

THE IRONY OF GLENN GREENWALD CUDDLING UP WITH BILL BARR, THE GRANDFATHER OF ED SNOWDEN'S PHONE DRAGNET

Glenn Greenwald, who has written two books about the abuse of Presidential power, continues to dig in on his factually ignorant claims about the Mueller report. For days, he and the denialists said that if Mueller's report was being misrepresented by Bill Barr, Mueller would speak up. Now that Mueller's team has done so, Glenn complains that these are anonymous leaks and nevertheless only address obstruction, not a conspiracy with Russia on the election.

Glenn and his lackeys in the denialist crowd who continue to willfully misrepresent the public evidence have yet to deal with the fact that Mueller has already presented evidence that Paul Manafort conspired with Russian Konstantin Kilimnik *on the election*, but that they weren't able to substantiate and charge it because Manafort lied. Mueller's team say they believe Manafort did so in hopes and expectation that if he helped Trump and denialists like Glenn sustain a "no collusion" line, he might get a pardon. That is, we know that Trump's offers of pardons – his obstruction – specifically prevented Mueller from pursuing a fairly smoking gun incident where Trump's campaign manager coordinated with Russians on the hack-and-leak.

As Glenn once professed to know with respect to Scooter Libby's obstruction, if someone successfully obstructs an investigation, that may mean the ultimate culprit in that investigation escapes criminal charge.

Glenn's denialism is all the more remarkable, though, given that this same guy who wrote two

books on abuse of presidential power is choosing to trust a memo from Bill Barr that was obviously playing legalistic games over what the public record says. As Glenn must know well, Barr has a history of engaging in precisely the kind of cover-up of presidential abuses Glenn once professed to oppose, fairly epically on Iran-Contra. The cover-up that Barr facilitated on that earlier scandal was the model that Dick Cheney used in getting away with leaking Valerie Plame's identity and torture and illegal wiretapping, the kinds of presidential abuses that Glenn once professed to oppose.

I find Glenn's trust of Bill Barr, one of the most authoritarian Attorneys General in the last half century, all the more ironic, coming as it does the same week that DOJ IG released this IG report on several DEA dragnets.

That's because Glenn's more recent opposition to abuse of power comes in the form of shepherding Edward Snowden's leaks. Glenn's recent fame stems in significant degree to the fact that on June 5, 2013, he published a document ordering Verizon to turn over all its phone records to the government.

The dragnet Snowden revealed with that document was actually just the second such dragnet. The first one targeted the phone calls from the US to a bunch of foreign countries claimed, with no court review, to have a drug nexus. Only, that term "drug nexus" came to include countries with no significant drug ties but instead a claimed tie between drug money and financing terrorism, and which further came to be used in totally unrelated investigations. That earlier dragnet became the model for Stellar Wind, which became the model for the Section 215 dragnet that Glenn is now famous for having helped Edward Snowden expose.

Here's what the IG Report released the same week that Glenn spent hours cuddling up to Bill Barr says about the original dragnet.

According to DEA and FBI memoranda and other contemporaneous records, senior Department officials sanctioned the development of ██████ in the early 1990s. The DEA's historical records reflect that in January 1992 Attorney General William Barr provided approval for the ██████ program, including ██████, after receiving a program briefing, which the Deputy Attorney General also attended. The FBI Director also received a program briefing during that same time period. The DEA did not provide us with any formal document codifying the Department's approval of the program (besides implicit approval in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussed below). Nor did the DEA provide us with any formal document discussing the legal basis for what were then novel aspects of the program regarding the proposed use of the DEA administrative subpoena authority for collecting bulk data through ██████.

Bill Barr, the guy Glenn has spent 10 days nuzzling up to, is the grandfather of the dragnet system of surveillance.

The IG Report also shows that Bill Barr – the guy Glenn has spent 10 days trusting implicitly – didn't brief Congress at all; the program wasn't first briefed to Congress until years after Barr left office the first time.

⁶⁴ Available records showed that only four Members of Congress received briefings between 1996 and 1997, 3 years after the program began, and then none until 10 years later in committee oversight hearings in 2007. From 1993 to 2006, we found that approximately 35 congressional committee staff received briefings.

This is the man that former critic of abusive presidential power Glenn Greenwald has chosen to trust over the public record.

This is, it seems, the strange plight of the denialist left, cozying up to the kind of authoritarians that their entire career, at least to this point, have vigorously opposed.

As I disclosed last July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.