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HUFFPOST GAY VOICES

Targeting Glenn Greenwald's Partner Is an Attack on Every One of Us

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In one sense Glenn Greenwald's being gay has nothing to do with the work he's done as a journalist and commentator, including the revelations of government surveillance he's helped bring to light in recent months. On the other hand, as he's stated himself, growing up gay has given him a keen awareness of injustice, and certainly that's true with regard to a government collecting personal information about its citizens. More than that, Glenn's being gay seems to have been used against him in recent months. One lurid report in June about his past involvement in an LLC that had a business interest in a gay porn company seemed like a ridiculously feeble attempt to dirty him up by using homophobia as a weapon.

Now Glenn's relationship is being drawn into the spotlight, as his partner David Miranda, a Brazilian citizen, was detained for nine hours over the weekend at London's Heathrow airport on his way from Berlin back to Rio, where he and Glenn live together. David was detained under Britain's Terrorism Act and had his laptop, phone and all of his data confiscated and not returned, after he was held for almost half a day with the possibility of arrest. That's an attack on every one of us who are journalists, and frankly, every one of us who are in relationships, gay or otherwise.

David is the partner of a journalist, not a journalist himself. The British government clearly believes it's perfectly fine to target and intimidate journalists and their families and associates -- their partners, husbands, wives, children, friends, colleagues -- if it's in the interest of its surveillance partner, the United States. More than 97 percent of those detained under this law are held less than an hour, while David was held for the maximum allowable time under the law and while he was clearly no terrorist threat of any kind.

I've known Glenn Greenwald for several years, having had him on my radio program regularly, including recently, discussing the NSA story and media coverage of it, and I once met his partner David. As Andrew Sullivan similarly notes, I can only imagine what it would be like to have my partner (yes, I recently got married but we haven't quite settled on "husband" yet -- more on that in a future blog post) detained by a government because of work I've done exposing wrongdoing on the part of that government or an ally.

Glenn is right in describing it as "designed to send a message of intimidation." Some have already sloughed that off, claiming this action was too stupid to be a blatant attempt to threaten Glenn. That's naive or just plain disingenuous. At this point, the governments involved are desperate to shut things down and don't seem to care how arrogant, over-reaching or unbelievable they come off. If that were not true, President Obama wouldn't have given a press conference in which he laughably argued that he was intent on stemming the NSA abuses anyway, before Edward Snowden came on the scene, and that he really, truly loves that we are having this debate.

And they won't care how this plays out in the media now either. Be prepared for more preposterous claims and and more extreme lengths. The revelations we've seen about millions of American's data collected and the NSA breaking its own rules thousands of times, even defying the stacked FiSA court itself, show just how far the'll go. They've already forced down a foreign leader's plane. Detaining a journalist's partner, and withstanding the public criticism in the name of the "war on terror," is nothing compared to all that.

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