

Whistleblower Chelsea Manning criticizes Glenn Greenwald's right-wing politics

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7 September 2021

Whistleblower and former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning has publicly criticized the journalist Glenn Greenwald for his increasingly right-wing politics.

In a series of tweets last Thursday afternoon, Manning wrote that she wanted to return to Greenwald a \$10,000 donation he had given to her because, “i can’t deal with this anymore. im terrified of you and everything you do. you’re greedy, unprincipled, and im embarrassed for ever considering you a friend.”

Manning went on to write that she had “decided that im no longer going to be afraid of saying what’s on my mind anymore or taking a stand from the people that i once considered allies but who have chosen to bash, harass, humiliate, intimidate, and lie to get ahead.”

Although she was not specific in her comments, Manning was clearly responding to the fact that Greenwald has evolved—since his initial defense of the whistleblower in 2010—into a proponent of extreme right-wing politics.

Chelsea Manning was convicted by court-martial in July 2013 of violations of the Espionage Act and other violations after disclosing to WikiLeaks some 750,000 documents that exposed the crimes of the US military in the Afghan and Iraq wars. Manning was imprisoned from 2010 to 2017 for her heroic exposures.

The American journalist Greenwald began his career as a blogger who was critical of US foreign policy and the Iraq War. He contributed to *Salon* in 2007 and to *The Guardian* beginning in 2012 and played a significant role in the exposure of the classified documents about illegal US surveillance programs leaked by NSA contractor Edward Snowden in 2013.

Greenwald was a co-founding editor of *The Intercept*, the independent media organization funded by eBay executive Pierre Omidyar, in 2014. Since that

time, Greenwald evolved in the direction of extreme right-wing politics and appeared regularly on Fox News with the fascistic Tucker Carlson. In October 2020, he resigned from the *The Intercept* to write full-time on Substack over accusations of censorship related to his writing about Hunter Biden.

As analyzed by the *World Socialist Web Site* last week, for example, Greenwald wrote on August 25 that the American public is putting insufficient emphasis on the application of a “cost-benefit analysis” in dealing with the coronavirus. He advocated policies that he acknowledged “will kill people” and called “bizarre” any refusal to consider the “costs” of aggressive measures to stop the pandemic.

In responding to Manning’s criticism, Greenwald posted his own tweet, saying vindictively that “Friendships that depend on political agreement were never ‘friendships,’ just cynical transactions.”

Greenwald then proceeded to publish on Thursday evening a lengthy Substack response to Manning that is both subjective and revealing as to the actual political issues involved in Manning’s criticism.

After taking credit for breaking the story of how Manning “was being tortured and held in inhumane conditions by the Obama administration” and leading “a fundraising campaign for her criminal defense,” Greenwald admits that she “began complaining about my politics and specifically about my going on Fox News” and that the two have not communicated since 2018.

Greenwald went on to characterize Manning’s recent tweet as “a deeply personal and vicious attack” and said that her denunciation was so “vague and lacking in specifics” that it “makes it impossible to defend oneself while ensuring maximum reputational damage to those who want to believe the worst.”

He then wrote that Manning’s “only grievance with me was the same standard political ones that so many other liberals like her voice everyday: my politics changed, I go on Fox News, I am interviewed by Tucker Carlson, etc. etc.” Greenwald said he does not really care who disagrees with his politics but “I do care about widespread defamatory insinuations that I’m some sort of abusive or threatening person, let alone one that ‘terrifies’ people like her.”

Greenwald then published all his Twitter direct message (DM) communications with Chelsea Manning between November 2016 and January 2021. Although Greenwald intended for the exchanges to reveal Manning in a negative light, the DMs show that Manning was growing increasingly uncomfortable with Greenwald’s unprincipled positions and embrace of right-wing politics.

On December 19, for example, Manning wrote to Greenwald, “this Tucker Carlson thing is really really really off mark,” “You’re losing a lot of friends here” and “Who’s side are you on?”

Greenwald replied that Manning’s statements are “extremely disappointing” and that “you finally decided to speak to me in this aggressive tone that relies on an utter distortion of everything I think and said.” To which Manning replied, “I read what you wrote – and it scares me – because I don’t know who’s on what side anymore – it’s fear.”

When Manning pressed Greenwald over his association with Carlson, he wrote, “OK: to be clear: I agree with Tucker on some things and find much of what he does toxic and harmful, which is pretty much how I see most cable news hosts. I think there are worse people on air with big audiences, including [Sean] Hannity. I confronted Tucker about those problems when I interviewed him.”

By January 3, 2021—three days before the fascist coup attempt on the Capitol aimed at blocking the final certification of the results of the 2020 presidential election by Congress—Manning wrote to Greenwald, “you’re constantly exchanging potential material gains for your own benefit—I know you’re living large and all but I’m living in a closet sized apartment in Brooklyn without health insurance and constantly waiting for a break on mass quarantines—you’re causing actual material harm ...”

By June, Tucker Carlson was claiming that the “FBI

operatives were organizing the attack on the Capitol” and effectively exonerated the role of the Trump White House, the Republican Party leadership, individual Republican Party officeholders and the fascist groups such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers in attempting to overthrow the US Constitution.



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