate partner homicide were voluntarily reported to the National Violent Death Reporting System. Of those, 49.3% were White, 29.9% were Black or African American, Black, 14.8% were Latino Hispanic and 6.0% comprised all other races and ethnicities (Rowh and Jack 2024), showing that the clear and overwhelming threat to women are most often men whom they know intimately.

While the crisis in intimate feminicides is the biggest threat to women's lives in the United States in terms of violent crime, the necropolitical project in US nationalism turns the lens toward immigration status and race of the perpetrator. The hypervisibility of perpetrators' immigration status and race becomes salient, as in the murder of Mollie Tibbets and Laken Riley, whose feminicide was a point of entry into this analysis. On August 21, 2018, the FBI arrested Cristhian Bahena Rivera as a suspect in the Mollie Tibbetts feminicide. He led police to her hidden body in a rural cornfield near the site of her disappearance (Morris 2021). Immediately following, images of Bahena Rivera circulated on local, regional, national, and international media (see Image 2 below).

The semiotics of Bahena's last names, skin color, and prison uniform in the above image circulated broadly in the media point to an implicitly potent racialized and criminal notion of Latino identity.

This potent racialized representation was intensified through political discourse directed *not* toward considering the crisis in feminicides of diverse women throughout the United States. Rather, political attention about Mollie's case focused on a possible threat to "All-American" women by unauthorized migration at the southern border in the United States, over 1,300 miles from the crime scene in Iowa where the perpetrator had been living for several years. Then President Donald Trump and other national leaders used Mollie's horrible death as a vehicle to focus on the immigration status of Bahena Rivera:

> 'Just this week we learned that Iowa authorities… they charged an illegal alien in the murder of a college student– Mollie Tibbetts', the President said. He later continued, criticizing the media, 'When they found out that it was this horrible, illegal immigrant that viciously killed her, all of the sudden that story went down' (sic) (Tatum 2018).

Image 2: Cristhian Bahena Rivera Arrest Photo

Photo courtesy of Iowa Department of Public Safety.

President Trump's repeated use "illegal alien" here and elsewhere became the vector for an attack on Democrats about broader immigration policies at the Southern border; in this way Mollie's death became a political instrument in directions that had no relationship to the cause of her murder, namely on-going state neglected lethal GBV against women of all ages, classes, and races in the United States, regularly committed by their partners. Trump's strategic use of an "all-American" college girl's tragic murder was intensified in the words of other powerful national leaders like Charles Grassley. United States Senator Chuck Grassley, elected to Congress for 44 consecutive years and then Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, wrote a public letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen demanding public access to Bahena Rivera's immigration records. Grassley asserted:

> Yesterday, officials charged a 24-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico with the murder of missing Iowan, Mollie Tibbetts. According to reports, Cristhian Bahena-Rivera, a Mexican national who allegedly entered the United States illegally, followed Tibbetts while she was running and abducted her. Rivera has apparently resided in the Brooklyn area for the last four to seven years, yet little information is known about the man's immigration and criminal history, or employment details (Grassley 2018).

Here Grassley draws attention to Bahena's Mexicanness, a national identity with a long history of racialization in the US (Hill 2008) and his migration status as key facts in Mollie's murder. Grassley then uses Mollie's loss as a vehicle to question Bahena's employment record. Following these necropolitical formations, Grassley invokes broadly the prevention of future murders of women like Mollie, young white college students, to increased militarization of the Southern border and state surveillance of hiring practices.

We must prevent murders such as Tibbetts' from ever occurring again. At a minimum, Congress must increase law enforcement personnel at the border, aggressively modernize relevant technology and infrastructure, and eliminate the potential for fraud and abuse in our E-Verify system (Grassley 2018).

In this instance, on-going state negligence in recognizing feminicide as a gendered crime and state complicity in allowing the crime to continue with impunity are rendered invisible while simultaneously rendering visible an optional federal program to surveille the immigration status of potential employees during the hiring process (E-Verify). The consequence continues to make feminicide an unknown crime in the United States and functions to support restrictive immigration policies in the US, primarily directed at vulnerable Latin American populations attempting to enter the United States who are often fleeing political and structural violence in their countries of origin.

