

“Greenwald: The Infamous Edward Snowden Leak” -Part A

(This case was prepared by University of Georgia journalism student Kelsi Eccles for JOUR 5170, Advanced Studies in Journalism, based on secondary sources cited below.)

The summer of 2013 brought about the Edward Snowden National Security Administration leak story, one of Americas largest stories to hit headlines in the past decade. Edward Snowden, who at the time was 29-years-old, revealed a series of documents to Glenn Greenwald, a reporter for *The Guardian*, who decided to report on the information he received regarding U.S. surveillance intelligence. The release of the information on June 5th caused uproar from global citizens who debated whether the classified information was appropriate for publication or not. The information released included information regarding surveillance programs to monitor citizen’s phone calls, information provided on social media websites and other online platforms and records as sensitive as bank and email account information. Edward Snowden fled for asylum in other countries upon the story’s publication but *The Guardian* and Greenwald received a lot of heat as well from Prime Minister David Cameron.

Discussion:

Should Greenwald have received harsh criticism from members of US and British government officials?

Was the information provided to Greenwald necessary for the general public to see?

Did the publication of this information compromise American safety and intelligence operatives?

Were Snowden and Greenwald courageous for the publication of this information or treasonous?

“Greenwald: The Infamous Edward Snowden Leak” -Part B

British Prime Minister David Cameron scolded Snowden and *The Guardian* for the publication of NSA surveillance programs. Reuters quoted Cameron’s remarks as “ What Snowden is doing and, to an extent, what the newspapers are doing in helping him do what he is doing, is frankly signaling to people who mean to do us harm how to evade and avoid intelligence and surveillance and other techniques. That is not going to make our world safer, it’s going to make our world more dangerous. That is helping our enemies.”

Discuss:

Did Greenwald of *The Guardian* and Snowden compromise the safety of citizens everywhere with the publication of this information?

How could the publication of surveillance information of average citizens compromise the safety of countries such as Britain and the United States?

Should Greenwald and Snowden have take more potential outcomes into consideration before publishing the work?

“Greenwald: The Infamous Edward Snowden Leak” -Part C

The Guardian also reported to Prime Minister David Cameron’s remarks about the newspaper itself in Oct. 2013. Cameron addressed how despite wishes from government officials the paper and Snowden continued to publish more intelligence details over a period of time instead of stopping after the initial story. The article included an excerpt from Cameron who agreed that freedom of press is an important freedom, but should be used with discretion. “We have a free press, it’s very important the press feels it not pre-censored from what it writes and all the rest of it. The approach we have taken is to try to talk to the press and explain how damaging some of these things can be and that is why the Guardian did actually destroy some of the information and disks that they have. But they’ve now gone on and printed further material which is damaging.”

Discussion:

Is *The Guardian’s* credibility compromised for reporting on a story that addresses the government’s issue with the publication or did it increase their credibility?

Are Greenwald and *The Guardian* continuing the reporting over a time period, despite warnings from the government?

Are government officials interfering with freedom of press when they “try to talk to the press and explain how damaging some of these things can be?”

“Greenwald: The Infamous Edward Snowden Leak” -Epilogue

This was the first time that Greenwald broke a story like this, but not the first time he went against the grain for what he thought was right. After the Snowden leaks, Greenwald’s family faced scrutiny as well. Greenwald’s partner was thoroughly searched and suspected of carrying secret documents between Snowden and Greenwald to continue reporting more information. Since the cease of these publications both Snowden and Greenwald have resided outside of the United States, but should they be seen as treasonous.? Was the Guardian right in the publication of the leaked documents or has our safety been compromised?

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