

# US Intelligence Analyst Leaked Classified Defense Info to His CNBC Lover



By NWV Senior Political News Writer, Jim Kouri

An employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) pleaded guilty Thursday to charges related to his disclosure of classified national defense information (NDI) to two journalists in 2018 and 2019.

Henry Kyle Frese, a Pentagon counter-terrorism analyst is accused of leaking classified documents related to North Korea and China to CNBC's Amanda Macias and another reporter from a CNBC affiliated news organization.

Macias was Frese's paramour, according to court documents and social media posts. Matthew Keys was the first to [identify](#) Macias as "Journalist 1" in Justice Department reports and statement and MSNBCs' [Courtney Kube](#) is the other

A [criminal complaint](#) filed on October 9 in Eastern District of Virginia federal court stated that Frese was "caught red-handed disclosing sensitive national security information for personal gain." The DOJ complaint adds that the disclosure of the information, "could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave harm to the national security of the United States." He was hired in January 2017 as a contractor and then became a full-time employee with the ultimate level

security clearance.

"Frese violated the trust placed in him by the American people when he disclosed sensitive national security information for personal gain," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers.

"He alerted our country's adversaries to sensitive national defense information, putting the nation's security at risk. The government takes these breaches seriously and will use all the resources at our disposal to apprehend and prosecute those who jeopardize the safety of this country and its citizens," Demers stated.

"Henry Kyle Frese was entrusted with Top Secret information related to the national defense of our country," said G. Zachary Terwilliger, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

"Frese violated that trust, the oath he swore to uphold, and engaged in felonious conduct at the expense of our country. This case should serve as a clear reminder to all of those similarly entrusted with National Defense Information that unilaterally disclosing such information for personal gain, or that of others, is not selfless or heroic, it is criminal," head prosecutor warned.

"Mr. Frese violated his sworn oath to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States by using his access to the United States' most sensitive information and steal state secrets for nothing more than personal gain," said Robert Wells, Acting Assistant Director of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division. "The men and women of the FBI who investigated this case swore the same oath but unlike Mr. Frese, they chose to uphold it. I am proud of the work they did to hold Mr. Frese accountable for his actions."

"By disseminating the same classified information he had pledged to protect, Henry Kyle Frese put the US and our

national defense equities in danger,” said Timothy R. Slater, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Washington Field Office. “The US Government and the American public depend on trusted government employees to keep such information out of the hands of our adversaries, who could use it to cause us harm. The FBI’s counterintelligence mission is to protect our country’s information and secrets in order to safeguard our future; and the men and women of the FBI will continue to work hard to preserve that information.”

According to court documents, Henry Kyle Frese, 31, of Alexandria, was employed by DIA as a counter terrorism analyst from February 2018 to October 2019, and held a Top Secret//Sensitive Compartmented Information security clearance. United States government agencies have confirmed that in the spring and summer of 2018, News Outlet 1 (CNBC) published eight articles, all authored by the same journalist (Amanda Macias) that contained classified NDI that related to the capabilities of certain foreign countries’ weapons systems.

The Justice Department’s Press Release of Feb. 20, 2020 stated:

*These articles contained classified intelligence from five intelligence reports (the Compromised Intelligence Reports) made available to appropriately cleared recipients in the first half of 2018. The topic of all of these initial five Compromised Intelligence Reports – foreign countries’ weapons systems – was outside the scope of Frese’s job duties as an analyst covering CT topics, according to the Justice Department statement.*

*The media articles, and the intelligence reporting from which they were derived, both contained information that is classified up to the TS//SCI level, indicating that its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in exceptionally grave damage to the national security. The*

*intelligence reporting was marked as such.*

*According to court documents, Frese and Journalist 1 lived together at the same residential address from January 2018 to November 2018. Throughout 2018 and 2019, Frese and Journalist 1 "followed" each other on Twitter, and on at least two occasions Frese re-Tweeted Journalist 1's Tweets announcing the publications of articles containing NDI classified at the Top Secret level.*

*In or about April of 2018, Journalist 1 introduced Frese to a second journalist (Journalist 2). Subsequently, Frese began texting and speaking with Journalist 2 by telephone. Between mid-2018 and late September 2019, Frese orally transmitted NDI classified at the Top Secret level to Journalist 1 on 12 separate occasions, and orally transmitted NDI classified at the Secret level to Journalist 1 on at least four occasions. Frese knew the information was classified at the Secret and Top Secret levels because the intelligence products from which he had learned the classified information had visible classification markings as to the classification level of the information, and the intelligence products accessed by Frese were stored on secure, classified government information systems.*

*In relation to one of the 12 times Frese orally transmitted Top Secret NDI to Journalist 1, in or about mid-April to early May 2018, Frese accessed an intelligence report unrelated to his job duties on multiple occasions, which contained NDI classified at the Top Secret//SCI level (Intelligence Report 1). A week after Frese accessed Intelligence Report 1 for the second time, Frese received an April 27, 2018 Twitter Direct Message (DM) from Journalist 1 asking whether Frese would be willing to speak with Journalist 2. Frese stated that he was "down" to help Journalist 2 if it helped Journalist 1 "progress." During the same April 27, 2018, Twitter exchange, Journalist 1 indicated that a certain United States military official told Journalist 2 that the official was not aware of*

the subject matter discussed in Intelligence Report 1. Frese characterized the official's denial as "weird" and commented on the source of information contained within Intelligence Report 1.

Several days after the April 27, 2018, Twitter exchange, Frese searched on a classified United States government computer system for terms related to the topics contained in Intelligence Report 1. A few hours after searching for terms related to the topic of Intelligence Report 1, Frese spoke by telephone with Journalist 1, and several hours later he spoke by telephone with Journalist 2. Immediately after the call with Journalist 2, Journalist 1 called Frese. During at least one of the calls with Journalist 1 and Journalist 2, Frese orally passed Top Secret NDI derived from Intelligence Report 1. Approximately 30 minutes after Frese spoke with the two journalists, Journalist 1 published an article (Article 1) which contained Top Secret NDI, orally communicated by Frese and derived from Intelligence Report 1 classified at the Top Secret//SCI level.

On at least 30 separate occasions in 2018, Frese conducted searches on classified government systems for information regarding the classified topics he discussed with Journalists 1 and 2. On multiple occasions in 2018 and 2019, Frese conducted searches on classified government systems because of specific requests for information from Journalists 1 and 2.

Additionally, between early 2018 and October 2019, Frese communicated with an employee of an overseas CT consulting group (Consultant 1) via social media. On at least two occasions, Frese transmitted classified NDI related to CT topics to Consultant 1, using a social media site's direct messaging feature.

Frese pleaded guilty to the willful transmission of Top Secret national defense information, and faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison when sentenced on June 18, 2020, at 9:30

*am. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.*

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