

## Outside Voices



Credit: AK Rockefeller - Flickr

### How Snowden became an enemy of the state



Elliot Tyler

It was at a job-fair, in 2006, in which a young, self-proclaimed 'computer wizard' called Edward Snowden found his calling. He was offered a position at the Central Intelligence Agency's global communications division in Langley, and he was later placed onto a diplomatic cover exercise in Switzerland. 'I realised I was part of something that was doing more harm than good,' Snowden said in an interview with The Guardian newspaper. A disillusioned Snowden made some serious allegations about the CIA using 'dirty tricks' during that particular operation, claiming that his employers bribed the police and judiciary in order to encourage a banker to become an informant.

Three years later, Snowden was assigned to a National Security Agency facility in Japan. His time here was focused on educating high-ranking military officials on cyber-security, in particular the growing threat of Chinese hackers. He returned to the United States in 2011, spending a year as a lead technologist and having occasional meetings with the CIA's chief information and technology officers. Snowden started downloading top-secret government documents about spying programs, shortly before his 'breaking point' where

he claimed to witness a Cabinet-level official lying under oath. Snowden, now reassigned to a CIA consulting firm, gathered further data and, according to an anonymous source, persuaded co-workers to share passwords to assist with this objective. In June 2013, Edward Snowden met with journalists in a Hong Kong hotel room and shared with them 'The NSA Files'. His intention, according to The Guardian, was to start a debate about mass surveillance. He certainly succeeded.

Officials can only estimate the size of Snowden's disclosure; however, it is agreed that the number of documents is in the region of one million. He stated that he 'carefully evaluated every single document disclosed to ensure that each was in the public interest.' Despite his screening methods, the improper redaction of a document by the New York Times did result in the exposure of intelligence activity against al-Qaeda. Snowden's cache of documents also revealed details of Tempora, a British black-ops surveillance program involving the interception of large amounts of citizens' personal data. Sir David Omand, former director of GCHQ, described the decryption of Snowden's files by Russian and Chinese intelligence agencies as 'a huge strategic setback - harming Britain and its allies.' It is not clear how these agencies obtained the data; however, it may be possible that, according to The

Sunday Times, Snowden volunteered the data at a price.

The NSA contactor Booz Allen Hamilton have been criticised for choosing to employ Edward Snowden despite finding discrepancies within a résumé that he submitted for the \$122,000-a-year job. One example of untrue and incorrect information was the mention of a master's degree in computer studies which 'was to be received from the University of Liverpool'. A university spokesman confirmed that Snowden was 'not active in his studies and did not complete the programme.' The résumé also stated that he attended classes at John Hopkins University, in Maryland, however a spokeswoman for that university said no records could be found to show that Snowden had ever attended the university as he had claimed.

In June 2013, Snowden took a flight to Moscow, Russia where he was restricted to the airport terminal by the authorities due to his US passport having been cancelled. His employment officially ended one month after departing his home country. He was granted temporary asylum in Russia for a year, and then, after this expired, a three-year residency permit. In 2017 it was said, possibly incorrectly, by a senior US official that Russia was considering extraditing Snowden. As of this month, Edward Snowden remains in Moscow despite being sought by the United States for trial. The human rights organisation 'Amnesty International' has expressed their view that Snowden should be pardoned rather than imprisoned.

Edward Snowden has written his memoirs, entitled 'Permanent Record', which will be released in twenty countries this month. The publishers of this book, Macmillan, who are based in the UK, said of Snowden: 'He displayed enormous courage in giving up his future for the good of his country and his is an incredible American story.' He has already been portrayed in a feature film directed by Oliver Stone and in the 2014 Academy Award winning documentary *Citizenfour*. Snowden is also active on Twitter, commenting on a range of issues.

## Tales of Wisdom



Sid Arter

### Choose well

The men had been held in the camp for many months and saw little hope of escape and many had become very thin and in poor health. The war had been long and many people had been killed and many more taken captive and held in camps such as this.

The guards demanded work from the prisoners and treated everyone harshly. The huts

were cold and the thin blankets kept out little heat and harboured bed bugs. The beds were crudely made from wood and the men used dried vegetation to provide some softening as they had no mattresses.

The days were cold outside and at this time of the year the weather was often grey and overcast; and the nights were colder. The men had only the ragged clothes they stood in and had few comforts and no contact with the outside world. Yet still there were men

in the camp that walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last crust of stale bread.

There were few in numbers of these generous individuals but they offered proof that you can take everything from a person except one thing; the last of all freedoms – the freedom to choose how you respond to a situation.

Prison is not supposed to be a pleasant existence and you may have to cope with inferior bedding, inferior food and an inferior lifestyle to that which you are used to. You may have to share a cell with a disagreeable individual, eat meals in the same room that you get rid of your waste in and spend hours locked behind a door. But however tough the regime is, it can never take away the freedom to respond to it with a positive frame of mind – you are here in custody and cannot change that, but you still have the freedom to choose how you respond to imprisonment.

*Sid Arter is a teacher and entertainer*

## Child Abuse. Helping victims achieve justice.

### Lambeth Council Redress Scheme

Lambeth Council has set up a scheme to compensate people who, as children, were abused or feared abuse at a Lambeth children's home and/or Shirley Oaks Primary School.

The scheme allows people to make claims for compensation even if the abuse they suffered took place many years ago.

Our specialist Abuse Solicitors have a proven track record in handling child abuse claims.

If you would like to find out if you're eligible to make a claim under the scheme, please contact our Abuse Solicitors for more information.

Applications to the redress scheme close on 1st January 2020.

Prison Visits

Legal Aid Available

Complete Confidentiality



T. 0808 239 8516

[newclients@simpsonmillar.co.uk](mailto:newclients@simpsonmillar.co.uk)

[simpsonmillar.co.uk](http://simpsonmillar.co.uk) | [abuselaw.co.uk](http://abuselaw.co.uk)

© Simpson Millar LLP, 100 Talbot Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 0PG. Simpson Millar LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No OC313936. Registered office 21-27 St Paul's Street, Leeds, LS1 2JG. A list of members in available from our registered office. We use the term 'partner' to refer to an employee of equivalent standing to that of a partner in a partnership. Members of the Law Society's Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence Panels. A list of our offices can be found at [www.simpsonmillar.co.uk](http://www.simpsonmillar.co.uk). Authorised and Regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Registration No. 424940.