

No Place to Hide Study Guide

No Place to Hide by Glenn Greenwald

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Summary

Glenn Greenwald was contacted by a man calling himself Cincinnatus in late 2012 asking him to use encrypted email so they could speak freely. Greenwald, involved in other stories at the time, brushed the man off. Then, in April of 2013, Greenwald met with friend and documentarian Laura Poitras. Poitras showed Greenwald a document sent to her by an anonymous source that claimed the NSA was spying on the American people. Greenwald quickly got in touch with the source and learned that he had many more documents that showed the NSA had developed a system by which they could spy on electronic communications throughout the world.

Greenwald got his paper, the Guardian, on board with the story and flew to Hong Kong to meet with the source. The source, Edward Snowden, spoke openly with Greenwald and reviewed with him the multitude of documents he had obtained through his job as an analyst with the NSA. After some discussion about the legality of publishing the stories, Greenwald wrote multiple articles that were published in the Guardian. The news took the world by storm.

Greenwald describes the extent of the NSA's surveillance as proven not only through Snowden's documents, but also through separate investigation and previous examples of surveillance in American history. Greenwald also makes an argument against surveillance to counter arguments made by many who suggested that the NSA should have the right to collect metadata against citizens all over the world.

Greenwald returned to Rio shortly after the publications began. He learned that his partner, David, had a computer stolen from his home after having a conversation with Greenwald over Skype. Later, Greenwald heard that one of the lawyers at the Guardian had overheard a group of intelligence agents discussing how Greenwald and Snowden should be murdered. The London offices of the Guardian were raided by the British spy group, GCHQ, and their archives destroyed. Finally, David, was detained as a terrorist in London while attempting to catch a connecting flight to Berlin.

Chapter 1

Summary

Introduction. Just a few months after Greenwald began a political blog, he learned that the George W. Bush administration had authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to eavesdrop on American's electronic communications without getting a warrant. Greenwald wrote extensively about this issue and, as a result, Edward Snowden chose him to be one of several persons with whom to release secret information.

Greenwald describes the controversy in terms of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution which states that American citizens should be free from unlawful search and seizure. He argues that this extends to electronic surveillance even though the Bush administration argued that the NSAs actions were justified to protect Americans from terrorist attack. These types of illegal surveillance have been going on for years. Back in the 1970s, an investigation discovered that the American government had gathered information about many people they considered a risk to security, including celebrities such as John Lennon.

Greenwald feels that this electronic spying might become the enduring legacy of the September 11, 2001 attacks and its aftermath because of its prevalence. It could also have a strong impact on the internet, a medium that many people use daily that could easily be turned into a tool of surveillance.

Chapter 1. Contact. In December of 2012, Greenwald was first approached via email by Snowden, calling himself Cincinnatus. Cincinnatus wanted Greenwald to use encryption software for his email so that they could discuss sensitive issues about national security. Greenwald ignored these first emails, telling Cincinnatus he would do what he could, but he never did. Again in January Cincinnatus contacted him and, again, Greenwald ignored him. In April of 2014 he was contacted by Laura Poitras, a documentarian working on a movie about the NSA, and whom he had helped once by publishing a story about harassment she experienced whenever she flew. Poitras showed Greenwald a document she received from an anonymous source dealing with U.S. surveillance programs. Greenwald looked at the document and agreed that the source seemed reliable.

Greenwald returned home and was contacted by a tech who promised to send him something that would help him install encrypted software on his computer for his emails. It took an exceedingly long time for the package to arrive. When it did, Poitras contacted him and told him that they might have to go to Hong Kong to visit with the source. Greenwald questioned why the source was in Hong Kong. A short time later, he received an email directly from the source asking for a chat. The source asked Greenwald to go to Hong Kong and he quickly agreed. They also talked about other things, including the source's concern about what was happening with documents he allowed Poitras to share with Washington Post reporter, Barton Gellman. These



documents dealt with PRISM, a program that allowed the NSA to gather information about private communications from internet companies such as Google, Facebook, and Skype.

Greenwald was told that the source was prepared to reveal his identity to the world and accept the consequences of releasing these documents. Greenwald, however, wanted more before he went to Hong Kong. He asked the source to send him a few documents. Among the documents the source sent Greenwald was a training manual for NSA agents regarding electronic surveillance. Greenwald was excited and decided it was time to call his bosses at the Guardian, a paper he worked for as a columnist. He was instructed to fly to New York immediately. Once there, Greenwald showed his editors what he had. They quickly arranged for him to fly to Hong Kong. However, the editor insisted that reporter Ewen MacAskill accompany them to Hong Kong. Both Greenwald and Poitras disliked the idea because they were afraid a third person would scare the source away.

When they were on their way to the airport, Poitras gave Greenwald a thumb drive with all the source's documents on it. On the plane, Greenwald used a computer that had never, and would never, be on the internet to read the documents. He was shocked to come across a document that used the Patriot Act to force Verizon to hand over phone records. There were dozens of other files, all clearly well organized. Greenwald also found a note written by the source that revealed his name and his occupation. Greenwald came to the conclusion that the source was an intelligent man who had clearly thought through what he was doing and chose to do it anyway.

