

Whistleblowers Update 2016

As the Obama presidency comes to a close, the man who promised to protect whistleblowers has prosecuted and imprisoned more whistleblowers than all presidents before him combined.

Writing about his legacy on whistleblowers, [Salon.com](#) headlined an article with "Obama's unprecedented war on whistleblowers" in which they concluded, "This administration fears the noise of democracy, preferring the silence of compliance." [MotherJones.com](#) in "Obama's War on Whistleblowers" stated "his aggressive prosecution of whistleblowers is a president who believes himself above the law, and seems convinced that he alone has a preternatural ability to determine right from wrong." [MoveOn.org](#) stated, "Disturbingly, the Obama administration has criminally prosecuted more whistleblowers under the Espionage Act than all other past administrations combined." [Politifact.com](#) investigated that charge and gave it a "true" rating.

Did you notice anything about those first three sources I just quoted? Are they right-wing conservative news sources? Hardly, they are just the opposite. Even The Huffington Post headlined "Obama Whistleblower Prosecution Leads To Chilling Effect On Press." They mention the Marine officer Franz Gayl (inadequate protection against IEDs in Iraq); Lockheed Martin project manager Michael DeKort (security flaws in the Coast Guard's Deepwater Project); Department of Justice attorney Thomas Tamm (who exposed Bush's wiretapping program) - all of whom have been prosecuted, fired, and shunned."

<http://www.columbiadailyherald.com/opinion/columns/obama-s-war-whistleblowers>

I think of the American government as public employees. That makes us, the public, the employers. I can think of no place besides the government where the employees get to hide what they are really doing from their employers.

How can we, the public, manage our employees if they can hide all of their dirt from us? We can't. This is why it is so important to support the courageous whistleblowers. There are many and I will just touch on a few of them. They are our unsung heroes and we must support them.

Veterans For Peace salutes them.

"Shamai Kedem Leibowitz, also known as **Samuel Shamai Leibowitz**, is an American lawyer and blogger who was convicted of leaking classified FBI information to another blogger.^[1]

Leibowitz pleaded guilty on December 17, 2009 to knowingly and willfully disclosing five Secret level FBI documents in April 2009 to a blogger, who then published information derived from those documents on the blog.^[1] He was sentenced on May 24, 2010 to 20 months in prison".^[2]

According to Leibowitz, "During the course of my work I came across wrongdoings that led me to conclude this is an abuse of power and a violation of the law. I reported these violations to my superiors at the FBI who did nothing about them. Thereafter, to my great regret, I disclosed the violations to a member of the media."^[3]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamai_Leibowitz

Staff Sergeant Brandon Bryant, Senior Airman Stephen Lewis, and Senior Airman Michael Haas, Predator Drone sensor operators, and **Senior Airman Cian Westmoreland**, a former drone program infrastructure technician, went public with an [open letter](#) to President Obama, Defense War Secretary Ashton Carter, and CIA Director John Brennan. Their compelling letter follows.

Dear President Obama, Secretary Carter and Director Brennan:

We are former Air Force service members. We joined the Air Force to protect American lives and to protect our Constitution. We came to the realization that the innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism and groups like ISIS, while also serving as a fundamental recruitment tool similar to Guantanamo Bay. This administration and its predecessors have built a drone program that is one of the most devastating driving forces for terrorism and destabilization around the world.

When the guilt of our roles in facilitating this systematic loss of innocent life became too much, all of us succumbed to PTSD. We were cut loose by the same government we gave so much to sent out in the world without adequate medical care, reliable public health services, or necessary benefits. Some of us are now homeless. Others of us barely make it.

We witnessed gross waste, mismanagement, abuses of power, and our country's leaders lying publicly about the effectiveness of the drone program. We cannot sit silently by and witness tragedies like the attacks in Paris, knowing the devastating effects the drone program has overseas and at home. Such silence would violate the very oaths

we took to support and defend the Constitution.

We request that you consider our perspective, though perhaps that request is in vain given the unprecedented prosecution of truth-tellers who came before us like Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, and Edward Snowden. For the sake of this country, we hope it is otherwise.

