

One Day After Sentencing, CIA Whistleblower Jeffrey Sterling Tells His Side of the Story

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Jeffrey Sterling, who has maintained his innocence, was sentenced on Monday to 42 months in prison for leaking national security secrets. (Screenshot via *The Invisible Man*)

One day after a federal court sentenced the former CIA officer to 42 months in prison for allegedly blowing the whistle on a botched CIA mission, Jeffrey Sterling is sharing his side of the story.

In *The Invisible Man: Whistleblower Jeffrey Sterling*, a short documentary released Tuesday, Sterling describes how his experience with racial discrimination within the CIA took him from working as an Agency case manager, to living out of his car, to years later facing charges under the Espionage Act for supposedly leaking national intelligence secrets to *New York Times* journalist James Risen.

The film was directed by Judith Erlich, whose past works include the Oscar-nominated *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers*.

“They already had the machine geared up against me,” Sterling said. “The moment that they felt there was a leak, every finger pointed at Jeffery Sterling.”

Sterling, who has maintained his innocence, says he had lawfully approached the Senate Intelligence Committee to express concerns over certain CIA operations and the impact those missions might have on the safety of troops in Iraq.

Prior to reporting those concerns, however, Sterling had filed racial discrimination charges against the CIA, becoming the first CIA case officer ever to do so. That case was eventually dismissed on the grounds that its details might compromise national security and Sterling was eventually fired.

Years later, after meeting his wife and moving on to a job in the health care industry, Sterling was told by his attorneys that he was being looked at as a possible leak.

Sterling, who was [convicted](#) on January 26, 2015, said, “It was a shock. It’s still a shock. He added, “They shut me up with my discrimination case and they closed the door on me with the criminal case.”

You can watch the film below:

[The Invisible Man](#) from [Judith Ehrlich](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Throughout the case, Sterling’s supporters have denounced the injustice of the charges and sentencing, particularly as it contrasts with the recent plea bargain deal granted to former CIA chief General David Petraeus, who leaked troves of classified material to his mistress and biographer Paula Broadwell.

Norman Solomon, executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy and coordinator of whistleblower advocacy organization ExposeFacts.org, who produced the Sterling documentary, [told Democracy Now!](#) on Tuesday that the sentence marks a “continuation of the war on whistleblowing and journalism and a clampdown on the essential flow of information for democracy” under the Obama administration.

“General Petraeus’s ‘fondle on the wrist’ by the government was hovering over the courtroom yesterday,” Solomon continued, “showing the absurdity and tyranny of what the administration continues to do.”

In a press statement following the sentencing, former CIA analyst Ray McGovern said: “It seems clear that the White House told the Department of Justice to make an example of Jeffrey Sterling—an example of what one can expect if s/he decides to blow the whistle.”

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