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# DISMEMBERED BODIES OF COLOR: U.S. Imperialisms in the Pulse Shooting

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*“What frameworks can young people use when ‘democracy’ is the language of U.S. statecraft and expansionism, ‘women’s rights’ and ‘gay rights’ are the alibis of imperial interventions and occupation, and cultural and religious difference are promoted by the neoliberal, multicultural state, particularly under Obama?”—Sunaina Maira*

Within the first three months of 2017, the onslaught of blatant politics fostered by the already infamous Trump Era had an irrefutably sweeping effect on U.S. political landscapes and corresponding analysis/deconstruction of said landscape. From inauguration, the streets were incessantly packed as codified white supremacists filled government positions and Twitter seemingly became the primary forum for presidential addresses: in a nutshell, the Post-Apocalyptic Future had arrived. Thousands have been placed in migrant purgatory, children being shot at by police were now getting arrested, and conversations of Cold War ruptures between the U.S., Russia, and North Korea were a constant. Yet, the question is, did anything change? While perhaps brash, are the political manifestations following January 20th 2017 informed by an internal framework that drastically differs from what guided the Obama administration for the past eight years?

This preface intends to serve as a reminder of the calculated divisiveness manifest in the multicultural white supremacy put forward by the Obama administration and the violent ramifications still (invisibly) in place as a result of their liberal sheen. In the same way Bush was

followed by Obama, there were movements to pre-emptively impeach Trump and replace him with dedicated Zionist/ War-Advocate Hillary Clinton due to her Likable Liberal Appeal. In this paper, I will systematically unpack the Pulse Shooting of June 2016 through the political context described above. I contend that this moment in history is the perfect 21st century encapsulation of liberal presidential perversion that provided an exemplary foundation for Trump's fascist assumption to excel from day one.

Ultimately, it becomes important to bear in mind that there is a distinct link between the political perversions either fortified or initiated during the Obama administration that are being directly carried forward and bolstered by the Trump administration today. These are not fluke continuations or indirect-but-related happenings. They are long-standing, violent, calculated policies and wars meticulously brain-stormed from the inception of this nation with Obama and Trump serving as mere vessels re-shaping these politics to suit the context of the times. They are given the illusion of difference to feign change and evade discovery, but they are the same profit, the same policies, the same deaths.

### (INTRODUCTION) المقدمة

On June 12, 2016 at 2:09 AM Pulse nightclub posted the following to their Facebook: "Everyone get out and keep running." What followed was deemed by public outlets as the nation's deadliest mass shooting.

The facts: 49 were killed, over 50 wounded. Omar Mateen—the perpetrator—was of Afghan descent and was also Muslim. Pulse is a gay nightclub in Orlando.

The News:<sup>1</sup> "Radical Islam's Loathing for Gays Fueled Madman to Carry out Orlando Terrorist Attack"<sup>2</sup>

The Nation, the World: LGBT<sup>3</sup> communities held vigils in which they mourn those who lost their lives, Extremism and Conservative Intolerance are socio-politically posited as society's poison and "LGBT Safety" becomes the Nation's "#1 Concern." Mateen's potential affiliations with ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Al-Qadea are all thoroughly and publicly deconstructed.<sup>4</sup>

((Invisible Facts)): A majority of those killed were of Black, Latino, and Afro-Latino descent, including a high number of Puerto Rican

immigrants.<sup>5</sup> Mateen was a hopeful police officer as well as an employee of G4S, one of the world's largest private security corporations with offices in over 100 countries as well as surveillance projects and alleged political abuses in Palestine, the Philippines, and most recently, the Standing Rock DAPL Resistance Site.<sup>6</sup> The FBI was unable to confirm Mateen had a relationship to any of the previously mentioned U.S.-deemed Terror Organizations. Furthermore, dozens of people came out testifying that Mateen was in fact Gay and his motives were most likely *personal*.<sup>7,8</sup>

Regardless, security industries see a mass influx of funding as well as militarization all in the name of LGBT Protection.<sup>9</sup> Government initiatives targeting Arab, South-Asian, and Muslim populations in the United States saw a dramatic increase in resources as well as a general public support for the persecution of “homegrown terrorism” by means of intensive racial profiling, increased surveillance of previously mentioned communities, and escalation of the quickness to act on suspicion.<sup>10</sup> LGBT communities also began intentionally seeking out the support of police forces for Pride celebrations, including but not limited to rainbow flag NYPD cars proudly proclaiming “Pride/Equality/Peace.”<sup>11</sup>

The Quandaries: What are the political implications of the Pulse shooting and its aftermath? How was Mateen's identity warped to sustain the War on Terror while simultaneously simplifying his potential want to embody the very State/infrastructural violence he was presumably at odds with? How were the Queer Muslims who came out after Pulse co-opted to recreate Zionist Pinkwashing Projects? How were the Dead of Pulse whitewashing thus erased the sociopolitical context that, in fact, left them more likely to be killed than their Gay, White, Cis, Mainland,<sup>12</sup> Citizen counterparts and how does this in turn complicate the increased presence of police in QTPOC communities? Finally, how can we understand the world events that happened during and after Pulse as codifications of the United States intent to prey on the Blood of the Other? In particular, what are the startling connections between Pulse, Palestine, Zionist Colonization, and U.S. Imperialist/ Domestic Projects? Allow ourselves to consider the Pulse shooting as a Nexus of several distinct yet interrelated State Projects and let us take this piece by piece.

## (OMAR MATEEN) عمر متين

Omar Mateen's stakes in Pulse were quite complicated: The son of two Afghan-Muslim immigrants, Mateen was born and grew up in New York before his family relocated to Florida during his childhood. During the aftermath of Pulse, it came out that Mateen 1) was previously married to a partner who presumably divorced him for battery 2) more recently began observing Islam and 3) was potentially queer.<sup>13</sup> However, mainstream press circumvented this nuance by essentializing his narrative. Quick to center his ethno-religious background, conflicting news sources either posed Mateen as 1) a deranged, misogynistic jihadist who condemned Homosexuality, or 2) an unstable gay Muslim who struggled with his own sexuality, or 3) a mixture of the two.<sup>14</sup>

Invoking what Jasbir Puar calls the 21st century "barometer" of a nation's modernity, the mainstream narrative irrefutably placed weight on Mateen's religion, his ethnicity, and stoked the stereotypical associations of Islam with homophobia, ISIS, and backwardness to make sense of the shooting and strategically rally LGBT communities into militaristic action: "'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated."<sup>15</sup> Here Puar contends there is an active creation/exploitation of Terrorist Bodies to Other Brown Muslim nations for their supposed inability to accept homosexuality while simultaneously prompting U.S. Imperial/ Zionist ventures through their conversely more accepting mindsets. With regard to Mateen, there was a quick move to use Pulse as a platform to vilify him, Islam, Afghanistan, and SWANA as a whole for their presumed homophobia, ultimately *valorizing* the United States through its swift and sympathetic response (both socially as well as governmentally).

