

American injustice: Trump and cronies protect a murderous US Navy SEAL

Jacob Crosse
6 July 2019

US Navy SEAL Chief Edward “Eddie” Gallagher, who earlier this week was acquitted of murder and eight other charges related to war crimes he committed while deployed to Iraq, has received political and legal support from significant sections of the ruling class throughout the trial. A report by the military-oriented website *Task & Purpose* found that three members of Gallagher’s defense team, two lawyers and an investigator, have close ties to President Trump and Fox News.

Upon his arrest September 2018, Edward Gallagher was confined to the San Diego’s Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar. This was done, according to the judge, because Gallagher had threatened witnesses, including fellow SEALs who were set to testify against him. Gallagher had allegedly sent text messages and left voicemails in which he promised to go after “traitors.” A motion by Gallagher’s defense to have him moved to less restrictive housing or his home was denied in January 2019.

Gallagher’s original defense team consisted of attorneys Colby Vokey and Phil Stackhouse, both of whom had extensive experience in military trials. But neither were able to convince the judge, Navy Captain Aaron Rugh, that Gallagher should be moved from the military prison where he was imprisoned during the trial to less restrictive accommodations.

After the judge denied the defendant’s request, a shake-up began within Gallagher’s defense. Beginning in March, attorneys Vokey and Stackhouse were replaced by a new lead attorney, Tim Parlatore, assisted by Marc Mukasey.

Parlatore was hired on the recommendation of Bernard Kerik, former New York City police commissioner, and convicted felon, who joined the defense team as a strategist and investigator. Kerik who

was briefly nominated by President George W. Bush in 2004 to head the Department of Homeland Security, was forced to withdraw seven days later after a cascade of reports detailing his ties to organized crime, extramarital affairs, and gross corruption were revealed.

In 2009 Kerik pleaded guilty to eight felony charges, including corruption, tax fraud and making false statements; for this he was given a lenient three-year sentence at a minimum-security federal prison and was released in 2013. Kerik has since been elevated to the highest echelons of power, rebranding himself as a “criminal justice reform advocate,” he is close friends with President Trump. In December 2018 Kerik celebrated the signing of two “criminal reform” bills with Trump at the White House.

Marc Mukasey has family ties to the Bush administration—his father, Michael Mukasey, was Bush’s last attorney general—and professional ties to Trump, whom he is representing in a case involving the demand by a House committee for Trump Organization financial records held by Deutsche Bank. He is a longtime law partner of Rudy Giuliani, who as mayor of New York City appointed Kerik as police commissioner, and who has been Trump’s principal spokesman on the Mueller investigation.

In a demonstration of these interlocking ties, Mukasey was making a telephone appearance at a hearing in San Diego involving Gallagher when he had to drop out for 15 minutes to deal with a simultaneous hearing in New York City related to the Trump Organization case.

Tim Parlatore, the lead defense attorney for Gallagher, has confirmed that he had previously represented Pete Hegseth, a cohost on the “Fox & Friends” television program which Trump watches avidly, frequently calling in to the program or tweeting

about its contents. Hegseth, a former Marine who has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, lobbied Trump over the phone, in person and on air throughout the trial on behalf of Gallagher. Hegseth frequently used his Fox News platform during the trial to have figures sympathetic to Gallagher lobby for his release. These figures not only included Gallagher's wife and brother, but also congressmen such as Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Ralph Norman (R-SC).

Trump viewed such a segment in March, where Congressman Norman appeared and called for Gallagher to be moved from the brig. Within a day Norman confirmed on Twitter that he had spoken to Trump and on March 30, 2019, Trump tweeted, "In honor of his past service to our Country, Navy Seal #EddieGallagher will soon be moved to less restrictive confinement while he awaits his day in court. Process should move quickly!" Trump cited Fox & Friends and Ralph Norman in his statement.

Within four months Gallagher was acquitted of all the most serious crimes, even though he never claimed he didn't shoot civilians and did not deny stabbing the injured child. In all Gallagher spent only eleven months in confinement for his crimes.

The one crime Gallagher was found guilty of, posing "for an unofficial picture with a human casualty," is the same war crime Representative Hunter admits he is guilty of. "Eddie did one bad thing that I'm guilty of too—taking a picture of the body and saying something stupid," Hunter admitted at a border-issues forum in May with his father, former Rep. Duncan L. Hunter.

Of course that is not the only "bad thing" the California representative has admitted to doing while deployed in the service of US imperialism. Hunter, the first combat veteran from Iraq and Afghanistan to serve in Congress, also admitted on a podcast in May to killing "hundreds of civilians."

"I was an artillery officer, and we fired hundreds of rounds into Fallujah, killed probably hundreds of civilians," he continued. "Probably killed women and children if there were any left in the city when we invaded. So, do I get judged too?"

After Gallagher was released, his wife on one side, Kerik the opposite, Rudy Giuliani and President Trump both Tweeted out their support. Giuliani chided the prosecution for their "overzealous and unethical behavior" while Trump, characteristically, thanked

himself for Gallagher's release, "Congratulations to Navy Seal Eddie Gallagher, his wonder wife Andrea, and his entire family. You have been through much together. Glad I could help!"



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact