

LAROUCHE PAC

Obama Wants To Jail New York Times Reporter James Risen

July 23rd, 2013 • 10:41 AM

Obama is again being accused of being worse than George W. Bush and Dick Cheney in his assaults on freedom. In 2011, the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press reported that the Obama Administration had indicted more government employees under the 1917 Espionage Act for "sharing classified information with the press — *than all previous administrations combined.*"

Now, a decision by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia is giving Obama greater power to silence reporters in the case of CIA whistle-blower Jeffrey Alexander Sterling, who was indicted in 2010 under that 1917 Espionage Act for allegedly provided New York Times reporter James Risen information on Iran for Risen's 2006 book, *State of War*.

On July 19 the Appeals Court overturned an important Federal District Court decision from February 2011 that quashed a subpoena for Risen to testify in Sterling's case. The Circuit Court ruled that Risen would not have to testify in the Sterling case, after Risen's lawyers had forcefully argued that it was Risen himself who was the target of DoJ abuse.

People familiar with Risen's reporting know that the issue is indeed much broader than Risen's book and Sterling's information. Risen has been a thorn in the side of secret government surveillance operations for decades. In 1998, Risen exposed Al Gore's secret dealings with then-Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Gore's fight with the CIA when the Agency uncovered Chernomyrdin's corruption; in early 2002, Risen put the spotlight on the neo-conservatives' Defense Policy Board and its role in sending its operatives around to find "proof" of Iraq and Saddam Hussein's role in 9/11, in order to justify going to war against Iraq.

Now, in the two-to-one ruling, written by Chief Judge William Traxler, the 4th Circuit appeals court decision says that Risen must testify as "there is no first amendment testimonial privilege, absolute or qualified, that protects a reporter from being compelled to testify in criminal proceedings."



Court gives Obama further powers to override 1st Amendment.

But the third member of the Appeals Court, Judge Roger Gregory filed a strong dissenting opinion, reported Britain's *Guardian*. "A free and vigorous press is an indispensable part of a system of democratic government," Gregory wrote. "Public debate on American military and intelligence methods is a critical element of public oversight of our government." Risen's attorneys told the press that Risen is pursuing a number of further legal actions to fight the subpoenas.

The decision has alarmed civil rights defenders because it comes in the midst of the NSA spying battle and Obama's global obsession to hunt down NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. Lawyers for Sterling are also pointing out that the Obama Justice Dept. just published "guidelines" on July 12, 2013, to protect journalists against the use of subpoenas and investigations to interfere with First Amendment activities. The 4th Circuit Appeals Court decision comes one week after the guidelines were put out publicly.

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