

Person of Interest? The Detention of journalist Kit Klarenberg

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Kit Klarenberg is an investigative journalist exploring the role of intelligence services in shaping politics and perceptions. He hosts the podcast 'Active Measures' with **Alex Rubinstein**. He has contributed to the GrayZone and Mint Press News and he also has a substack at [kitklarenberg.com](#). His work exposing state crimes against democracy has made him an honoree for the 2022 Indy Media Awards.

In the September 13th edition of Global Research News Hour, Klarenberg describes to host **Michael Welch** the incredible violation of his rights directed to him by Anti-terrorism officers at Luton airport in London, England in May of 2023.

Global Research: A year ago, they took you off the plane and really fielded you aggressively. I wonder if you could talk about or introduce our listeners to that subject of being a target of this collective, and what happened to you.

Kit Klarenberg: Well, yeah, that was May 2023. So I mean, just, I mean, there's a bit of

background. I mean, I've lived in Serbia for a number of years.

I got trapped here during the pandemic, and it was a good place to get trapped because they didn't lock down and they didn't have all these insane mandates. But anyway, the point is, yes, I've called Serbia home for a number of years. I flew back to the UK to visit a relative who was, from my perspective, at least, like at that time, on their deathbed, and I thought that I would never see them again.

I had reservations about going because the previous summer, due to my reporting on Paul Mason's leaked emails, I had a British detective email me inviting me to an interview in London to discuss charges under the, quote unquote, computer misuse act, i.e. reporting on leaked information in the public interest. And so I was, to say the least, ever so slightly worried. Now, when I landed in Luton, one of the world's worst airports by some considerable margin, there was a team of armed counter-terror officers waiting for me on the tarmac.

They escorted me into the airport, and I was given the option of submitting to a six-hour long interview in which I would not have the right to silence. I would have to answer every question put to me, and I would have to hand over the PINs and passcodes to my digital devices, or face arrest and a prison sentence of up to six months for non-compliance.

GR: How many were there?

KK: There were six of them waiting for me, and there were more in the terminal waiting for me.

They'd done their homework in terms of digging into my background and my reporting. I proceeded to be interrogated very intensively for six solid hours as someone who has ADHD, being stuck in a windowless, airless, extremely hot room without access to any form of contact with the outside world, without food, without water.

GR: Without access to a lawyer.

KK: Yeah, that was about as much fun as you can imagine. Now, I was asked a wide variety of questions about my political beliefs, why I write, think, and say the things that I do, but also, yes, specific questions about my reporting, and also just completely insane queries about my relationship, or indeed Grayzone's relationship, with the FSB, which is to say Russia's federal security service. Of course, these were ludicrous, and I almost laughingly dismissed them, I mean, as the rubbish that they were, and then I'm asked, well, why are you responding so strongly? Look, it never, it just went on, it went on forever, and I think that what's really interesting, and this is a point I've made on Twitter and it does bear endlessly repeating, that my, me getting stopped like this, it created an enormous amount of bad publicity for the British state.

There were mainstream figures, including people, to their credit, with whom I'd had crossed words with in the past, who were speaking up about this and condemning it and saying it was wrong. I, there, I was invited onto mainstream news networks in the US to, and other countries, to talk about what happened to me. There was, there were celebrities tweeting about, about what, about my detention.

This, I thought that this might be some deterrent to the British state doing this to other

independent journalists. Since me, they've gone after Craig Murray, the former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, who blew the whistle on CIA and MI6 complicity and torture in that country. They've gone after Richie Medhurst, who is an independent journalist, mainly reporting on Gaza.

He was, like myself, had a team of officers waiting for him when he flew into Heathrow. He was, he was, he was outright arrested and thrown in a cell for 24 hours as a result of this, and he remains on bail and must present himself back in the UK in three months time. They've gone after Sarah Wilkinson, another independent journalist covering Palestine.

This is like some, some meek, mild, I mean, well, maybe not meek and mild in terms of her reporting, but like, she is just a very sweet middle-aged woman who had a team of a dozen balaclavid counter-terror officials kick in her door, arrest her, and she was initially released from this with bail conditions that stated that she couldn't use a laptop, a phone, or the internet. I mean, quite how she was expected to do any work or function as a human being with these restrictions isn't clear. Thankfully, by the grace of God, they have been undone, and she's back covering the genocide in Gaza.

You know, the British authorities, it seems at this point, are drunk with power and completely unconcerned about the negative publicity arising from their heavy-handed treatment. To say the least, I am unenthused about returning to the UK ever again. You know, if needs must, I might consider it, but for the time being, I'm very happy in Serbia, where I might add as well, for all of the the brickbats which are hurled at this country, and it's people who I consider to be, you know, fundamentally decent, to put it mildly, there was national outcry here when I got stopped.

There was a very prominent TV show run, which is, I think it's the most watched news show in the country, and when the host, who's regarded as a bit of a national treasure, his name is Marij, found out about this, he was like, this is an absolute disgrace, and the world must know about it, and he like pretty much demanded that I come on to talk about what had happened to me, and so it's like, and I had political parties and press organizations here talk up in my favour. Now, I think that's a very, it is a huge disparity with the British response, where the National Union of Journalists initially issued a statement in solidarity with me, but then deleted it due to backlash. There were a number of mainstream figures who did justify what happened to me, and claimed that it was, yes, legitimate and right that it was done.

And so, yeah, it's the Britain I grew up in, what prided itself on being, you know, a land of freedom, and in the birthplace of liberal democracy. We are very far from that right now.

GR: Is there in some sense, is it deliberate to get the media on board so that anybody who's thinking about putting out, you know, inconvenient messaging or whatever, this is what you're up against, okay? And also, the fact that maybe they're trying to change the way media is reporting on this stuff. Well, what do you think about that?

KK: Yeah, sure.

I mean, I do think that the British media in general is extraordinarily bad, and co-opted. But yeah, I do think that there is a sense of intimidation. There is a belief that this will create a chilling effect.

I would like to think that this is wrongheaded and erroneous, because I think a large number

of people, including people who would otherwise be very quiet, passive, complacent liberals, have had enough of all of this. You know, I mean, Europe is collapsing economically. Its political system is producing parties and candidates who are completely indistinguishable from one another.

People want something different, and they also can see very plainly the repression and abuse and brutality that's being meted out to anyone who dares deviate from the state line. I mean, you know, you look at Germany, where there are videos of armoured riot police beating young girls because they are walking around with Palestine flags. People are being prosecuted in that country and others for Palestine solidarity, for exercising their basic free speech, freedom of assembly rights, you know, the very hard-fought and hard-won freedoms.

And so I think that actually, rather than deterring people, it is radicalizing people further, because they can actually see the systems in which they've been living and not what they've been told they are. They are considerably more repressive than they've been led to believe. And yeah, people are looking for alternatives.

A feel-good story out of the last UK election in July was the fact that several completely independent candidates, who didn't have any real presence in the mainstream and had no money, got elected to parliament on explicit Palestine solidarity platforms. So, you know, it's usually right when repressive power structures are on the brink of collapse that they become their most repressive. It is a shame.

We have to live through that period of it. But the long-term view is a lot brighter than it might seem now, I like to think anyway.

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