In order for the caliber of Puar's analysis to be concretely translated, it is essential to bear in mind how Obama manipulated this exact rhetoric early on in his presidency. Barack Obama, elected for his staunch commitment to dissolving U.S. imperial ventures, *expanded* U.S. militarism in Afghanistan by approximately 70,000 troops in February 2009.<sup>16,17,18</sup> Excerpts from Obama's 2009 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech give light to the seemingly principled, moral ground from which Obama justified his extension of the very military operations he so adamantly condemned before assuming office:

I do not bring with me today a definitive solution to the problems of war. . . . We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth: We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There will be times when nations—acting individually or in concert—will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified. . . . So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths—that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly. Concretely, we must direct our effort to the task that President Kennedy called for long ago. “Let us focus,” he said, “on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions.” A gradual evolution of human institutions. . . . We have borne this burden not because we seek to impose our will. We have done so out of enlightened self-interest—because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if others’ children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity. . . . America has never fought a war against a democracy, and our closest friends are governments that protect the rights of their citizens. No matter how callously defined, neither America’s interests—nor the world’s—are served by the denial of human aspirations.<sup>19</sup>

While perhaps he was elected to disband U.S. war projects, Obama’s careful explanation of 1) the regrettable inevitability of war, 2) the unquestionable responsibility on just nations to save Others and 3) the need for pragmatic de-escalation instead of immediate termination all provided the perfect binding materials to bridge conservative and liberals alike; emotional, poignant words to allay anti-war voters yet brash, cut-throat military operations to assuage the State’s needs. As acting face to the State, Obama was the principal instrument through which the State was able to brand its imperial ventures and, for the 21st century multicultural-wave so strongly at play, Obama’s approach was artful and unstoppable.

Consequently, how does the saturation of the Pulse shooting in a liberal luster become the microcosm demonstrating exactly how 1) domestic calamities and their corresponding ramifications are strategically fractured and 2) their corresponding transnational legs are rightfully brutalized as a result. In short, Puar’s analyses comes to life between the politically-charged *moral* condemnation of Omar Mateen—the resulting retaliation enacted as structural violence against SWANA/ or QTPOC communities—and the simultaneous *moral* justification of the continued invasion of Afghanistan.

Yet, despite all the efforts to simplify Mateen's intentions, there were other facts of equal if not *more* relevance: Omar Mateen had an extensive past in correctional facilities, had wanted to be a police officer, and was a nearly 10 year employee of G4S.<sup>20,21</sup> In a nutshell, Omar Mateen consistently sought out occupations that recreated securitization, militarization, white supremacy, the Prison Industrial Complex, the War on Terror, Zionism, and Imperialism. The significance and incongruity within these posited characterizations of Omar Mateen is not merely a surface-level difference but instead reveals to us that Mateen may have in fact been the *purest* embodiment of American Ideals, a product of the mix of his complex individual experiences but also the larger social product of U.S. Patriarchal Gun Rhetoric.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, while Mateen was perhaps enacting the most direct form of U.S. White Masculinist Patriotism, his actions were distorted as Radical, framed as a norm of Islam/the Middle East, and legitimized the need for Intervention both domestically and abroad. News reports consistently emphasized the supposed connection between Mateen and ISIS and capitalized on Homonationalist<sup>23</sup> rhetoric to cater to Liberal Mainstream understandings of SWANA as backwards, dogmatic, and homophobic. However, even the most basic exploration of the US-Deemed Terror Orgs Mateen was accused of being affiliated with maintain political identities that are not only different from each other (ethnically, religiously, structurally, politically, and geographically) but entirely antithetical to each other: Hamas is a Sunni-Muslim militia group almost entirely based in Palestine, primarily the Gaza strip. While considered a terrorist organization in the United States, they were formally elected to office in 2006 and play a strong, direct role in the political landscape of Palestinian representational politics. Hezbollah is a Shia militia group based mostly in Lebanon, specifically the south of the country. Their primary political movement is rooted in anti-Zionist/anti-Imperialist defense and they, too, hold democratically elected office within the Lebanese parliament. ISIS claims to be a Sunni Muslim group notoriously silent regarding Israeli militarism and currently *battling* Hezbollah in Syria. All are predominantly *Arab*—not Afghan, despite Mateen being the son of Afghan Muslim immigrants.

Of course, the point is not to imply Mateen was affiliated with one organization over the other but instead to highlight that the political particularities of each group (and Mateen's subjectivity) are *entirely irrelevant*.

This is of essential importance considering no concrete justifications were given to validate pairing Mateen with Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, or ISIS outside of what has since become a notoriously edited 911-call-transcript in which Mateen presumably declared his allegiance to God (and only God). Not only had the transcript been severely redacted before its release, however, news source comparisons confirmed that it was *literally changed* over time.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, these buzzword accusations clearly operate on much simpler levels: they redirect from the fact that Mateen's potential internalized masculinist perversions *learned in the United States* played the most direct role in his actions.

Again, paralleling this seemingly individualized context with the structural ongoing in the country at the time are absolutely essential. *Following Pulse*, there was a widespread reframing of securitization and surveillance programs in the country—specifically a program entitled “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE). However, CVE had previously received little support from mainstream liberal masses and was simultaneously suspended in congressional purgatory due to dispute over both implementation and the potential efficacy of the program.<sup>25</sup>

This hesitancy surrounding the development and implementation of new policing programs and surveillance databases was undoubtedly tied to the universal shock over the various police-murders of Black youth including but not limited to Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, and Philando Castile. From 2013, the widespread condemnation of police forces in turn normalized a general hesitancy toward the expansion of police programming and related security ventures.<sup>26</sup> While perhaps critical politics of State-complexes, violence, policing, and war were not streamlined into the mainstream anti-police rhetoric, there *was* a saliency of the moral question of the efficacy of policing and in turn reluctance regarding State-expansion. Similarly, as highlighted in the congress report, there was an awareness that community members themselves *would need* intensive affective cultivation as part of the methodology of implementing new programs.<sup>27</sup> However, the complexities of Pulse and capitalization on prevailing liberal Islamophobic rhetoric in turn re-opened the door for pilot surveillance programs police-department growth, and institutional development of *new* bodies specifically related to surveillance/ terror.