This on-going necropolitical project that simultaneously renders women habitually at risk for lethal gender violence in the United States while using the deaths of a very few specific young white women to advance a restrictive and xenophobic immigration policy circulated powerfully in the 2024 election cycle. Politicians returned to the Laken Riley murder on the campaign trail, erasing feminicide and highlighting immigration. Presidential candidate Donald Trump invoked Riley's death instrumentally in his Republican nomination acceptance speech in July 2024 as he has done throughout the campaign:

> 'What Joe Biden has done on our border is a crime against humanity and the people of this nation for which he will never be forgiven,' Trump charged, alleging that Riley 'would be alive today if Joe Biden had not willfully and maliciously eviscerated the borders of the United States and set loose thousands and thousands of dangerous criminals into our country' (Fox 5 Atlanta Digital Team 2024).

Using a dead white woman's body as a tool to invoke human rights language of collective US victimhood and crimes against humanity due to immigration policies shows the trajectory of necropolitical ends. It is a dual politics of death that renders the majority of vulnerable migrant lives seeking refuge in the United States into dangerous bands of lawless criminals that must be eliminated, all the while ignoring broader patterns of feminicide that make women chronically unsafe in the United States. The necropolitical state project has efficacy across the political divide in the US to date. On March 11, 2024, the United States House of Representatives passed the Laken Riley Act. It is not an act to identify or prosecute feminicide; instead, it legislated that:

> President Biden should prevent another murder like that of Laken Riley by ending the catch-and-release of illegal aliens, increasing immigration enforcement, detaining and removing criminal aliens, reinstating the Remain in Mexico policy, ending his abuse of parole authority, and securing the United States borders (US Congress 2024).

5. Conclusion: State Power to Let Women Die and the Intimacy of Gendered Violence

As we have seen through a close examination of three violent deaths of young white women, Tammy Zywicki, Mollie Tibbetts, and Laken Riley, along with the suspicious violent death of a young Latina women, Sadie Alvarado, public and state attention to select cases of murdered women does not venture into the terrain of what are clearly larger patterns of feminicide crimes in the United States and in the world. We see that in the United States, feminicide victims are literally erased from the political and legal national justice system—an exception in the American hemisphere as well as in the Global North. The state fails to protect the rights of women when it lets women die at the hands of on-going and unabated gender violence by enabling a system of impunity for future crimes against women.

At the same time, a few young white women's feminicides murdered by perpetrators of color from Latin America are deployed strategically by powerful political actors to justify and intensify violence directed at migrant populations from Latin America entering into and within the United States. This sovereign power of

the state to determine who lives and who dies is an articulation of necropolitics constituted through the racialized bodies of women. In fact, the use of harsh conditions of migration prevention through deterrence in the 1990s (de Leon 2015) forces migrants into the hostile terrain of the Sonoran desert where women and children are more likely to die than men attempting to cross (de Leon 2015).

In Jan 2025 the United States Congress passed the Larken Riley Act and President Donald Trump signed it into law on Jan 29, 2025. The law requires that

> the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into custody any alien. . . charged with, arrested for, convicted of, who admits having committed, or admits to committing acts which constitute the essential elements of any burglary, theft, larceny, shoplifting, or assault of a law enforcement officer offense, or any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person (US Congress 2025).

The law focuses on undocumented migrants who have arrest records in the United States; plainly it does not address any GBV or feminicide crimes in any capacity.

As these developments continue to unfold, the United Nations reminds us of the on-going crisis of feminicides around the world, including the US. In 2023, "60 percent of the almost 85,000 women and girls killed intentionally during the year were murdered by their intimate partners or other family members. In other words, an average of 140 women and girls worldwide lost their lives every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative. Women and girls everywhere continue to be affected by this extreme form of gender-based violence and no region is excluded" (2024, 3). The majority of the women killed in the United States and around the world are not killed by unknown undocumented immigrants who prey on women. They are most likely to be killed by husbands, boyfriends, and/or family members. There is no correlation between immigration status and perpetration of GBV. Men across every social demographic—race, class, gender, age, religious identity-- commit GBV, including unrecognized feminicide in the United States.

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