

Inconsistencies and Unanswered Questions: The Risks of Trusting the Snowden Story

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Global Research, January 01, 2014

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Region: [USA](#)

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

Last June, [Glenn Greenwald at The Guardian](#) revealed that Edward Snowden was the NSA insider behind “one of the most significant leaks in US political history.” Snowden explained his motivations through Greenwald by saying, “There are more important things than money.... harming people isn’t my goal. Transparency is.”

Such altruistic motivations were welcome news at the time but have come into question recently given that only a tiny fraction of the documents have been released nearly a year after Snowden started working with Greenwald. Perhaps more importantly, billionaire Pierre Omidyar is funding Greenwald’s slow release of those documents. It is worth noting that Omidyar’s Paypal Corporation has links to the NSA.

It was originally reported that the number of documents Snowden had stolen [was in the thousands](#). Today, however, that number is [said to be nearly two million](#). This calls into question Snowden’s early statement, as reported by Greenwald, that he “carefully evaluated every single document to ensure that each was legitimately in the public interest.” The huge, new number also reveals that less than one tenth of one percent of the documents (only about 900) have actually been released to the public.

How could Snowden have “carefully evaluated every single” one of what is now being said to be nearly two million documents? He only worked for Booz Allen Hamilton for a few months. According to NSA Director Keith Alexander, Snowden also worked directly for NSA for twelve months prior to that, which is interesting. But still, that would require carefully evaluating thousands of documents a day during that entire time. Didn’t he have a job apart from that?

[Journalist Margie Burns](#) asked some good questions back in June that have not yet been answered. She wondered about the 29-year old Snowden who had been a U.S. Army Special Forces recruit, a covert CIA operative, and an NSA employee in various capacities, all in just a few, short years. Burns asked “How, exactly, did Snowden get his series of NSA jobs? Did he apply through regular channels? Was it through someone he knew? Who recommended him? Who were his references for a string of six-figure, high-level security jobs? Are there any safeguards in place so that red flags go up when a subcontractor jumps from job to job, especially in high-level clearance positions?”

Five months later, journalists [Mark Ames and Yasha Levine investigated](#) some of the businesses in which Greenwald’s benefactor Omidyar had invested. They found that the actual practices of those businesses were considerably less humanitarian than the outward appearance of Omidyar’s ventures often portray. The result was that Omidyar took down

references to at least one of those businesses from his website.



In December, whistleblower Sibel Edmonds broke the news that Omidyar's [Paypal Corporation was implicated](#) in the as-yet-unreleased NSA documents from Snowden. Moreover, Edmonds had allegedly been contacted by an NSA official who alleged that "a deal was made in early June, 2013 between the journalists involved in this recent NSA scandal and U.S. government officials, which was then sealed by secrecy and nondisclosure agreements by all parties involved."

It would appear that Snowden's whistleblowing has been co-opted by private corporate interests. Are those involved with privatization of the stolen documents also colluding with government agencies to frame and direct national discussions on domestic spying and other serious matters?

The possibilities are endless, it seems. Presenting documents at a measured rate could be a way to acclimate citizens to painful realities without stirring the public into a panic or a unified response that might actually threaten the status quo. And considering that the number of documents has somehow grown from only thousands to nearly two million, it seems possible that those in control could release practically anything, thereby controlling national dialogue on many topics.

We live in an age of information war. It does not serve the public interest well to ignore that fact at any time based on pre-conceived notions of what corporations, governments or journalists are capable of. Let's hope that Greenwald, who has done some good work revealing government misconduct, will immediately release all of the stolen documents, speak to the claims of an alleged deal made with government officials, and admit the risks with regard to Omidyar and his Paypal colleagues.

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