For example, Alameda County (California)—who have already gained visibility for hosting the annual Urban Shield convenings in which private security, police forces, and militaries from around the world converge to exchange strategies and sell weapons—voted to increase police funding by approximately 3 million dollars *within 3 days* of the Pulse shooting under the guise of “LGBT safety.”<sup>28,29</sup> It is important to note Alameda is home to both San Francisco—the heart of the Gay White Elite—as well as Silicon Valley—the heart of Tech-Security Expansion. Similarly, Pride celebrations all across the country eagerly increased police presence *including counterterrorism forces* and LGBTQ clubs throughout the U.S. subjected patrons—particularly patrons of color—to search/frisk tactics.<sup>30,31,32</sup>

The discursive construction of Mateen with one or all of the previously-mentioned groups he had no affiliations with provides a digestible explanation for his actions as well as the perfect alibi for structural enactments of otherwise taboo policies. By blanketing Mateen’s masculinist/nationalist aspirations with orientalist buzzwords—such as “jihadist,” “terrorist,” “Muslim gunman,” etc—the resounding structural shifts that emerged in relation to the Pulse shooting are in turn rendered invisible, or, at worst visible but justified. Furthermore, the fact that Mateen potentially vied to represent the very structures distancing themselves from him is the missing link to understanding 1) the overlapping masculinist, violent roots of the structures themselves, 2) the deranged warping of a supposed national tragedy into a convenient cover for a political agenda and 3) the lengths these institutions would go in order to maintain these facades.

Lastly, the fact that Mateen’s father is a former FBI-informant magically evaded public attention during the hype of Pulse and became common knowledge only two years later.<sup>33</sup> Seddiq Mateen—who has central ties to the domestic politics of Afghanistan—provided information to the U.S. government from 2005–2011. Of Pashtun descent, it cannot be taken lightly that Mateen Sr. was collaborating with the U.S. at a time that the U.S.’s militaristic aggression towards Pakistan and Afghanistan were at all-time highs. Furthermore, his over-enthusiastic condemnation of his son’s actions as Homophobia principles certainly require further scrutinization:

We were in downtown Miami, Bayside, people were playing music. And he saw two men kissing each other in front of his wife and kid, and he got

very angry. . . They were kissing each other and touching each other, and he said: ‘Look at that. In front of my son, they are doing that.’<sup>34</sup> As a father, I don’t approve of what he did. What he did was completely act of terrorist, United States is my house, United States is the house that is always taking care of me, my family, all the people from my homeland. . . They have a good life [here]. . . Especially all the US people, I love them so much and dearly. I condemn what he did. . . If I had caught him, I would have arrested him myself.<sup>35</sup>

Is it coincidental that a 10-year plus government collaborator was interviewed and happened to say the words that would become the foundation of the public’s outcry?

(*QUEER MUSLIMS*) "مسلمين" "قوير"

Immediately after the Pulse shootings, several queer-identified Muslims took to mainstream media to attempt to contextualize their struggle. Perhaps an affirmation of the universal ignorance to UndocuQueer Narratives, NBC referenced this phenomenon as the already taken “Coming out of the shadows.” Nonetheless, several major news outlets broadcasted snippets of interviews presumably in an attempt to portray the everyday struggle of the Queer Muslim in America.

However, *apparently*, the Queer Muslim’s struggle is largely one with their own identity *and not* the State: “The words Muslim and Gay are a contradiction in much of the Muslim world,” states an NBC Nightly News report. In this story and dozens like it, the journalists used airtime with these community members to highlight 1) a sensationalized, static, and repressive conservatism inherent to Islam and Muslim communities—implying that there is only *one* Islam and all Muslims are interchangeable regardless of migration narrative, ethnicity, class, gender, political affiliation, etc.—to victimize the interviewees and the community they descend from *as well as* contextualize the background that informed Mateen’s savagery as well as 2) the unfortunate double-bind queer Muslims were caught in after the aftermath of Pulse: a violently antagonistic, Islamophobic, Zionist, hateful cloud that was attributed to the coincident misfortune of being Muslim at a bleak time.<sup>36</sup> However, this rage enacted against Brown communities was emotionally justifiable because of the reprehensible actions of Omar Mateen. More specifically, the notion that this hypervisibility, antagonism, and violence was one that was structurally in place well *before* Pulse (well *before* the Boston

bombing, well *before* 9/11, well *before* the 1967 invasion of Syria, Egypt, and Palestine) is intentionally skewed by the United States producing an exceptional sensationalism through events like Pulse. The news stories that centered queer Muslims opinions on Islam, queerness, and Pulse focused on this misfortune of being queer *and* Muslim as the *focal* oppression relevant to queer diasporic Muslim life. Thus, Omar Mateen becomes a Muslim who is in turn creating disdain and tension for the Muslim community through *his* homophobia, through *his* violence. What is invisibilized yet implied is that the structural Islamophobia, Zionism, constant surveillance, political repression, violent displacement due to U.S./ or Israeli invasion, and so forth experienced by these interviewees as well as communities at large are not real traumas perpetually recreated through both interpersonal and structural violence both domestically and abroad.

While some activists hinted at critiques of Zionism, Homonationalism, and Pinkwashing,<sup>37</sup> these notions were omitted upon final editing. In the NBC interview previously referenced, a Queer Muslim's extended statement condemning Homophobia, Islamophobia, Pinkwashing, *and their overlapping connections* had their critiques of Zionism blatantly expunged upon final airing of the segment and ultimately reduced her statement to the following: "I immediately went to Facebook and I wrote this post I said, we're here. We're queer. We're Muslim. We're both without apology or contradiction."<sup>38</sup> This woman's post originally went on to condemn uses of Pulse to justify Zionism, recreate Pinkwashing but this was effectively removed and its themes were decentered from the interview alongside the woman herself. The journalist used the first sentences of this post to redirect toward an *interpersonal*, affective interview about queer Muslim sensitivities instead of the structural critique of State co-optation the woman directly opened the door for. Beyond divisive omission on the part of news agencies, the Queer Muslim in question could only critique so much given the dangers of visibility. For example, the inconsistency of the shooting—the contradictions between Mateen's career and his projected intentions or the lack of clarity on his party allegiance—were some that could never be called into question.

Jasbir Puar invokes Ghassan Hage to contextualize Arab/Arab Muslim/South Asian inability to question Terrorism (Hage particularly invokes the image of the Suicide Bomber) for fear of being deemed Terrorist:

The fact that we approach suicide bombing with such trepidation, in contrast to how we approach the violence of colonial domination. . . indicates the symbolic violence that shapes our understanding of what constitutes ethically and politically illegitimate violence. . . why is it that suicide bombers cannot be talked about without being condemned first. . . There is a clear political risk in trying to explain suicide bombings.<sup>39</sup>

It must be made clear that the invocation of this concept is not to consolidate the actions of Mateen with stated resistance. Rather, I wish to highlight the exact inability to, as Puar and Hage highlight, discuss and situate “violence” depending on the sociopolitical context: Mateen’s actions cannot be discussed *at all* without extensive condemnation and distancing from him and anything potentially affiliated with him, *including Islam*. Through Puar’s phrasing, the contrast is especially apparent: to discuss certain types of “violence,” it must be done indirectly and apologetically while structurally-sustained genocide can either 1) never be formulated into words despite its unmeasurable reach or 2) is so thoroughly coded that it is always read as legitimate, necessary, and vital to justice. So, while even in the first days of Pulse, the holes in U.S. Constructions of Mateen were gaping, this is a territory no Arab (-Muslim), Muslim, or South Asian (-Muslim) could ever cross without inherently damning them self to not only sociopolitical isolation, but also potential disappearance and death.

