

Alt-news site Gray Zone editor, Max Blumenthal, arrested: 'The charge is 100% false'

by Ben Norton via gayle - Gray Zone Tuesday, Oct 29 2019, 11:30pm

international / prose / post

And with ease was Mr Blumenthal arrested, as almost no reaction to Assange's arrest and court railroading has been evident though the Assange trial is the critical test case. Clearly, many more arrests are to come of the many editors and journos that prefer to broadcast TRUTH rather than the CFR scripted news (propaganda) from criminal elites. As Orwell said, to paraphrase, 'in thoroughly corrupt societies telling the truth becomes a subversive act.'

Very soon nose-ringed and profoundly cowardly populations would wonder how big brother and tyranny became the norm -- well, here's how: YOU/WE all failed to reign in the known corporate/banker criminals that have hijacked our governments/nations, courts and many other social institutions to the point where the leader of the USA now boasts openly of illegally occupying Syria and stealing its valuable oil resources. If this is the world in which the global majority CHOOSES to live then so be it -- but never forget you will reap a whirlwind as you allowed it all to happen. I feel extremely sorry for your kids which you failed miserably to protect. Shame, shame on you gutless wonders,, though at any time you could stop this virulent criminal disease in its tracks by popular demand and social opposition, as was done in the 60's and many times before that. Never in history has the world witnessed such a cowardly, self-centred, frightened global population, you all clearly deserve everything you get.

Max Blumenthal, the editor of the news site The Grayzone, was arrested on the morning of October 25 on a fabricated charge [sound familiar?] related to the siege of the Venezuelan embassy in Washington, DC that took place between April and May.

A team of DC police officers appeared at Blumenthal's door at just after 9 AM, demanding entry and threatening to break his door down. A number of officers had taken positions on the side of his home as though they were prepared for a SWAT-style raid.

Blumenthal was hauled into a police van and ultimately taken to DC central jail, where he was held for two days in various cells and cages. He was shackled by his hands and ankles for over five hours in one such cage along with other inmates. His request for a phone call was denied by DC police and corrections officers, effectively denying him access to the outside world.

Blumenthal was informed that he was accused of simple assault by a Venezuelan opposition member. He declared the charge completely baseless.

"This charge is a 100 percent false, fabricated, bogus, untrue, and malicious lie," Blumenthal declared. "It is clearly part of a campaign of political persecution designed to silence me and the The Grayzone for our factual journalism exposing the deceptions, corruption and violence of the far-right Venezuelan opposition."

The arrest warrant was five months old. According to an individual familiar with the case, the warrant for Blumenthal's arrest was initially rejected. Strangely, this false charge was revived months later without the defendant's knowledge.

"If the government had at least told me I had a warrant I could have voluntarily surrendered and appeared at my own arraignment. I have nothing to fear because I'm completely innocent of this bogus charge," Blumenthal stated. "Instead, the federal government essentially enlisted the DC police to SWAT me, ensuring that I would be subjected to an early morning raid and then languish in prison for days without even the ability to call an attorney."

Background to the embassy siege

In April and May, Washington-backed Venezuelan coup leaders began taking over properties in the United States that belong to the internationally recognized government of Venezuela's democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro, in violation of international law.

A group of activists responded by keeping a vigil inside the Venezuelan embassy in Washington, DC, in order to protect it from an illegal seizure by the US-supported coup leaders. The activists formed what they called the Embassy Protection Collective. The internationally recognized Venezuelan government gave them permission to stay in its embassy, which is its own sovereign territory under international law.

In response, hordes of violent right-wing activists who support the Venezuelan opposition launched a de facto 24/7 siege of the embassy, preventing people, food, and supplies from entering the building.

The Grayzone reporter Anya Parampil and Alex Rubinstein, a contributor to The Grayzone, were embedded in the embassy with several peace activists.

Parampil and journalists including Blumenthal documented the right-wing mobs lashing out with racist and sexist invective as well as violence at Venezuelan solidarity activists who gathered outside the embassy to show support for the protectors.

The Venezuelan coup regime's supposed ambassador to the United States, Carlos Vecchio, who is not recognized by the United Nations and the vast majority of the international community, helped to lead this aggressive mob as it besieged the embassy.

The Grayzone's Anya Parampil exposed Vecchio to be a former lawyer for the oil corporation Exxon. The Grayzone has documented his close links to the US government, and has reported at length on accusations of corruption. Vecchio was a regular presence outside the DC embassy, appearing with his gaggle to stage manage the situation.

The Grayzone has also published numerous exposés on Venezuelan coup leader Juan Guaidó, who was selected by the US government to be the so-called "interim president" in Caracas, detailing his extensive ties to Washington and his notorious corruption.

Blumenthal was arrested literally hours after The Grayzone published an article on USAID paying the salaries of Guaidó's team as they lobbied the US government.

"I am firmly convinced that this case is part of a wider campaign of political persecution using the legal system to shut down our factual investigative journalism about the coup against Venezuela and the wider policy of economic warfare and regime change waged by the Trump administration,"

Blumenthal stated.

If this had happened to a journalist in Venezuela, every Western human rights NGO and news wire would be howling about Maduro's authoritarianism. It will be revealing to see how these same elements react to a clear-cut case of political repression in their own backyard.

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