

Guardian Editor Says Newspaper Forced to Destroy Hard Drives

By [Thomas Gaist](#)

Global Research, August 21, 2013

[World Socialist Web Site](#)

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

In a [comment](#) published Monday, *Guardian* editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger wrote that he and other *Guardian* journalists were faced with unofficial threats of legal action by the British government, and therefore were forced to destroy hard drives containing material from whistle blower Edward Snowden.

The revelation came in the aftermath of the detention of David Miranda, the partner of *Guardian* journalist Glenn Greenwald, by British authorities in a blatant act of political intimidation. (See, "[Detention of Glenn Greenwald's partner approved at highest levels of US and UK governments](#)")

The British government acted swiftly to suppress exposures of its criminal activities and the activities of its US partners. One day after the first article was published in the *Guardian* on NSA surveillance, the UK government issued a Defence Advisory Notice to the newspaper, warning that future such articles might threaten "national security" and "UK personnel."

Rusbridger writes that two months ago he was contacted by "a very senior government official claiming to represent the views of the prime minister" about the Snowden material, which, as Rusbridger learned through a series of subsequent meetings with government agents, the state wanted to be destroyed or handed over. Rusbridger says he was told by an official, "You've had your fun. Now we want the stuff back."

According to Rusbridger, "two GCHQ security experts" oversaw the destruction of hard drives containing material from Snowden in the basement of the newspaper's office. The government agents supervised and reportedly cracked jokes as the journalists "swept up the remains of a MacBook Pro," after using drills and grinders to smash memory chips containing encrypted files.

Rusbridger says that there are other copies of the destroyed files and that the *Guardian* will continue to report on the surveillance from America and Brazil.

"We were faced with an ultimatum by the British government that if we didn't hand back or destroy it, they would move to law," Rusbridger added in an interview with the *Guardian*.

Rusbridger wrote in his comment, "The state that is building such a formidable apparatus of surveillance will do its best to prevent journalists from reporting on it. Most journalists can see that. But I wonder how many have truly understood the absolute threat to journalism implicit in the idea of total surveillance, when or if it comes—and, increasingly, it looks like 'when.'"

The editor added, "I think what Snowden is trying to draw attention to is the degree to which we are on a road to total surveillance. In these documents there is the stated ambition to scoop up everything, to store it all, and to master the Internet, this is the language that is being used internally, and Snowden waved a big red flag."

Asked during in an interview with *World at One* whether his team of journalists has held back from publishing anything about GCHQ and UK security services because of "worries about national security," Rusbridger said "Yes, we've held back a great deal, we've published a small amount of what we have read."

The original source of this article is [World Socialist Web Site](#)
Copyright © [Thomas Gaist](#), [World Socialist Web Site](#), 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Thomas Gaist](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca