



MARCH 3RD, 2011

Reporters Without Borders
Clothilde Le Coz
1500 K Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC, 20005

WILLIAM DEAN SINGLETON,
MEDIANEWS GROUP CORPORATE

101 WEST COLFAX AVE

SUITE 1100
DENVER CO 80202

Dear Mr. Singleton,

Reporters Without Borders, an international organization defending freedom of the press and freedom of expression worldwide, is surprised to learn about *The Denver Post's* decision in February to immediately file a lawsuit against Brian Hill, instead of simply asking him to remove the photo from his blog uswgo.com (<http://uswgo.com/>).

After posting a photo to his personal blog - which he has never profited from - Hill was notified by Righthaven LLC, acting on your behalf, that he may pay \$6,000 to close the case or fight against a \$150,000 lawsuit in court. Hill, 20, who receives Social Security payments, cannot afford the lesser amount and is planning to defend himself in court.

Righthaven LLC has filed a total of 32 lawsuits in Colorado federal court, regarding the specific police pat-down *Denver Post* photo. Righthaven LLC has also acquired copyrights from Stephens Media LLC, owner of the Las Vegas Review-Journal, which has filed more than 230 lawsuits in Nevada last year. Thus, another copyright lawsuit Righthaven LLC introduced was against Bill Hyatt, over re-posting a Review-Journal article to his blog. Just like Hill, Hyatt has been the target of a \$150,000 lawsuit.

We were surprised to witness such behavior here, in the United States, while this is generally a phenomenon Reporters Without Borders witnesses in authoritarian

Reporters Without Borders defends imprisoned journalists and press freedom throughout the world. It has nine national sections (Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). It has representatives in London, New York, Tokyo and Washington and more than 120 correspondents worldwide.

Contact : Clothilde Le Coz - DC Director
clc@rsf.org - 202 256 5613 - 1500 K street NW #600, Washington, DC, 20009

regimes to silence netizens and intimidate journalists, bloggers and others. Therefore, we ask you to drop the lawsuit against him and find a reasonable compromise regarding his case.

As MediaNews Group Inc. is one of the largest newspaper publishers in the US, we fully understand the copyright issues that the *The Denver Post* has to face and we are not at all supporting the theft of a picture. However, this decision led Brian Hill to close down his website, which constitutes a very bad precedent for freedom of the press in the US. Though we believe news organizations deserve to make money off their creative work, Reporters Without Borders urges *The Denver Post* to reconsider its approach to these lawsuits. We suggest that you first ask bloggers and other secondary users of materials to first remove content before taking such drastic actions. This would help keep a vigorous decision of timely issues alive while guarding against silencing and censorship themselves – as Hill did when he shut down his blog.

We are confident that you will consider our position carefully and we looking forward to hearing back from you,

Sincerely yours,



Jean-Francois Julliard
Reporters Without Borders
General Secretary



Clothilde Le Coz
Reporters Without Borders
Washington DC Director

Reporters Without Borders defends imprisoned journalists and press freedom throughout the world. It has nine national sections (Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). It has representatives in London, New York, Tokyo and Washington and more than 120 correspondents worldwide.

Contact : Clothilde Le Coz - DC Director
clc@rsf.org - 202 256 5613 - 1500 K street NW #600, Washington, DC, 20009