

If I'm Not a Political Prisoner, Judge, Who Is?

by Edgar J. Steele

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"There is an attempt by some to call Mr. Steele's case a politically-motivated prosecution. That is not true." Thus spoke the judge at my recent sentencing hearing. Ok, judge - if not true, then *why did you feel compelled to deny that I am a political prisoner?*

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then why did you secretly listen in on my privileged attorney-client discussions during breaks at trial?

If I'm not a political prisoner, then why did you keep my world-class forensic sound experts and linguist from telling the jury how those two recordings *clearly* were fabrications? (351 anomalies, judge. 351! Just *one* was enough to put the lie to them.)

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, *why did you deny me a public trial?* (29 sidebar conferences, all those secret hearings from which even I was excluded and all those sealed and now disappearing documents!)

If I'm not a political prisoner, then why did you let Federal Prosecutor Whelan use the US Marshals Service secretly to record all my "privileged" attorney-client telephone calls and in-person private conferences, as well as to open my "privileged" legal mail to attorneys?

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then why did you sustain virtually *every* prosecution objection at trial, while denying virtually every defense objection?

If I'm not a political prisoner, then why didn't you let my trial witnesses testify to much of anything, while granting the prosecution every possible indulgence, with the result that the federal prosecutor's case took a week and my own defense was forced by you into *less than a single day?*

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then why did you deny my key witness' testimony by *live* video feed from outside the US, while allowing the prosecution to play the *taped* deposition of their foreign witness? Did you forget that the US Constitution reserved the "Right of Confrontation" to criminal defendants, *not* the government?

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then why did you force me to choose between my key witness' testimony and my Constitutional right to not testify? And, *why did you then alter the trial transcript to cover up the evidence of your having done so?*

If I'm not a political prisoner, then why did you consistently deny me the right to present evidence and testimony that showed the government, especially the FBI, "in a bad light," though that excluded virtually *all* my evidence in this, a case *about* government misconduct?

If I'm not a political prisoner, then why am I, once again, being held virtually incommunicado, in max-security, full-lockdown, solitary confinement, though I have proven to be the model inmate after 18 months, most of *that* in solitary, too?

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then *why did you sentence me to 50 years*, despite my age, poor health and the fact that ax murderers routinely walk after 8 years?

Why are there so many other inmates here, in prison and in jail, who consider *themselves* to be political prisoners?

If I'm not a political prisoner, judge, then why has America's prison population *tripled* in the last generation (20 years), now to stand at *6 times* that (per capita) of any other nation in the world, far surpassing Russia in the mid-1900s, WWII Germany and modern-day communist China?

If I am not a political prisoner, judge, why did you have to stack the deck against me, then deal from the bottom, *anyway*?

Simple fairness, judge, is all for which I ever have asked. *If I'm not a political prisoner, why couldn't you have afforded me simple fairness?*

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