Analysis

The introduction tells the reader who the author is and why he chose to write this book. The author is a political blogger who also worked as a columnist for the Guardian. He wrote this book because he was one of the first people Edward Snowden contacted when he was ready to release to the world documents he stole from the NSA about electronic surveillance. Snowden was deeply concerned about the invasion of privacy these policies represented. He wanted to go public so that the American people could defend themselves against this invasion of privacy. He chose the author because he had written about NSA surveillance before. The author cares deeply about these issues and continues to worry about the impact on such surveillance in light of the American people's obsession with the internet.

The author ignored the first few contacts he had with Snowden because he did not understand what the impact would eventually be and he was busy with other stories. However, when a friend of his, Laura Poitras, a documentary film maker who has dealt with similar subjects in the past and been harassed because of it, received notification from Snowden along with documents. Greenwald became excited by Poitras' enthusiasm and eventually spoke to Snowden himself. The documents Snowden showed the author were so powerful that he went straight to the Guardian to gain their



support for the story. The author then flew to Hong Kong to meet with Snowden and learn more about the documents he had stolen.

Vocabulary

Defense, investigation, compartment, consequences, insufferable, marginalized, committed, specifically, classified, authorities, documents, predictions, similar, entitled, allies, demonize, government, sophisticated, politically, interrupted, informant, domestic, indisputably, whistle-blower, succinct, maintain, extensively, reflected, collected, communication.

Chapter 2

Summary

The day after arriving in Hong Kong, Greenwald and Poitras met Snowden at his hotel after some clandestine behavior. Snowden took them to his room. Snowden then took their cellphones and placed them in a refrigerator because it was possible for someone to remotely activate the phones and listen in to the conversation. Poitras then set up her camera in order to film their conversation.

The conversation began awkwardly. Greenwald, who was formerly a litigator, interrogated Snowden about his childhood and other aspects of his life. He was aggressive, determined to make Snowden reveal every aspect of himself and his past. Greenwald learned that Snowden was the child of low-middle class federal employees. Snowden dropped out of high school because he felt unchallenged, but used his extensive technological knowledge to get freelance work. Snowden then followed in the footsteps of his family members and became a security guard for the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland, a building that was secretly managed by the NSA. Snowden worked his way from there to a job as a technical expert with the NSA. From there, Snowden got a job working on computer systems in Switzerland for the CIA. It was while working there that Snowden became disillusioned by methods used by agents to get what they wanted.

Snowden moved to Japan where he worked with Dell through the NSA. This job gave Snowden access to more surveillance intel, such as the images drones revealed while gathering intel on possible assassination targets. Snowden was being trained to become a high-level cyber operative, someone who would hack into foreign military and civilian systems. At one point he was even tasked to teach cyber counterintelligence to Chinese counterintelligence agents.

In 2011, Snowden was moved back to Maryland where he again worked through the Dell Corporation for NSA. There, he began to realize that the NSA was working with private industry to create a system whose goal was to eliminate global privacy through the ability to collect, store and analyze communications. It was then that Snowden began collecting documents. He also applied for, and got, a job in Hawaii with Booz Allen Hamilton, that would allow him to download the most important documents that would reveal the NSA's secret monitoring of the telecommunications infrastructure within the United States. It was soon after downloading these final documents that Snowden fled Hawaii for Hong Kong.

When asked why he chose Hong Kong, Snowden said that it was a place where he felt he could be secure and have the backing of a city filled with people willing to fight for civilian rights. However, he also acknowledged that when his identity was revealed, choosing Hong Kong could be a problem, especially since it was so closely aligned with China. Snowden made it clear that he knew what would happen to him when his identity

was revealed, but he was not afraid of the consequences because he believed so deeply in what he was doing. However, Greenwald convinced him not to reveal his identity in the first article about the documents.

Greenwald immediately began writing articles he hoped the Guardian would publish immediately so that they would have continuing contact with Snowden to follow up. With these articles, they began to pick and choose the documents they would release. Other reporters were interested in the stories and Poitras was working with Washington Post reporter Barton Gellman. Greenwald has reservations about going to major publications with this story because they had a history of allowing fear to drive their stories and of allowing government officials to influence the articles. They also would stop after just a few articles rather than do it the way Greenwald had planned, releasing the documents over multiple articles. Snowden had made it clear by contacting Greenwald that he wanted to avoid conventional publications and Greenwald felt this was the way they should precede. However, Poitras believed that using the Post to discuss these documents she was drawing in Washington on their own scandal and making it harder for them to dismiss the reality of the documents. However, the Post, afraid of legal ramifications, refused to send Gellman to Hong Kong to meet with Snowden and refused to have Poitras meet with them in Washington.

