

## Interview



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# Snowden-Interview: Transcript

**At the very end you ended up in Russia. Many of the intelligence communities suspect you made a deal, classified material for Asylum here in Russia.**

The Chief of the Task Force investigating me as recently as December said that their investigation had turned up no evidence or indications at all that I had any outside help or contact or had made a deal of any kind to accomplish my mission. I worked alone. I didn't need anybody's help, I don't have any ties to foreign governments, I'm not a spy for Russia or China or any other country for that matter. If I am a traitor who did I betray? I gave all of my information to the American public, to American journalists who are reporting on American issues. If they see that as treason I think people really need to consider who do they think they're working for. The public is supposed to be their boss not their enemy. Beyond that as far as my personal safety, I'll never be fully safe until these systems have changed.

**After your revelations none of the European countries really offered you asylum. Where did you apply in Europe for asylum?**

I can't remember the list of countries with any specificity because there were many of them but France, Germany were definitely in there as was the UK. A number of European countries, all of whom unfortunately felt that doing the right thing was less important than supporting US political concerns.

**One reaction to the NSA snooping is in the very moment that countries like Germany are thinking to create national internets an attempt to force internet companies to keep their data in their own country. Does this work?**

It's not gonna stop the NSA. Let's put it that way. The NSA goes where the data is. If the NSA can pull text messages out of telecommunication networks in China, they can probably manage to get facebook messages out of Germany. Ultimately the solution to that is not to try to stick everything in a walled garden. Although that does raise the level of sophistication and complexity of taking the information. It's also much better simply to secure the information internationally against everyone rather than playing "let's move the data". Moving the data isn't fixing the problem. Securing the data is the problem.

**President Obama in the very moment obviously doesn't care too much about the message of the leak. And together with the NSA they do care very much more about catching the messenger in that context. Obama asked the Russian president several times to extradite you. But Putin did not. It looks that you will stay to the rest of your life probably in Russia. How do you feel about Russia in that context and is there a solution to this problem.**

I think it's becoming increasingly clear that these leaks didn't cause harm in fact they served the public good. Because of that I think it will be very difficult to maintain sort of an ongoing campaign of persecution against someone who the public agrees serve the public interest.

**The New York Times wrote a very long comment and demanded clemency for you. The headline "Edward Snowden Whistleblower" and I quote from that: "The public learned in great detail how the agency has extended its mandate and abused its authority." And the New York Times closes: "President Obama should tell his aides to begin finding a way to end Mr Snowden's vilification and give him an incentive to return home." Did you get a call in between from the White House?**

I've never received a call from the White House and I am not waiting by the phone. But I would welcome the opportunity to talk about how we can bring this to a conclusion that serves the interest of all parties. I think it's clear that there are times where what is lawful is distinct from what is rightful. There are times throughout history and it doesn't take long for either an American or a German to think about times in the history of their country where the law provided the government to do things which were not right.

**President Obama obviously is in the very moment not quite convinced of that because he said to you are charged with three felonies and I quote: "If you Edward Snowden believe in what you did you should go back to America appear before the court with a lawyer and make your case." Is this the solution?**

It's interesting because he mentions three felonies. What he doesn't say is that the crimes that he has charged me with are crimes that don't allow me to make my case. They don't allow me to defend myself in an open court to the public and convince a jury that what I did was to their benefit. The espionage act was never intended, it's from 1918, it was never intended to prosecute journalistic sources, people who are informing the newspapers about information that's of public interest. It was intended for people who are selling documents in secret to foreign governments who are bombing bridges who are sabotaging communications not people who are serving the public good. So it's I would say illustrative that the president would choose to say someone should face the music when he knows the music is a show trial.