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**THE FORGOTTEN
MAN... IN UNIFORM...
LESS THAN A FULL
CITIZEN**





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The Forgotten Man... In Uniform... Less Than a Full Citizen

When the military decides it needs a scapegoat, it has a thousand tools at its disposal to ensure the chosen fall guy never has a fair chance to fight back. The case of [Navy Captain \(Retired\) Bradley Geary](#) is a clear example of just how far the services will go – not just to tilt the playing field, but to bulldoze it entirely.

Geary faced over 1,000 pages of an administrative investigation against him. To prepare his rebuttal, he and his lawyer requested access to the full Report of Investigation. What they got instead was a charade of access: a small, government-issued laptop locked inside a secure facility, available only for limited hours. Geary was allowed to take nothing but handwritten notes on a small legal pad. Imagine trying to mount a defense against a thousand-page, career-ending report with nothing but fragments of notes scribbled during a restricted window of access.

Worse, this setup forced him to spend thousands of dollars just to have his lawyer physically present. In any normal legal process, his attorney could have been sent the report, combed through the evidence, and worked with Geary virtually. Instead, the military created artificial barriers, requiring travel, lodging, and on-site attorney time. This was not an accident—it was by design. The intent was clear: disadvantage the subject of the investigation, isolate him, and drain his resources until a meaningful defense became impossible.

And here's the kicker: this entire ordeal unfolded within an *administrative* process, not a criminal one. Administrative actions in the military are not bound by the due process protections of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Congress, and the American public, rarely grasp the implications of this gap. A service member can be involuntarily separated with an “Other Than Honorable” (OTH) discharge, stripped of their benefits, their reputation, and their livelihood—without ever having the protections afforded to someone accused of shoplifting a pack of gum at the corner store. And once it happens, there is no meaningful legal recovery. Thanks to the Feres Doctrine, service members cannot sue for damages when their



rights are trampled.

That means the men and women who wear the uniform – the very people entrusted with our nation’s defense – are, in a very real sense, *less than full citizens*. President Franklin Roosevelt once spoke of the “*forgotten man*.” Today, the forgotten men and women are in uniform. They are the soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and guardians forced to shoulder the blame for institutional cowardice while being systematically denied the tools to fight back.

And before anyone rushes to parrot the tired line – “*well, they knew what they were signing up for when they joined the military*” – let’s call that out for what it is: nonsense. I enlisted at seventeen. At seventeen, I barely knew what my own face looked like in the mirror, much less the intricacies of military justice, the Feres Doctrine, or the lifelong consequences of being stripped of citizenship-level rights in the name of “good order and discipline.” Nobody signs up to serve their country expecting to be denied the very protections the Constitution guarantees every other American.

The Geary case isn’t just one man’s ordeal. It’s a stark reminder of a system designed not for justice, but for expedience, self-protection, and scapegoating. Until Congress and the public demand change, our service members will remain trapped in this twilight zone of half-citizenship – asked to give everything, while being denied the most basic safeguards of the law.



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Feel free to reach out privately at francescagraham@walkthetalkfoundation.org or in the comments.

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