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PROGRAM CBS Morning News

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SUBJECT Homosexuality in the Government

BILL KURTIS: Our next guest is John William Green, a conservative Republican who is suing the CIA for $1 million and restoration of his security clearances.

Mr. Green works for TRW, a defense contractor, but when the CIA learned that he was a homosexual it revoked the clearances that enabled him to do his job.

Welcome, Mr. Green.

JOHN WILLIAM GREEN: Thank you.

KURTIS: Thank you for joining us.

Let me sum up the case so we can comment it. You worked for TRW for about 12 years. You assumed that everyone knew of your homosexuality. You held five separate security clearances, and then one day it all changed. What happened?

GREEN: October 1981, my lover, who worked at TRW at the time, was being submitted for one of these special accesses. He gave me as a reference. During the interview, I was very open with the lady investigator, saying things like, well, you couldn't have come to a better person because of the closeness of our relationship. And when she left, she asked me point blank if I considered it a long-term relationship. I said I do.

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Three weeks later, she showed up at my lover's office and asked him directly if we were having a homosexual relationship. He said yes. He called me immediately. Then, in a very short sequence, two other friends -- she appeared at their office and home, asking similar type questions. They answered, yes, I am homosexual.

At that time, I realized that after holding my clearances for a span of over 12 years at the time, and thinking that they were given to me on my personal integrity, I was wrong. I was absolutely wrong. So, I went to TRW Security, at least to keep my company from being embarrassed by a sudden irrevocation of my clearances. I told them about the investigation. They said they would have to notify the customers, and shortly thereafter I was suspended, and a few months later my clearances were revoked.

KURTIS: They say gays are subject to blackmail and are high security risks as one reason for not allowing them to hold the jobs and those clearances. How do you feel?

GREEN: Anybody who has something to be blackmailed about is a security risk. I've lived all my life openly gay. I am not a security risk. I never have been. I haven't any quarrel with the -- the basic concept of being blackmailed as opposed to being a security risk.

KURTIS: Let's bring someone else into the conversation now from Phoenix. Joining us from station KTSP-TV is Admiral Stansfield Turner who was Director of the CIA from 1977 to 1981.

Admiral Turner, thank you for joining us.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Good morning, Bill.

KURTIS: You've heard the facts. In fact, a similar kind of case came up during your tenure there as Director...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

KURTIS: ...and, how did you react?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I found it necessary to dismiss an employee who was a CIA employee, not a contractor employee, who'd been there for a number of years, Bill.

The point is that even if a homosexual admits his homosexuality and, therefore, is less vulnerable to blackmail than one who hides it, there is still in our country a definite stigma on being a homosexual. In addition, the record shows

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that "homosexual families", so-called, are less stable than regular heterosexual families. Therefore, there's more likely to be emotional instability. The person is a little less secure as a security risk.

KURTIS: What about the blackmail issue? Is that the number one priority in your thinking?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I think it's just the overall situation of stability and reliability.

We also have a particular problem in the CIA -- I don't think it applies to Mr. Green -- and that is that in 53 countries around the world homosexuality is illegal and, therefore, a person practicing that in those countries if he were sent there by the CIA is subject to definite blackmail.

KURTIS: Let's give Mr. Green a chance to speak to that.

You have filed suit. What do you feel about this statement?

GREEN: Well, with respect to stability, I think I probably -- I'm not exceptional in my lifestyle. I -- I've only had two lovers. My first lover and I were together 21 years. Now that's probably a pretty good record for heterosexual relationships.

KURTIS: A stable relationship, would you say?

GREEN: Yes, a very stable relationship.

My present lover and I have been together for four-and-a-half years, a totally monogamous relationship. I take exception to that because I know a lot more heterosexual people that I would call unstable.

KURTIS: Only a few seconds left, and I want to give Admiral Turner a chance to tell us whether or not the government's policy will change.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think it will. What we're trying to do here is balance two interests. On the one hand, the importance of protecting our national secrets. On the other hand, the imporotance of allow a homosexual to be treated equally with a heterosexual.

I think if you asked the vast majority of American public which of those interests they would put foremost, it would always be protecting our national secrets.

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We've come a long way in accepting homosexuality in our country, but we haven't come so far as to treat it as a right, like the right of minorities, to be treated equally.

KURTIS: I guess you're at the end of the line, John Green. Perhaps your lawsuit will settle things.

GREEN: Perhaps it will. There is a definite "Catch 22" here. You see, all I needed to do after having five clearances was to have kept my mouth shut and be a closet case and, ergo, perhaps blackmailable.

The CIA is forcing this on me, not me on them. They're the ones that create the security risks.

KURTIS: As usual, we only have time to scratch the surface of a very interesting issue.

We thank you both for joining us -- Admiral Turner and John Green.

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