

## **Bezos mentions of Nationwide Enquirer's ties to Saudi fuels hypothesis, however specialists say declare of 'gov entity' may be 'sizzling air'.**

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Jeff Bezos's private investigator's suggestion that a "government entity" could have acquired racy pictures of him, coupled with the Amazon CEO's mentions of Saudi Arabia in his blog post targeting the National Enquirer, has fueled speculation about whether the Middle Eastern kingdom is involved in the scandal.

On Thursday, The Amazon founder took the extraordinary step of accusing American Media Inc. (AMI), the parent company of the Enquirer, of threatening to publish "intimate photos" of him, including a "below the belt selfie" and other potentially compromising photos of his reported girlfriend, former TV anchor Lauren Sanchez, if he did not end an investigation into the company and its alleged political ties.

### **JEFF BEZOS: NATIONAL ENQUIRER'S PARENT COMPANY THREATENED TO PUBLISH LURID SELFIES, OTHER 'INTIMATE PHOTOS OF ME'**

Bezos said he has given an unlimited budget to his lead private investigator, Gavin de Becker, to investigate the outlet after the Enquirer published a story last month that included lurid texts between the billionaire and Sanchez.

AMI has denied the charges of blackmail and said the company acted "lawfully," according to the statement provided to Fox News. The company pledged to "promptly and thoroughly investigate the claims" made by Bezos.

In Bezos' blog post, the Amazon mogul wrote David Pecker, the chairman and CEO of American Media Inc., and his company "have also been investigated for various actions they've taken on behalf of the Saudi Government."

The Washington Post, of which Bezos is the owner, has extensively reported on Saudi Arabia's killing of columnist Jamal Khashoggi. Bezos noted that not only is his newspaper "unpopular in certain circles," he himself has become the "enemy" for some people due to his ownership of the newspaper.

Without providing additional information or context, Bezos later added: "Several days ago, an AMI leader advised us that Mr. Pecker is 'apoplectic' about our investigation. For reasons still to be better understood, the Saudi angle seems to hit a particularly sensitive nerve."

The mentions of Saudi Arabia drew attention after a Washington Post reporter told MSNBC that the investigators believe the CEO's intimate text messages may have been acquired by a "government entity."

"They have begun to believe, the Bezos camp, that this publication by the National Enquirer might have been politically motivated," said Manuel Roig-Franzia.

"Gavin de Becker told us that he does not believe that Jeff Bezos' phone was hacked, he thinks it's possible that a government entity might have gotten hold of his text messages," without clarifying whether the investigators believe it was a domestic or foreign entity.

#### JEFF BEZOS' INVESTIGATOR BELIEVES 'GOVERNMENT ENTITY' MAY HAVE OBTAINED TEXTS: WASHPO REPORTER

Patrick Eddington, of the Cato Institute think tank, is not convinced by the claim that a government entity could have intercepted Bezos' communications.

"What I'm seeing is basically a lot of hot air and allegations that are being made in the absence of providing any proof for public inspection. That by itself is problematic," he told Fox News.

"For me one of the red flags right out of the box is that Gavin de Becker's associates have not released any kind of formal written technical analysis describing how this allegedly took place.

"Secondly, if Mr. Bezos believes that his communications were intercepted by a government entity – any government entity – he should have had his counsel contact the Department of Justice and ask for an investigation," he added, noting that Bezos and his associates haven't yet apparently contacted either House or Senate intelligence committee regarding the matter.

"When I see allegations like that, the first question I have is, did they reach out to the DOJ, did they ask for an investigation from any U.S. government entity before they made their public claims," Eddington added.

"If they didn't reach out beforehand for an investigation, it raises a whole series of credibility questions."