Augmenting the silence on both State and structural critique is the News’s vested interest in telling the “Right Story:” the one that victimizes the Queer Muslims who struggle with Islamophobia in the LGBT community alongside their seemingly more pressing struggle with Homophobia at home and in the homeland—the one that deserves to be Colonized. Several interviews with the Queer Muslims who chose to speak to press perpetually emphasized the supposed contradictions between Queerness and Islam *as well as* individualized the experience of these Muslims by emphasizing their challenges with family and “contradictory communities.” Ultimately, the news was able to “give voice” to the community instinctually in mind but redirected the Nation’s eyes from the U.S. Imperial interventions in SWANA, the influxes of Islamophobic hate crimes in the U.S., and their intensive correlations with Zionism, Gay Tourism in Occupied Palestine, and Intensive Militarization Coded in Feminist and LGBT Friendly Rhetoric.

## (VIGILANTISM CODIFIED) الاقتصاص

One need not search to see the ways in which Zionism, Homonationalism, and Violence manifest themselves in domestic sociopolitical contexts. Following Pulse, two particularly noteworthy arcs of violence took place. In Florida, there were bi-monthly violent crimes from June 2016 - July 2017. Specifically, Pulse-related instances took place in June, July, and November of 2016.<sup>40</sup> Immediately following the Pulse shooting, a group of over 200 self-identified anti-Islamic motorcyclists began regularly harassing the Fort Pierce Islamic Center, the former mosque of Omar Mateen. A representative of this group told the press they would circle the mosque in their motorcycles for several minutes at a time in an attempt to intimidate those attending prayer services or other community events: “We stand united against those willing to destroy our country and what we stand for.”<sup>41</sup> Less than a month after the shooting, a Muslim man was beaten when trying to pray Fajr prayer at Fort Pierce. Despite the fact that the assailant loudly proclaimed, “You Muslims need to go back to where you came from,” before violently pummeling the mosque patron, Florida police ultimately ruled the attack as non-racially motivated.<sup>42</sup>

It is key to note that in the days after Pulse, the mosque had appealed to state forces several times for increased security but was denied based on supposed “lack of staff availability.” Finally, approximately three months after these instances had been unraveling, Omar Mateen’s mosque was burned by a white supremacist Jewish man, one most likely affiliated with the 200 Islamophobic motorcyclists who had been harassing the mosque for months prior.<sup>43,44,45</sup> The mosque was burned down on a day of both religious significance for the Muslim community, *Eid Al-Adha*, as well as political significance for the US (and, again, the Muslim community): 9/11.

Though the arsonist was ultimately charged, it is undeniable St. Lucie County Police Forces showed little concern for the precarious situation the Fort Pierce Islamic Center—and its constituency—had experienced following the Pulse shooting. The lack of regard for the vulnerability of its patrons and the lack of responsiveness is not surprising. Nor is there a suggestion for police-mosque collaborations as a rectifying solution. However, their disregard instead further codifies the selectivity

of whose Safety the State is hired to protect, and, more importantly, whose Violent Vigilance they exist to sustain.

Perhaps most interesting is that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)—one of the Nation’s most radical Zionist organizations—came forward releasing a statement of solidarity with the mosque, despite the organization’s direct endorsement of Islamophobic rhetoric, its intensive tracking and harassment of Palestinian activism/activists, and its blatant support of the military colonization of Palestine among several other Zionist/Imperialist Projects.<sup>45</sup> The organization had previously released a statement condemning the Pulse shooting as an act of “Islamic extremist ideology” and reinforced Zionist rhetoric by paralleling the Pulse Shooting to an attack in Tel Aviv.<sup>46</sup>

When examined as isolated incidents, the ADL statements are seemingly contemporary, empathetic responses from one religious community to another: gestures of Solidarity that promote Equal Rights and communicate political yearnings for Multicultural Love. However, when examined against the backdrop of violence, the statements are the perfect encapsulation of Liberal Co-Optation: The ADL is condemning Islam and Palestine in one statement, yet simultaneously identifying with the victim *role* by expressing sorrow over the arson of the Fort Pierce Islamic Center and pledging pseudo-allegiance to the Muslim community—from one persecuted community to another. The contradictory, hypocritical oversight of this directly Zionist aggression against the Muslim community is strategically acknowledged as a tragedy but concurrently depoliticized of its Zionist and White Supremacist implications. It is important to link this act to the default Israeli tactic of invoking buzzwords such as “extremism,” “self-defense,” “right to exist,” and “fear” as emotive rationalizations for the blatant aggression toward and colonization of surrounding Arab nations.

Of special note is that the arson of the Fort Pierce Islamic Center barely made local news, let alone national news comparable to the caliber of the Pulse Shooting. This is important because it is in the minutia of local organizational responses like the ADL’s quote to local press in Florida through which soft Zionist rhetoric is normalized: between the glaring void in Major News reporting and the ADL’s subtle insertion of Self into such a politically complex instance, the organization was in turn able to plant Zionist seeds in local Florida politics.

In “Transnational Feminist Practices against War,” the authors explore the ways in which the Mainstream invites hegemon individuals<sup>47</sup> to center themselves and thus view any potential acts of aggression as attacks on their personhood while simultaneously dismembering any political meaning from said attacks, in turn upholding dominant rhetoric:

Signs of the current trauma discourse’s ethnocentricity come through in media depictions staged within the therapeutic framework that tend to afford great meaning, significance, and sympathy to those who lost friends and family members in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. By contrast, people who have lost loved ones as a consequence of US foreign policy elsewhere are not depicted as sufferers of trauma or injustice.<sup>48</sup>

Expanding on this essay in her own book, Jasbir Puar elaborates on how through a systematic stratification of trauma, there are communities that are allowed to claim their losses in unquestionable, public, and justifiable ways. Beyond the interpersonal affective privilege this affords to communities of power, and the mental health issues it reifies in marginalized communities, what is inadvertently highlighted by Puar is that the communities of hegemonic dominance that are allowed to experience loss are simultaneously afforded the opportunity to turn that “loss” into new means of protecting their system through political, economic, militaristic, and social responses. Conversely, oppressed communities are conditioned to perpetually endure state-structured loss and are responsible for crafting methods of coping and survival without state support.<sup>49</sup>

Another key act of violence that must also be considered took place in Oklahoma, after Pulse: a White Gay Man—Vernon Majors—purposefully ran over a Lebanese Christian woman, Haifa Jabara. Though Jabara survived, police sent Majors back to his home across the street from the Lebanese family and also refused the family a restraining order. Soon after his release, Majors fatally shot Haifa Jabara’s son, Khalid. Previous to this murder, the family had been consistently reporting extensive harassment that was largely sexualized, racialized, and Islamophobic (despite their being non-Muslim) for quite some time. Majors apparently made correlations between the family, ISIS, and the supposed homophobic violence committed by ISIS.<sup>50,51</sup>

Multiple acts of violence manifest here. First and foremost is the glaring conflation of Arab with Muslim. Despite the fact that even the most basic knowledge of Lebanese history would reveal a historically

large Christian population, this interaction is undeniably an embodiment of/ reflection on US Mainstream Consolidations of Arab, Muslim, and South-Asian identities into One Recognizable Terrorist. Next, the amount of sexual harassment Majors enacted against the women of the Jabara household irrefutably fortifies the patriarchal, misogynistic, racialized violence White Cis Men have historically enacted against Othered Women *especially* as understood within a framework of militarized sexual violence in occupied SWANA.

However, perhaps the most complex detail manifests itself in Major's justification for killing Khalid: Khalid represented Homophobic Islam and Majors claimed he would be killed by Khalid for being Gay. Irrefutably an embodiment of the same Multicultural Violence performed by State Policies increase in security funding and painting police cars presumably out of Defense of LGBT Identity from Muslim Attack, this sexually-violent, misogynistic Gay White Man killed what he thought was a Jihadist Homophobic Muslim Man in direct response to his understandings of this family and their projected culture as anti-Queer; Homonationalist Aggression at its finest.

In essence, by constructing images of conservatism, jihad, and misogyny as seemingly inherent to their culture, NBC and the U.S. at large are pre-occupied with telling the Nation that the Queer Muslim's biggest concern is their oppressive homeland but that they have actualized Self- freedom, safety, and acceptance in the United States. Yet, this Nation is simultaneously and enthusiastically encouraging and enabling White Supremacists to Murder and providing them with the needed Liberal Doctrines of Diversity to obfuscate the violence at hand.

(*NOOR SALMAN*) نور سلمان

Immediately following the Pulse shooting, interviews with the ex-wife of Omar Mateen, Sitora Yusufiy, went viral. During these interviews, Yusufiy accused Mateen of having have been a self-loathing homophobic gay man who was abusive and mentally unstable.<sup>52</sup> Any article discussing Mateen inadvertently quoted Yusufiy to corroborate his proclivity toward the shooting.

Yet, despite this, the fact that Omar Mateen's second wife (and wife at the time), Palestinian-born Noor Salman, had been missing for days went largely unexplored the first week following the Pulse shooting.<sup>53</sup> In



general, there was a stark contrast between the hyper-visibility of Yusufy–news interviews being released *daily*—yet dead air regarding Salman: the same two photos recycled for various news articles and third-person speculations scraped together of her background information and potential affiliations. News articles either avoided mentioning her or portrayed her as a potential collaborator. These speculations, including from Zionist news sources, accused her and her family of Terrorism by questioning her family’s sympathy for Gaza as well as their expressing support for anti-Zionism.<sup>54,55</sup> In short, Salman was actively erased yet simultaneously demonized, her potential disappearance or physical safety never once an actual concern.

Following the hype of the first couple weeks of Pulse, though not in custody, Salman was kept under constant watch by the FBI and other security personnel for months following the shooting until she was arrested January 2017 for obstruction and “supporting terrorism.”<sup>56</sup> She remained in detention during that time and her trial process was extensively drawn out. What would follow was a year trial in which the FBI and the family of those killed in the Pulse shooting adamantly pushed for the arrest and sentencing of Noor Salman in place of her husband: “I have no sympathy for her. I hope she’s convicted. . . She had to know she married a jihadist.”<sup>57</sup>

Recently, over one year following the beginning of her trial and detention, Noor Salman was found not guilty and released. There was intensive speculation that Mateen was physically and emotionally violent to Salman. These speculations asserted that Salman suffered extensive trauma from the experience of her marriage, and that she was coerced into confessing into being a co-conspirator.<sup>58</sup> Of special interest was an interview released March 2018 with Salman’s attorney that called both the initial arrest of Salman and her delayed release into question:

Courts often apply absolute immunity to the government. . . Ms. Salman’s case was the first acquittal in 12 years, in 851 cases [related to domestic terrorism since 9/11] . . . Ms. Salman’s case is a great example how we have sacrificed liberty at the altar of national security. . . Omar Mateen was killed at the scene and because of this significant loss to the community and because of this so-called War on Terrorism, the community and the government needed a villain and they found a perfect foil in Ms. Salman. . . Somebody of both intellectual and mental vulnerabilities, a Muslim woman who had suffered domestic violence. That’s an easy target, and that’s an easy

target when you keep someone in interrogation for 12 hours. If you can go after Ms. Salman, you can go after anyone.<sup>59</sup>

Though still recent, the portrayal of Noor Salman from the shooting until her recent acquittal are essential to deconstruct because they reveal the State's same selective and opportunistic application of concern over certain sites of violence, and who is to be sacrificed to uphold a more pressing meta-narrative.

For example, there were extensive interviews detailing all the ways in which Mateen was presumably violent toward his first wife, yet, not one news article following the shooting stopped to consider what situation Noor Salman may have been in her marriage with Mateen. This is not to impose or invalidate any particular experience, but instead to highlight that there was elaborate effort put into the construction of Mateen's ex-wife as a victim of domestic violence, yet somehow, the potential that Mateen was violent in any way toward Salman was never once explored as a possibility. Instead, mainstream media went out of its way to accuse Salman of being a co-conspirator and an exuberant amount of resources were put into securing that narrative. The fact that Zionist media was able to get away with tainting Salman's image by consolidating her family's support for Palestine with the Pulse shooting demonstrates the divisive investment imperial super-structures have in seemingly individualized narratives. With that, this *is* white liberalism directly supporting Zionist colonialist misogyny and US imperialism: the imprisonment of an innocent Palestinian woman intentionally constructed as terrorist in "support of" the LGBT community in an attempt to preserve the secret connection between Seddique Mateen and the US government. In other words, the sacrifice of a Palestinian woman to fortify Zionism (including the mosque burning, the ADL, and Israeli public relations) as well as to protect Imperial ventures in Afghanistan (by concealing the true identity of Seddique Mateen). The hype around Noor Salman as a co-conspirator distracted from the ways in which the US government was not only implicated in the shooting but in fact *culpable* in what took place the night of the Pulse shooting.

Expanding on the previously referenced Zionist opportunism, it is important to recognize the swift response from Israel after Pulse. First, a public vigil was held for the victims of Pulse in Tel Aviv. LGBTQ identified Israeli posited their ability to sympathize with being targeted by Muslim violence and expressed condolences and support for the

supposed Pulse counterparts. Similarly, a plane was sent to fly over Florida that read, “AMERICA! ISRAEL FEELS YOUR PAIN.”<sup>60</sup> It is important to recognize these public gestures as calculated branding opportunities that operate on emotional rhetoric to disseminate victimizing narratives that 1) reinforce Islamophobic sentiments that consequently 2) erase the Zionist, imperialist violence actually at play.

(WHITEWASHED DEATHS) **البياض والموت**

It is unquestionably dire to also consider those killed by Mateen. Following the shooting, rainbow flags, queer tears, and proclamations of unity swept the world. Accusations of homophobia as a plague to the U.S. were relentless, with LGBT communities everywhere using slogans such as “One Pulse,” “From \_\_\_\_\_ to Orlando,” and what I contend to be radically and politically contentious, “Stop Killing Us.”

An extension of this tactic were the slew of statements released by LGBT Community Leaders. In particular, one statement made by then Co-President of UCLA’s Anderson School of Business LGBT Association directly implied that what took place in Florida could have taken place anywhere:

I sat on the edge of the bed not saying a word and then I finally turned to Kelsie. “There are no safe spaces anymore. . .” I didn’t personally know anyone in that club; I don’t even know a single person who lives in Florida. I know myself, though, and I know people who would have been in a club just like Pulse, in any other city, on any other night, to celebrate each other, the LGBT community, and our shared experiences<sup>61</sup>

June 27, 2016

How can we see sweeping generalizations of the Pulse shooting as problematic? Is it truly fair or accurate to suggest that the Pulse shooting could have happened to Any One? What does it mean when slogans condemning anti-Black Police Violence—“Stop Killing Us”—are refurbished for LGBT Issues? In particular, what does it mean when the upper middle class white Gays of West Hollywood identify with the victims and posit, “It could have been me.”

Could it have been them? According to Jasbir Puar and Edward Said, there is a tendency in Western Whites to see themselves in tragedy, to instigate processes of mourning themselves regardless of whether or not the violence could have realistically reached them or not, and, on

a more relevant note, whether or not the violence *typically does* reach them or not:

The counterpart to this obsessive pathologizing of the individual is the deep narcissism implied in the query “Why do they hate us?” (the intonation of which usually implies something different: How *could* they hate us?). Is there no limit to the folly that convinces large numbers of Americans that it is now unsafe to travel, and at the same time blinds them to all the pain and violence that so many people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America must endure simply because we have decided that local oppressors, whom we call freedom fighters, can go on with their killing in the name of anti-communism and antiterrorism?<sup>62</sup>

On the flipside, communities of color have historically never been allowed to mourn themselves, their dead, or their strife at the hands of the United States. Thus, in relation to Pulse, the following concerns emerge: How is it problematic for White Gay Men to identify with those killed in the shooting when a majority of those killed are tied to meta-lineages of violence founded in white supremacy including but not limited to enslavement, incarceration, killer cops, deportation, colonization, war, labor exploitation, and so forth? More specifically, *were those killed the night of the shooting killed because they are queer? Or because they are Black, Latino, and Afro-Latino citizens or immigrants at a working-class club?* On an infrastructural level, what does it mean for the United States Mainstream to claim these bodies as Victims of an act of Terror and to purportedly mourn them yet to simultaneously condone, support, and encourage systemic violence against Their Communities, ultimately attempting to foster the annihilation of the very identity of those slain?

At the very same moment the United States Public shed tears over Puerto Rican lives lost in the Pulse Shooting, Congress also enacted a plan that has since placed Puerto Rico’s financial assets under direct control of a U.S. Appointed Board that is predominantly Republican. Part of this control stipulates that this financial board retains full immunity from being challenged by the Commonwealth or the United States Government *and also* grants the United States federal government formal access to any and all information it deems “relevant.” Presenting itself as a committee formed in response to Puerto Rico’s financial crisis, PROMESA decrees the following (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act) :

(Sec. 4) This bill prevails over any provision of territory law, state law, or regulation that is inconsistent with this bill. (The territories referred to in this bill include Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.)

This section provides the board with authority to oversee territorial instrumentalities. The bill specifies that a territorial instrumentality is any political subdivision, public agency, instrumentality, or public corporation of a territory, and that term should be broadly construed to effectuate the purposes of the bill.

The governor of a territory or a designee is an ex officio member of the board without voting rights. With the approval of a majority of its members, the board may conduct its business in an executive session that is closed to the public and consists solely of voting members and any professionals that the board determines to be necessary. (Sec. 104) The powers of the board include:

- holding hearings and sessions to take testimony and receive evidence;
- obtaining official data from the territorial and federal government;
- obtaining creditor information;
- accepting gifts, bequests, and devises of services or property;
- issuing subpoenas;
- entering into contracts;
- enforcing territorial laws prohibiting public sector employees from participating in a strike or lockout;
- certifying voluntary agreements between creditors and debtors;
- protecting certain preexisting voluntary restructuring agreements;
- filing a petition to restructure or to submit or modify a plan of adjustment on behalf of a debtor
- seeking judicial enforcement of its authority;
- imposing penalties for violations of valid orders of the board;
- ensuring prompt and efficient payment of taxes through electronic reporting, payment, and auditing technologies;
- requesting administrative support services from federal agencies; and
- investigating the disclosure and selling practices in connection with the purchase of bonds issued by a covered territory.

(Sec. 105) implement this bill. The board, its members, and its staff are exempt from liability resulting from actions taken to (Sec. 106) Except for actions arising out of Title III or out of the board's issuance of a

subpoena, any action arising out of this bill must be brought in the U.S. district court for the covered territory or the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii if the territory does not have a district court. The bill sets forth requirements for appeal, the timing of relief, and expedited consideration for matters relating to this bill. The U.S. district court does not have jurisdiction to review challenges to the board's certification determinations. (Sec. 108) The territorial government may not exercise control over the board or enact, implement, or enforce any legislation, policy, or rule that would impair the purposes of this bill.<sup>63</sup>

Though lengthy, these direct quotes from the since enacted Congress bill wholly place all of Puerto Rico's financial assets under the control of this board that is confirmed unchallengeable both by US courts as well as the Commonwealth itself. In particular, it specifies that territorial representation is permitted so long as said representative does not maintain voting rights *and* the board can hold "voting member only" meetings as see fit: thus, the input of the territories themselves is *entirely irrelevant*. Beyond this implied exclusion of territorial autonomy, the bill specifically forbids Commonwealth contestation of any of its actions and specifically protects board members from any liability that may arise in relation to PROMESA. In reading further, one will find that the board has preemptively complicated court processes by requiring challengers to go through the US District Court as opposed to Puerto Rico's own judiciary system. Furthermore, the bill contains a clear no-strike clause, deceptively consolidating and covering up matters of labor rights with that of a Liberal Bailout.

