

DANIEL HALE EXPOSES LIES ABOUT KILLER DRONES

Another whistleblower has joined the ranks of Daniel Ellsberg and Edward Snowden. On March 31, 2021, Daniel Hale pleaded guilty to leaking confidential information confirming repeated US government violations of human rights and international law. While Ellsberg exposed government lies on Vietnam and on nuclear weapons, and Snowden about government spying on individuals and foreign governments, Hale's documents concern lies about use and effectiveness of killer drones. All three were charged under the Espionage Act of 1917. All three acted with the same moral conviction that in a democracy, access to truthful information is essential to the public interest. Ellsberg's charges were dismissed in 1974 due to bungled government attempts at retaliation. Snowden is currently living in exile. Hale faces 10 years in prison, with sentencing scheduled for July 31.

In 2013, after 4 years in the Air Force and as an intelligence agent at NSA, Daniel Hale began speaking out against drone warfare. Hale shared with *The Intercept* reporter Jeremy Scahill top secret documents detailing protocols for ordering drone strikes, shedding light on civilian casualties as well as internal military debates over the accuracy of intelligence. A recent article from CODEPINK states that the documents "revealed that drones were more deadly and less accurate than the government presented publicly. In fact, nearly 90% of those killed by drone strikes were not the intended target....No one in the US government, including the military and the CIA, has ever been held accountable for the horrific crimes of killing civilians in drone strikes. But Daniel Hale is being severely punished for wanting to let the American public know what was being done in their name....Daniel deserves to be awarded for his courage in exposing the truth about extrajudicial assassinations by killer drones, not imprisoned.

"In the government's case against Daniel, they were not able to identify a single person harmed or killed by his actions. But the drone program that Daniel was accused of exposing led to the death and maiming of thousands of civilians, including many children, who were simply 'in the wrong place at the wrong time.' From Afghanistan and Pakistan to Somalia and Yemen, the US military and CIA have used killer drones to bomb wedding parties, funerals, farmers working in their fields, or families simply sleeping in their beds at night. Shamefully, US courts have held that a whistleblower's motive -- revealing information in the public interest to expose government misconduct -- is irrelevant in an Espionage Act trial. That's why Congress must amend the draconian and antiquated Espionage Act, since it makes it impossible for Daniel Hale to get a fair trial."

According to an April 2 article in *Common Dreams*, "Hale was charged in 2019 during the Trump administration....He is the first person to face sentencing for an Espionage Act offense during Biden's administration. As

vice president under Obama, Biden contributed to the creation of whistleblower protections in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, while serving in an administration promising 'a new era of open government' yet relentlessly targeting individuals who revealed US war crimes and other classified information." One of those, John Kiriakou, a former CIA agent sentenced under Obama to 30 months' imprisonment for exposing US torture, said "I had hopes that Biden's Justice Dept appointee would recognize the public service that Daniel Hale provided when he revealed illegality and abuse in the drone program."

"These documents detailed a secret, unaccountable process for targeting and killing people around the world, including US citizens, through drone strikes," said Betsy Reed, editor-in-chief of *The Intercept*. "They are of vital public importance, and activity related to their disclosure is protected by the First Amendment."

Hale's lawyer, Jesselyn Radack, said, "the US government's policy of punishing people who provide journalists with information in the public interest is a profound threat to free speech, free press, and a healthy democracy. Classified information is published in the press every day; in fact, the biggest leaker of classified information is the US government. However, the Espionage Act is used uniquely to punish those sources who give journalists information that embarrasses the government or exposes its lies."

Sign petition supporting Daniel Hale at <https://www.codepink.org/danielhale>
Call your members of Congress at 202-224-3121.
More information at www.droneswatch.org

Sources include <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2021/04/02/drone-whistleblower-daniel-hale-pleads-guilty-advocates-warn-profound-threat-free> and https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/legal-issues/daniel-hale-guilty-plea-espionage/2021/03/31/18ed4ca6-923c-11eb-9668-89be11273c09_story.html

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