Greenwald ran into the same problem with the Guardian. The Guardian's lawyers became concerned that the paper could be charged through the Espionage Act of 1917 if they published any of the stolen documents. Ewen MacAskill became involved. He met with Snowden for the first time and was convinced after only two hours that Snowden was real. He and Greenwald called their publisher in London, but he deferred to the editor in New York. When Greenwald was told it could be weeks before they would publish the stories, Greenwald turned to two other publications, Salon and the Nation. They both agreed to publish immediately. Greenwald also considered beginning a website and publishing his articles there. He decided to give the Guardian one more day and then he would publish on the website.

The Guardian had contacted the White House and the NSA that they were on the verge of releasing secret NSA documents. Neither returned her calls right away. When they did, they tried everything to keep her from publishing. Janine, the editor, decided that she needed to hear from Alan, the editor in London, before she published. However, he was unavailable. Greenwald threatened to quit the Guardian if they did not publish within half an hour. Forty minutes later, the first article, about the Verizon subpoena, went live. Within minutes the article spread like wildfire. It was the lead story on most evening news programs and dozens of people in government were speaking out about it, some defending the program as a means to protect Americans from terrorists, while others were outraged. One senator made an anonymous statement admitting that the program had been in effect for years and included most telecommunications companies, not just Verizon.

The following day, they made plans to release information on the PRISM program, the program that allowed NSA direct access to the servers of firms such as Google, Skype, and Facebook. The Guardian alerted Washington officials and gave them a deadline to



respond before the article would be published. Then Janine called and told Greenwald that the tech companies denied having ever heard of PRISM. Greenwald reworked the article to include this denial as well as the debate it implied. A short time later, Greenwald learned that the Post had published their PRISM story, but did not address the tech companies' denial. Greenwald and the Guardian decided to publish their PRISM story anyway. The response was immediate and explosive. Greenwald spent much of his time giving interviews as he continued to work with Snowden on more articles.

Five days after Greenwald's arrival in Hong Kong, Snowden learned that two NSA agents had gone to his house in Hawaii looking for him. This implied that the NSA had identified him as the leak. Greenwald disagreed, suggesting that if they knew it was him, they would have sent a swat team, not just two people.

Two more articles were published. Then they released an article and a videotape of Snowden, officially revealing his identity. The media frenzy afterward was overwhelming. They knew that the NSA and the American government would be coming after Snowden soon. A friend of Greenwald's in Hong Kong advised him that Snowden should get a lawyer. The man arranged to bring two lawyers to Greenwald's hotel to meet with Snowden. However, when Greenwald went to the lobby to meet them, he was overwhelmed by the number of reporters there. Greenwald ran into the lawyer for the Guardian who had stopped in Hong Kong on the way from Australia to London. That lawyer, Gill Philips, frantically began checking out the two lawyers the friend was providing while Greenwald spoke to Poitras. Snowden wanted to leave his hotel, afraid the reporters would soon find him. The two lawyers snuck Snowden out of his hotel and took him to the UN mission to seek asylum. They put him in a safe house. Greenwald then left Hong Kong for his home in Rio.

Analysis

Greenwald's first meeting with Snowden was awkward, but informative. Greenwald was a former litigator, so he had experience interrogating people. With this experience, he questioned Snowden about everything and anything, trying to get a feel for him and to decide if he was really legitimate, or just someone trying to pull a hoax. Greenwald was satisfied that Snowden was sincere.

Over the next few days, Greenwald fought with his publication, the Guardian, to publish the articles and documents associated with Snowden. No one had ever stolen and released documents from the NSA before, so this was explosive. However there are laws in place that are meant to protect the American people and the government from traitorous behavior. These laws had been used quite frequently within the Obama Administration, leaving the Guardian's lawyers concerned that the paper could be shut down and the editors charged through the Espionage Act of 1917. The paper dragged its feet, unsure what to do. Greenwald grew frustrated and threatened to quit the paper and go elsewhere if they did not publish right away. The Guardian made a decision that would change all of history. They published.



No one knew at the time what the repercussions of going public with these documents would be. There was a large public outcry as the articles and their attached documents went public. It was an exciting time full of uncertainty. Greenwald knew that Snowden would likely be persecuted, but had no idea what would happen to him or his fellow reporters and editors. It was a courageous thing all the people involved did, potentially causing themselves legal problems that could last for many years.

Vocabulary

React, administration, reasoned, clearly, interviews, impossible, exhausted, psychologically, emotionally, patience, reporter, significantly, vaguely, espionage, treason, irresponsible, unreliable, internet, online, obviously, ruckus, different, reservation, jumpsuit, courtroom, camera, journalists, refugee, secure, arrange, asylum.

Chapter 3

Summary

Snowden's documents show that the NSA is not alone in its massive collection of electronic information on its own citizens and people living in foreign countries. The NSA is part of what is referred to as the Five Eyes alliance, an alliance between the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These groups work together to surveil electronic communications in their own countries and others.

The NSA was headed by General Keith B. Alexander until the Snowden controversy prompted his departure. Alexander began a program in 2005 whose principal goal was to collect as much electronic communications information as possible from all around the world, including from United States citizens. Alexander's philosophy was, 'collect it all,' a philosophy that was not only picked up and used throughout the NSA, but throughout the Five Eyes alliance as well.

The NSA collects communications information in a number of ways. One way is to tap fiber optics directly. Another is to form partnerships with various private corporations. There are four programs the NSA employs that involve private corporations. One is BLARNEY, a program that leverages key corporate partnerships to gain access to international fiber optic cables, switches and routers throughout the world. FAIRVIEW is a program that works similarly to BLARNEY and is one of the top five programs for collecting ongoing surveillance. OAKSTAR is a program that redirects data into the NSA's own repositories. STORMBREW is a program that the NSA runs in partnership with the FBI that monitors internet and telephone traffic that enters the United States at specific choke points.

Private telecommunication companies in the United States denied knowing about PRISM and allowing them to have access to their servers. However, after the release of the documents Snowden had on PRISM, investigations into this program showed that not only were these companies aware of PRISM, some of them were active participants. Yahoo! sued in 2012 to avoid being forced to join PRISM but were ordered to do so. Microsoft, when they revamped Outlook to include all their email services, they worked with the FBI to make sure their encryption software would not interfere with PRISM.

The NSA works closely with their Five Eyes alliance. They also have alliances with other countries, countries they deem Tier B countries. The NSA pays these countries to develop certain technologies that they can turn around and use in surveillance. Some of these Tier B countries, such as Israel, are not only partners in gathering surveillance information, but they are also targets of that surveillance. Then there are third tiered countries that are targets of surveillance exclusively.

When it became public in 2007 that the government was listening in to communications between Americans and foreign born people, citizens were outraged. This led to



changes of the FISA law in 2008, a law that requires warrants for all these types of surveillance. However, the FISA courts rarely turn down a request for a warrant and only occasionally change the scope of these warrants. Beyond FISA, the only other oversight the NSA had was from the intelligence agencies. These agencies, however, benefitted from the information the NSA gathered and felt no need to regulate them. In the aftermath of the Snowden scandal, several Congressmen got together to create some sort of oversight for NSA, but they faced too much resistance.

In the aftermath of the Snowden scandal, the powers-that-be tried to claim innocence by saying that all the NSA collected was metadata, a record of who people communicated with, but did not eavesdrop on those conversations. However, metadata could tell more about a person than a single, meandering conversation could. Not only this, but it appears that the NSA collected data that benefitted their customers, such as the White House, the Treasury, and other such groups. There appears to be proof that the NSA was asked to spy on particular groups of people for use by American officials, such as Susan Rice asking the NSA to spy on key member states while she was ambassador to the UN so that she would know how they would negotiate.

There have been accusations against Chinese owned internet hardware manufacturers about surveillance software hidden in their hardware. However, it turns out that the NSA often places backdoors in American made internet hardware in order to spy on foreign citizens. These include routers built by Cisco.

The NSA collects so much information that it has needed to increase its storage abilities by building a new facility in Utah. This goes along with a new program, X-KEYSCORE, a program designed to allow NSA to watch in real time as a person browses the internet. When Snowden made his initial video, he stated that he could see a person's online activity with just an email address. Many said this was a lie. However, X-KEYSCORE could do just that.

Analysis

The NSA is a large organization that is practically unregulated. Not only that, but much of the work it does is sanctioned by high officials in the United States government because much of it benefits them. The NSA can get information on foreign enemies, can listen to conversations that will tell them how a certain person will negotiate in political power struggles, and it can help government find ways to invest and make money.

The NSA has used the motto of 'collect it all' for more than seven years. This motto disregards the Fourth Amendment and allows the NSA to listen into and collect information about any electronic communications method available. Even when the courts have been given the power to stop the NSA from overstepping, they do not employ that power. Not only that, but the NSA has many allies in foreign countries that help them collect this information even as the NSA is collecting information against them.



Snowden's documents exposed dozens of programs designed to spy on the American people, as well as people overseas. Not just criminals or heads of state, but everyone. This frightened Snowden and the people he turned to to expose this reality. They tried to discredit Snowden and the NSA programs, but Greenwald and others have found evidence that prove the opposite.

Vocabulary

Reckoning, surveillance, transparency, permitting, imbalance, populations, planning, international, subverted, limitless, manipulation, diplomatic, ubiquitous, economic, criminal, predictable, hackers, terrorists, elements, importance, various, transferred, dedicated, massive, endless, providing, expansion, explosion, ambition.



Chapter 4

Summary

Many proponents of the NSA argued that there really is no such thing as privacy anymore. Not only that, but metadata does not really invade privacy. However, these people refused to offer information to reporters that would be similar to that the NSA collects. Privacy is an important part of humanity. It is in privacy that people are able to be creative, dissident, or challenge authority. Without privacy, there is none of that.

Proponents of the NSA argue, as well, that only those with something to hide have anything to fear. However, as one reporter pointed out, most Americans have something to hide. Parents do not want their children to know about their love lives, while most employees do not want their current employer to know when they begin looking for work.

Being aware that they are under surveillance also changes the way in which most people behave. This has been proven not only in scientific studies, but with the use of surveillance historically. The author points to several court cases and even fictional accounts of how surveillance affected the actions of citizens, many of whom had nothing to fear from the surveillance.

The author also shows the reader that many of these programs the NSA continues to use are not new. During the Civil Rights Era, Hoover used a program called COINTELPRO to watch over groups that could have become violent. This led to several of these groups behaving differently than they might have otherwise.

Many believe that the only people who should worry about surveillance are those who have something to hide. However, there is clear evidence that this is not necessarily true. Many of the agencies in the Fifth Eye alliance are trained to draw out people they believe are possible threats by coaxing them onto compromising websites or using other methods to make them look bad. Not only this, but it is up to the NSA and other agencies what constitutes something 'to worry about'. It is possible that one of these agencies can target someone simply because of their religious or political beliefs. They could target someone based on their friends and family. Not only this, but when an agency such as the NSA is allowed to do whatever it wants, who is to stop it when it begins overstepping its bounds and what was one looked at as wrong becomes the normal?

The NSA claims that its collection of data could have prevented 9-11 and it will prevent future terrorist attacks. However, the CIA had information that could have prevented 9-11 and it did not give it to the FBI to allow them to do so. At the same time, the collection of information did nothing to stop the Boston Marathon bombing or other acts of terrorism that have taken place around the world in recent years.

Analysis

In this chapter, the author address some of the arguments made by proponents of the NSA who argue that the collection of metadata against American citizens is not an invasion of privacy or reason to fear the government. The author not only uses fictional accounts of super-surveillance against citizens, but he also uses legal arguments made by lawyers and politicians in the past and scientific studies.

There is quite a bit of argument over what the NSA is doing. The author takes the position that anyone could be a target of the NSA surveillance and that those people could be damaged by tricks of the NSA and other agencies in an attempt to discredit them or prove they have been involved in illegal activity even when they were not or coerced into it. The United States was founded on the idea that Americans deserve privacy, yet so many Americans are willing to give it up for others, but not so much for themselves. There is no doubt from the arguments the author has made that invasion of privacy is wrong and it should not be allowed to continue.

Vocabulary

Exception, public, sector, dynamic, radically, reverses, balance, contrivances, terrorism, attacks, operating, obtained, casket, liberties, declare, history, citizens, ominous, tactic, activity, paralysis, reelection, amendment, crucible, exploration, creativity, expansion, invasions, suspiciousness, constitution, prevented.



Chapter 5

Summary

Chapter 5. The Fourth Estate. After the Snowden articles came out, other journalists made an attempt to discredit Greenwald for his involvement. They refused to call him a journalist even though he had worked for several publications for several years. Instead, they called him a lawyer and a blogger. They also dug up a past tax problem and shares he held in a company that distributed pornographic videos. Not long afterward there were rumblings that Greenwald should be charged with a crime for helping Snowden go public. Greenwald was accused of threatening to reveal the name of CIA agents in the field. Greenwald went on Meet the Press and was called a criminal.

Snowden, too, suffered public persecution. Snowden moved from Hong Kong to Moscow, creating some frustration among journalists and government officials because they could not speak to him. The press tore him to pieces, calling him a loser because he dropped out of high school and accusing him of being anti-American for hiding behind the Chinese government. Snowden was accused of giving documents to China, but he denied it.

It is a common tactic to attempt to soil a person's reputation when he says things in public that are not kind to certain individuals. The author believes this is the reason that the press attacked him and Snowden. The American government is run by men, men who are powerful and have a great deal of influence. The author believes the reporters who came out against him and Snowden did so to protect their relationships with the white House and other government officials.

While Greenwald was in Hong Kong, he had a conversation with his partner, David Miranda, about sending him a flash drive with documents on it. Less than two days later, David's laptop was stolen from their home. Greenwald was also told by a lawyer with the Guardian that he overheard several intelligence agents discussing loudly how Greenwald and Snowden should be killed. Later, the Guardian was told by the GCHQ, the British spy agency, that they could no longer publish stories about the NSA and that they should hand over all documents given them by Snowden. Then, while some of the Guardian staff were on a retreat in England, they had to return to London to defend their office from members of the GCHQ, where they broke all the computers in their archives.

In August of 2013, David flew to Berlin to pick up some documents Poitras had taken back there with her to fix and wanted to return to Greenwald. The documents were originally supposed to travel to Rio via a Guardian employee, but the employee refused out of fear of being detained by British authorities. This is exactly what happened to David. While catching a connecting flight in London he was detained by authorities under the Terrorism Act of 2000. David was released after nine hours. The press had a field day with it, especially when comments Greenwald made were misinterpreted as a threat against the British government. It was later revealed that the British officials were



specifically looking for David and they had spoken with Washington in the hours before he was arrested.

Epilogue. Snowden's primary concern about coming forward with his documents was indifference. However, his documents have created a great amount of debate throughout the world about communication and internet freedoms. Some laws have changed, others have not. However, the debate is ongoing and will likely have a profound effect on the world in the years to come.

Analysis

Greenwald was viciously attacked in the aftermath of the publication of Snowden's stolen documents. Snowden, too, has been viciously attacked, all aspects of his life and personality questioned. This has caused a great deal of difficulty for the two men. However, the overstepping has been more profound for the Guardian, the publication that published Greenwald's articles. Their London offices were invaded by the British spy group, GCHQ, and their archives destroyed.

The fallout of the documents has been difficult for those involved. However, the benefits have also begun to appear. It has caused debate, it has put out there for the American people a truth they might not have learned any other way. Maybe someday it will bring change and people worldwide might get their privacy back.

Vocabulary

Revelations, political, uproot, challenge, entrenched, orthodoxies, institutions, demonizing, messenger, articulate, obscure, diploma, altered, defeatism, privacy, reclaim, international, currently, protections, offerings, alternative, superior, legislative, requests, judicial, sufficient, consistent, constitutional, engaged, wrongdoing, targeted.



Important People

Glenn Greenwald

Glenn Greenwald was a lawyer who became a political blogger and a journalist. Greenwald wrote extensively about the Bush wiretapping controversy, causing him to come to the attention of NSA analyst, Edward Snowden. Snowden contacted Greenwald to request his help in releasing multiple documents he had taken from the NSA. Greenwald did not, at first, appreciate Snowden's attempts to contact him and did not get in touch with him until months later when a friend, Laura Poitras, brought some of the documents to his attention.

Greenwald placed himself in danger by helping Snowden. In the aftermath of the articles he wrote about Snowden and his articles, Greenwald's life was threatened, his house was burglarized, and his partner was arrested for terrorism while traveling in England. However, Greenwald continues to believe in what Snowden did and to hope for change among spy organizations.

Edward Snowden

Edward Snowden was an analyst for the NSA. Snowden was raised in a low middle class family. His father was with the Coast Guard for more than thirty years. Snowden dropped out of high school because he did not feel challenged, but used his extensive knowledge of computers and software to take lucrative freelance programming jobs. Snowden later got a job with the NSA as a security guard and quickly moved up as a computer technician.

In his work with the NSA, Snowden saw things that bothered him. Snowden had access to surveillance information and information from NSA and CIA agents that caused him to become disillusioned by those agencies. Snowden began gathering documents that would expose the level of surveillance the NSA conducted against American citizens as well as people around the world. Snowden contacted first Glenn Greenwald and later, Laura Poitras, in order to release these documents. Snowden never attempted to hide his identity. He always intended to expose himself to the world. Snowden claimed that his intention had always been to create a world where people did not have to worry about their privacy being breached on the internet.

Laura Poitras

Laura Poitras was a documentarian who was working on a film about the NSA. When she traveled within the United States, she was often harassed at the airport until Greenwald wrote an article about it. Later, Poitras introduced Greenwald to some of the documents given to her by an anonymous source, later identified as Snowden. Poitras also traveled to Hong Kong with Greenwald and MacAskill to interview Snowden.



Poitras made the video of Snowden that was released after the first series of articles Greenwald wrote.

Janine Gibson

Janine Gibson was the New York editor of the Guardian. It was to Janine that Greenwald went when he first decided to write articles about the documents Snowden had taken from the NSA. Janine was excited by the documents Greenwald showed her and sent him to Hong Kong with another reporter, Ewen MacAskill. Later, however, Janine refused to publish Greenwald's articles until the legal department at the Guardian had given her permission. Janine also made multiple phone calls to the White House, the NSA, and other agencies to alert them of what was about to happen. They tried to talk her out of it, but Janine finally made the decision to publish the articles. Weeks later, the offices of the Guardian in London were raided by the GCHQ, the British spy group, and their computers in the archive destroyed.

Alan Rusbridger

Alan Rusbridger was the London editor of the Guardian. When the New York office of the Guardian hesitated to publish Greenwald's articles about Snowden and his documents, Ewen and Greenwald called Alan together to force New York's hand. However, Alan deferred to Janine and the legal team in New York.

Ewen MacAskill

Ewen MacAskill was a reporter for the Guardian in New York. When Greenwald went to his editor, Janine, about the Snowden story, she insisted that Ewen accompany them to Hong Kong. Greenwald and Poitras were unhappy about this idea because they did not want to spook Snowden. However, not only did Ewen accompany them, but they introduced him to Snowden on their second day in Hong Kong. Ewen was so convinced that Snowden was legitimate that he called Alan Rusbridger with Greenwald to convince him to allow the New York office publish the series of articles Greenwald had already written about Snowden and the leaked documents.

David Miranda

David Miranda is Greenwald's partner. David often gave advice to Greenwald during his work with Snowden. At one point, Greenwald spoke with David about sending him a thumb drive with Snowden's documents on it. Within days of that un-encrypted conversation over Skype, David's laptop was stolen from his home. Not long after that, David volunteered to go to Berlin to pick up a thumb drive from Laura Poitras, but he was detained in London under the Terrorist Act of 2000. It later came out that the British authorities targeted David after a conversation with Washington, D.C.