So, while News pretended to care about the dead Puerto Ricans of Pulse—*most likely in the United States due to U.S. Imperial Exploitations of Puerto Rico*—the United States not only secured a new grip on the island but U.S.-Marine Founded Puerto Rican Police Forces also arrested hundreds of PROMESA protesters attempting to express dissent and assert the their autonomy through resistance.

Lastly, as though satire of the most gruesome kind, at the same time as Pulse and the passage of PROMESA, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention attempted to address the rise of Zika by sending Naled, one of the most toxic pesticides known to pregnant women (and the public in general), to Puerto Rico in an unmarked container *without the Commonwealth's knowledge*.<sup>64,65</sup> Apparently, the CDC had been lobbying the island to consider using Naled and was met with fierce resistance.

Paired with this violence was the extensive policing of Puerto Rican sexuality by condemning consensual sex between Zika positive patients.<sup>66</sup> Though why sending Naled or structurally policing are individually violent occurrences, it is irrefutable that the incorporation of these incidents into the historical context of United States relations to Puerto Rico in turn reflect the U.S.'s hegemonic need to control Puerto Rican bodies.

The US has always maintained an imperial, oppressive grasp on Puerto Rican autonomy. First and foremost is the systematic filtration and ultimate denial of citizenship status.<sup>67</sup> In turn, the US reduces the island to an estranged entity with selective rights, just enough to maintain functionality but never enough to divulge its influence. This argument's more visceral telling point is buried within the United States projects of sterilization on the island well throughout the 20th century: What does it mean that nearly one third of the island's women underwent sterilization processes, several being non-consensual? It is undeniable that these two facts form the foundation for the silent truth that Puerto Ricans are non-human in the eyes of the U.S. and instead an accessory, a "test tube," from which the U.S. can extract resources as it pleases.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, it is unquestionable these concepts converge to highlight the objectification, dehumanization, erasure, and ultimate invisibilization of Puerto Rican lives and Puerto Rico in the grand scheme of U.S. hegemony.

On another plane, it is vital to examine the United States relationship to Black subjectivity. Historically, as pointed out by Michelle Alexander, Angela Davis, and several others, it is indisputable that between the Middle Passage, sharecropping, Jim Crow, and the Prison Industrial Complex, anti-Blackness has always been a limitless void of violence—often fatality—manifest in the form of extracted free labor alongside savage layers of gendered, sexual, and relentless brutality. A poignant and succinct encapsulation of this notion comes from Sadiya Hartman:

If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment.<sup>69</sup>

In order to connect conversations of the persistence of anti-Blackness with larger conversations of queerness, co-optation, and the monolithic understandings of LGBT within a White, Imperial framework, one need

not go beyond Calvin Warren's dense yet curt text, "Oncicide: Afro-Pessimism, Queerness, & Ethics," to position the Black Queer within the violence of the U.S. imperial machine: "The term black queer is a philosophical conundrum . . . [and at] the site of this fatality lies a mutilated, supine black body we cannot quite place within the symbolics of identity, politics, history, sociology, or law."<sup>70</sup> Perhaps the most jarring encapsulation of this last statement comes in Warren's analysis of the contrast between the institutionally Remembered murder of Matthew Shepard versus the still invisible murder of Steen Keith Fenrich—a Black youth killed by his homophobic white stepfather whose skeletal remains were dismembered post-mortem and covered in anti-queer, anti-Black slurs. Here, Warren invokes Eric Stanley to make sense of the disparity by highlighting: "Shepard, a white, gay, twenty-one-year-old college student, it could be argued, was held as referent for all anti-queer violence because of the relative ease of mourning him . . . his 'queer-ness' is registered as 'part' of a larger whole of the human family. It is this shared humanity that made it relatively easy to mourn him." Warren completes this notion with his own contention: "Unlike Matthew Shepard, the space that Steen inhabits is outside of public memory, culture, and ethics—it is the 'unthought' space cut by the blunt edges of anti-black violence."<sup>71</sup>

In direct line with stories like Steen's is the fact that of the 23 documented and publicized cases of Trans murders in 2016, nearly 20 were Black-identified.<sup>72</sup> In the same month as Pulse, over 100 people were killed by police in the United States and over 30 were Black, 20 were Latino, and 3 were American Indian.<sup>73</sup> As activists struggle to enact justice for people killed by police, we see that in relation to anti-Black struggles, the blatant disregard for Black life is not only on overdrive, however, it can now be recorded, leaked to Mainstream Media, and still shrugged off. A woman can record the murder of her husband and the Nation hollows its bearing from within, mutes the audio, and claims what is not filmed is more relevant than what is.

(CONCLUSION) استنتاج

In attempting to make sense of all of the former, one need not stretch the imagination. The Pulse Shooting is the encapsulation of a Nation desperately clinging to fabrics of Illusion. This is a careful orchestration



of Brown and Black bodies being sacrificed to no end, followed by a blowing up of hot air all in the hopes of sustaining brain-dead airwaves; attempts to garner unwavering, lifetime, psychological, physical, social, moral, and political support for National Projects, yearnings for profit of the most fatal kind: War, Imprisonment, Colonization. This is a matter of placement, stage crews, and acting all at its finest. The Nation stars, the bodies fall, the World watches.

While perhaps today marks a different era (one of blatant aggression and fascism), it is undeniable that through the guise of liberalism, projects recently embarked on in the name of Multicultural/progressive causes, such as Security for (White) LGBT communities, asylum for Queer Muslims, financial bailouts for Puerto Rico, or presidential nods affirming that Black Life matters while simultaneously facilitating one of the most deadly years ever for QTPOC communities, for Arabs and South-Asians (both domestically and abroad), for Puerto Ricans, and for (queer) Black communities were not any less Fascist.