Barton Gellman

Barton Gellman was a reporter for the Washington Post with whom Laura Poitras discussed the documents that Snowden gave to her. Poitras felt that they should have someone in the mainstream media to back them. Poitras shared with Gellman the documents about PRISM and encouraged him to publish an article about it. However, the Post did not publish the article until less than hour before the Guardian planned to release their article on the same documents. Later, Gellman would do some independent research on PRISM that would back up Greenwald's belief that the telecommunications companies that denied knowing about PRISM were lying.

Cincinnatus

Greenwald received multiple emails in late 2012 and early 2013 from someone called Cincinnatus. This anonymous person wanted Greenwald to use encryption software for his email so that they could speak privately about a matter of great importance. Greenwald did not follow through with the encryption software and never followed through with Cincinnatus. It was not until he met with Snowden that he learned that Snowden was Cincinnatus.

Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus

Cincinnatus was a Roman farmer in the fifth century BC. Cincinnatus was appointed dictator of Rome to defend the city against attack. After the attack, when Rome's enemies were vanquished, he gave up his power and returned to being a farmer. This made him a symbol of civic virtue to latter generations.

Objects/Places

Snowden Documents

Snowden took multiple documents from the NSA through his job as an analyst. Snowden not only reviewed these documents, but he put them in a logical order and created a glossary for those who would be reading them. Snowden then showed them to a documentarian and a reporter for help in releasing them to the American people.

Thumb Drive

As they board a plane for Hong Kong, Laura Poitras gives Greenwald a thumb drive on which she has all of the documents Snowden took from the NSA.

Snowden Video

Poitras videotaped the first interview between Glenn Greenwald and Snowden. This video was later edited and released to the public to reveal Snowden's identity in order to help support the claims behind the NSA documents.

The Guardian

The Guardian is a London based newspaper for whom Greenwald worked as a columnist. The Guardian was the publication that first published Greenwald's articles about Snowden's NSA documents.

Washington Post

Poitras contacted Barton Gellman at the Washington Post about Snowden's articles because she felt they needed a mainstream publication behind them.

Meet the Press

Greenwald went on Meet the Press shortly after the articles about Snowden and the NSA were first published. Greenwald was openly called a criminal on the show for his part in the leak.

Hong Kong

Snowden fled to Hong Kong after taking NSA documents and planning their release to the American people.

Moscow

Snowden moved to Moscow in the aftermath of the release of multiple NSA documents for his own safety.

Rio

Glenn Greenwald makes his home in Rio.

Berlin

Poitras lives in Berlin. It was on a trip to Berlin to pick up a thumb drive from Poitras that David Miranda was arrested by British officials.

Themes

Privacy

This book discusses the debate over privacy. In the aftermath of Snowden's release of NSA documents, the debate rages not around the invasion of privacy, but what it means to have privacy. Many of the proponents of the NSA argue that people without secrets have nothing to fear. Others claim that the collection of metadata is not an invasion of privacy. However, none of these proponents were willing to give out this information to a reporter who would publish them.

Privacy is important to humanity. Privacy allows for belief systems to build and grow, for the ability to be creative, for the ability to develop relationships. Without privacy, people act differently. They are not themselves. It is privacy that the NSA is taking away from the American people by collecting metadata that could tell stories that even the most mundane conversation could not. The author argues that without privacy, creativity goes away. It is this argument that makes privacy a theme of the book.

Surveillance

The NSA is the National Security Agency, an agency whose job it is to keep the American people safe. Their former director took this to mean that it was in his right to collect it all, to collect all the information he could about everyone he could. The NSA have begun programs that allow them to collect information about Americans and foreign people alike through their use of electronic communication, including the internet.

The American people have the right to expect a certain amount of privacy. The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution says that the people should not have to suffer unlawful search and seizure. By collecting communication information about the American people, the NSA is breaking this amendment. The NSA claims that it is simply attempting to keep the American people safe, that this information could stop another terrorist attack. However, the author points out that it did not stop the Boston Marathon bombing. It is this overstepping of power that Snowden was attempting to expose when he released the documents he took from the NSA.

Whistle-Blowing

Snowden was an analyst for the NSA. While working there, he became aware of common practices among the agency that he felt were illegal and that the American people should know about. Snowden took it upon himself to remove documents from the NSA and offer them to a reporter who would share them with the American people. In doing this, Snowden became a whistle-blower.



Whistle-blowers are people who see wrong doing and act to change it. Most whistle-blowers are sacrificing a great deal to come forward. However, in recent years, whistle-blowers have risked more than jobs or income, they have risked time in jail or even the death penalty. Obama campaigned on the idea of an open administration, but his administration has prosecuted more whistle-blowers than any administration before him. Snowden knew what he faced when he made the decision to release the documents he had taken, but he did it anyway. Now Snowden will never be allowed to return to the United States, will never see his girlfriend again, will never be with his family again.

Styles

Structure

The book is divided into a prologue, an epilogue, and five chapters. The author begins the book by discussing his first contacts with Snowden and the time he and Snowden spent together in Hong Kong. The author then describes the documents Snowden delivered to him and what they say about the actions of the NSA. Finally, the author describes why people should want privacy and what happens when it is gone.

The author of this book followed a linear time line in his book, telling the story of Snowden before discussing the actions of the NSA and then what it means to have privacy. The author then returns to his own story, describing how he and his partner were impacted by the aftermath of the Snowden controversy. The book is well structured, well written, and easy to read for even the most cynical readers.

Perspective

Tone



Quotes

On December 1, 2012, I received my first communication from Edward Snowden, although I had no idea at the time that it was from him.

-- Glenn Greenwald (Chapter 1)

Importance: This quote begins the book and begins to establish the relationship between the writer and Snowden.

Cincinnatus' then referenced the sex scandal of General David Petraeus, whose career-ending extramarital affair with journalist Paula Broadwell was discovered when investigators found Google emails between the two.

-- Glenn Greenwald (Chapter 1)

Importance: This quote discusses the need for encrypted emails in discussing private or highly sensitive matters.

Laura then pulled several pages out of her purse from two of the emails sent by the anonymous leaker, and I read them at the table from start to finish. They were riveting.

-- Glenn Greenwald (Chapter 1)

Importance: This is the first time Greenwald reads anything of significance from Snowden.

I still didn't know why he was in Hong Kong but assumed by this point that he had gone there to hide.

-- Glenn Greenwald (Chapter 2)

Importance: This quote reflects Greenwald's understanding of Snowden's behavior thus far.

He'll be carrying a Rubik's Cube,' she said.

-- Laura Poitras (Chapter 2)

Importance: This is the way in which Greenwald and Poitras were supposed to recognize Snowden.

Almost instantly, I could see in person what I had observed from our online chats: Snowden was highly intelligent and rational, and his thought processes methodical.

-- Greenwald (Chapter 2)

Importance: This is Greenwald's opinion of Snowden just moments after talking to him.

The archive of documents Edward Snowden had assembled was stunning in both size and scope.

-- Greenwald (Chapter 3)



Importance: This describes the collection of documents Snowden gave to both Greenwald and Poitras.

A military branch of the Pentagon, the NSA is the largest intelligence agency in the world, with the majority of its surveillance work conducted through the Five Eyes alliance.

-- Greenwald (Chapter 3)

Importance: This is a description of the NSA.

When Google CEO Eric Schmidt was asked in a 2009 CNBC interview about concerns over his company's retention of user data, he infamously replied: 'If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place.'

-- Glenn Greenwald/Eric Schmidt (Chapter 4)

Importance: This quote begins a discussion on what privacy means.

Google insisted on a policy of not talking to reporters from CNET, the technology news site, after CNET published Eric Schmidt's personal details—including his salary, campaign donations, and address, all public information obtained via Google—in order to highlight the invasive dangers of his company.

-- Greenwald (Chapter 4)

Importance: This quote shows contradictions in Schmidt's attitude toward privacy when compared to the previous quote.

The theory of the 'fourth estate' is to ensure government transparency and provide a check on overreach, of which the secret surveillance of entire populations is surely among the most radical examples.

-- Glenn Greenwald (Chapter 5)

Importance: This quote introduces a chapter in which Greenwald describes how the government overreached and impacted his personal life.



Topics for Discussion

Topic for Discussion 1

Discuss the NSA, what its job is, and how it serves the American people.

Topic for Discussion 2

Discuss Edward Snowden. Who was he? What was his job? Why did he become disillusioned with the NSA? What did he do about it?

Topic for Discussion 3

Discuss Glenn Greenwald. Who was he? What was his job? Why did he not respond to Cincinnatus at first? Why did he become involved with Snowden?

Topic for Discussion 4

Discuss Laura Poitras. Who was she? Why did she become involved with Snowden? Why did she involve Greenwald?

Topic for Discussion 5

Discuss the Guardian. Why did they initially delay publishing Greenwald's articles about Snowden? What happened to them in the aftermath of the publication of the articles? Why?

Topic for Discussion 6

Discuss the articles Snowden had. What did they say? What did they suggest about the actions of the NSA?

Topic for Discussion 7

Discuss David Miranda. Why was he arrested under the Terrorism Act of 2000? Did he do something wrong? What did the authorities do to him while he was in their custody?



Topic for Discussion 8

Discuss FISA. What is FISA? How is it enacted currently? How does it reflect the abuses of the NSA?

Topic for Discussion 9

Discuss privacy. What is privacy? Who has a right to privacy? What happens when privacy is taken away?

Topic for Discussion 10

Discuss the attacks on Greenwald and Snowden after the publication of the NSA documents. Why were their personalities and their past work history questioned? Why were they made to look like criminals and liars? Why were their lives threatened?