#### AFTERWORD

*This research commenced in the summer of 2016, immediately following the Pulse shooting and the first draft was completed in September 2016. It was intended to serve as a transitory but in-depth analysis of a particular moment in US history to 1) highlight the various superstructures always at play and 2) the charged, calculated maneuvers these structures stage during emotionally dense, pseudo-structureless “tragedies.”*

*Of distinct relevance in the Pulse shooting was the surreptitious utilization of co-optive strategies to quell and hypnotize marginalized and radical U.S.-based communities into fighting for the subjugation, securitization, and killing of their own communities as well as the enormously deceptive invisibilization of Puerto Rican struggles for autonomy against U.S.-fueled imperialisms that directly codified Zionist powers as well.*

*That being said, three years later, the Pulse shooting has maintained relevance 1) through its revitalization of pre-existing systems and policies of oppression within (and without) the U.S. and 2) in the ways those violences were given makeovers to elude and absorb already existing resistance formations. In other words, the seeds planted by Pulse in 2016 have since blossomed into monstrous tentacles of their own that are currently rife with repressive, violent, and mortal ramifications for multiple communities of color around the world.*

*Countering Violent Extremism has flourished into a multi-million-dollar project with operations all over the United States as well as abroad. Muslim refugees within the U.S. are made wholly vulnerable through new surveillance apparatuses birthed by CVE initiatives masked as community wellness programs, while citizens of countries abroad are encouraged to contribute questionable (aka unstable, critical, or Othered) people to international databases housed by CVE.*

*Puerto Rico's economic situation was exacerbated after multiple hurricanes struck in 2017 and, because of PROMESA, the commonwealth was unable to autonomously provide for its own without U.S. approval, resulting in more loans. Furthermore, the country had to enact extensive cuts from the public sector and allow for increased foreign/private investment, undermining local employment and simultaneously fortifying third-party ownership- codifying eventual imperial acquisition of the commonwealth.*

*Ultimately, it becomes important to bear in mind that there is a distinct link between the political perversions either fortified or initiated during the Obama administration that are being directly carried forward and bolstered by the Trump administration today.*

*These are not fluke continuations or indirect-but-related happenings. They are long-standing, calculated policies, wars, and violences meticulously brainstormed from the inception of this nation with Obama and Trump serving as mere vessels re-shaping these politics to suit the context of the times. They are given the illusion of difference to feign change and evade discovery, but they are the same profit, the same policies, the same deaths.*

## NOTES

1. Capitalization will be occasionally manipulated throughout this article to invoke the performative implications, power, or monolithic consolidations behind certain nouns when invoked within their hegemonic contexts
2. "Radical Islam's Loathing for Gays Fueled Madman to Carry out Orlando Terrorist Attack" New York Daily News June 14, 2016
3. "LGBT" and "Gay" will be used when referencing mainstream-normative understandings of or personal identifications with the accepted and assimilated forms of previously non-normative sexual/gender orientations while "queerness" will be used to referenced marginalized bodies still antithetical to state building
4. "Orlando: Omar Mateen 'pledged loyalty to ISIL, others'" Al Jazeera June 20, 2016
5. "Orlando Shooting Victims" Newsday June 15, 2016
6. "G4S Involvement in Israeli Prison System and Checkpoints" 2017
7. "Orlando massacre was "revenge," not terrorism, says man who claims he was gunman's lover," Univision . June 21, 2016.

8. Orlando attacker Omar Mateen ‘frequented gay nightclub,’ Al Jazeera , June 14 2016.

9. Haggerty, Valle, Muranishi. “Agenda Including Addendum” Alameda City Council Board of Supervisors, June 14, 2016.

10. Community Conference Call Regarding Government “CVE” Programs, Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee , June 29, 2016,

11. “Here Comes the Rainbow Fuzz” LGBTQ Nation June 23, 2016

12. Meant to invoke the privilege manifest in living in the United States vs living within the material conditions of the “unincorporated territory” of Puerto Rico, a territory whose autonomy has been repeatedly undermined, sacrificed, and exploited for U.S. financial and political structures

13. Ex-wife’s Bombshell Claim: Club Shooter was Gay, New York Post , June 13, 2016.

14. Pulse Shooter’s Ex-Wife Says He Was Gay, Targeted Club to Impress Father, Advocate , September 22, 2016.

15. Puar, Jasbir. “Rethinking Homonationalism” International Journal of Middle East Studies, 2013.

16. It is important to bear in mind that while 2009 was a peak in direct deployment that has since declined, the U.S. has still continued to lead large military operations, switch out troops for private security forces who determine their own rules of engagement, and continues to on-and-off re-deploy troops to Afghanistan all under the guise of “as needed.”

17. The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama, New York Times, January 1, 2017.

18. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Encyclopaedia Britannica , February 21, 2018.

19. Obama, Barack H., Nobel Peace Prize 2009, Nobel Prize , December 10, 2009.

20. Orlando Gunman Omar Mateen Twice Took Law Enforcement Test, NBC, June 17, 2016.

21. What Exactly Did the Company Omar Mateen Worked for Do? The Atlantic , June 14, 2016.

22. As someone who vied to be part of the State, we can deduce that Omar Mateen’s possession of firearms is justified and encouraged by their investment in masculinist institutions like police, security, and the steadfast commitment to the second amendment through this vein

23. Homonationalism is the selective, convenient, and transitory acceptance of non-heterosexual bodies into economic, legal, institutional, and militarized realms of society with the purpose of leveraging their subjectivities for imperial, capitalist, colonial agendas. However, while “homo” is in the term, it is important to note that 1) the ascendancy applies to largely gay men/ or white binary-transgender people 2) this acceptance is dependent upon the otherwise “normalcy” of persons in question: cis-gendered, abled, white, citizen, wealthy, patriot and 3) creates and further polarizes non-assimilable queer bodies (genderqueer, non-passing, disabled people of color, undocumented, working class, etc)

Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.

24. “Here’s the FBI’s Timeline and Transcript from the Orlando Nightclub Attack.” *Time*. June 20, 2016.

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26. Police Views, Public Views, *Pew Research Center*, January 11, 2017.

27. Bjelopera, Jerome P. “Countering Violent Extremism in the United States.” *Federation of American Scientists*, Congressional Research Service, 19 Feb. 2014, fas.org/sgp/crs/homsec/R42553.pdf. Article written by “Specialist in Organized Crime and Terrorism”

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31. Security Stepped Up At LA Pride Parade After Orlando Shooting, Arrest Of ‘Heavily Armed’ Man In Santa Monica, *CBC Los Angeles*, June 12, 2016.

32. After Orlando, the Plan to Police NYC Pride, *The Daily Beast*, June 24, 2016.

33. Father of Pulse gunman was FBI informant, widow’s attorneys say, *CBS News*, March 26, 2018.

34. Orlando nightclub gunman remembered as abusive, homophobic and racist, *LA Times*, June 12, 2016

35. Palm, TC, director. *Interview with Seddique Mateen, Father of Omar Mateen* by *TC Palm News*. *You Tube*, Interview with Seddique Mateen, Father of Omar Mateen, 13 June 2016, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ib9k3x0l1E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ib9k3x0l1E).

36. “LGBT Muslims Share Their Stories Following Orlando Massacre” *NBC Nightly News*, New York, NY: NBC Universal, 06/19/2016

37. Pinkwashing is the Zionist praxis of selectively championing (even fabricating) images of Israeli LGBT liberties in an attempt to drown out/ or codify Zionist colonization of surrounding Arab nations that are intentionally constructed as backwards, oppressive, conservative and so forth

The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability by Jasbir K. Puar Duke University Press, 2017

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