Haas and other whistleblowers expanded on the points in their letter in an interview with Guardian reporters, which resulted in two [eye-opening articles](#) by Ed Pilkington and Ewen MacAskill. This was followed by a lengthy [appearance](#) on Democracy Now! and a [news conference](#) in connection with the premiere in New York of a new documentary, "Drone," in which two of the whistleblowers (Bryant and Haas) make appearances. [Agence France-Presse](#) (AFP), Reuters and [Newsweek](#) all carried stories, as did [The Intercept](#), [Shadowproof](#) and other online news sites.

Disclosure: The four drone whistleblowers are represented by attorney Jesselyn Radack, who is national security and human rights director of the ExposeFacts WHISPeR program.)

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ExposeFacts, a project of the Institute for Public Accuracy, is pleased to announce the launch of a new [Whistleblower and Source Protection Program \(WHISPeR\)](#). WHISPeR makes ExposeFacts the first journalistic organization to house a program dedicated entirely to providing affordable legal representation to whistleblowers and sources.

Samuel Provance, United States Army

Provance was the system administrator for U.S. Army [Military Intelligence](#) at the [Abu Ghraib](#) prison who publicly revealed the role of [interrogators](#) in the abuses, as well as the general effort to cover-up the [Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse](#) itself.

On September 10, 2013, photographer [Jo Metson Scott](#) published the book "[The Grey Line](#)", which documents "the perspective of US and UK soldiers who have spoken out against the Iraq War." Provance is featured on the front cover, and a synopsis of his story is in the book. In 2016, [Voices of the Iraq War: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life...](#), was published with a chapter by **Samuel Provance** titled: Abu Ghraib, A Guard's Perspective.

Thomas Drake worked at the NSA in various analyst and management positions. He blew the whistle on the NSA's [Trailblazer project](#) that he felt was a violation of the [Fourth Amendment](#) and other laws and

regulations. He contacted [The Baltimore Sun](#) that published articles about waste, fraud, and abuse at the NSA, including stories about Trailblazer. In April 2010, Drake was indicted by a grand jury on various charges, including obstructing justice and making false statements. After the May 22, 2011 broadcast of a [60 Minutes](#) episode on the Drake case, the government dropped all of the charges against Drake and agreed not to seek any jail time in return for Drake's agreement to plead guilty to a misdemeanor of misusing the agency's computer system. Drake was sentenced to one year of probation and community service.

On July 3, 2014, Drake, along with former Technical Director of the NSA [William Binney](#), gave testimony to the [German Parliamentary Committee investigating the NSA spying scandal](#). He described the close cooperation between the NSA and the German secret service [BND](#). In September 2015, Drake and 27 other members of VIPS steering group wrote a letter to the President challenging a recently published book that claimed to rebut the report of the [United States Senate Intelligence Committee](#) on the [Central Intelligence Agency's](#) use of torture.

Julian Assange,

(1971-) is an Australian editor, activist, publisher and journalist. In 2006, he founded [WikiLeaks](#), which publishes submissions of secret information, [news leaks](#) and classified media from anonymous [news sources](#) and [whistleblowers](#).

On Aug 20, 2014, Swedish court rejects appeal to lift arrest warrant on **Julian Assange**.

On 15 September 2014, **Julian Assange** appeared via remote video link on [Kim Dotcom's](#) *Moment of Truth* town hall meeting held in Auckland.

A Swedish court on Nov. 20, 2014, upheld a four-year-old order for the detention of [Julian Assange](#), over accusations of sexual assault that inspired a lengthy legal battle before he took refuge in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London.

On 12 August 2015, Swedish prosecutors announced that, as the statute of limitations or two of less serious allegations has run out, and they had not succeeded in interviewing Assange, they would end part of their preliminary investigation. After 18 August 2015, Assange can no longer be charged for all three of the less serious allegations. However, the preliminary investigation into the allegation of rape still continues, as the statute of limitations there will only expire in 2020.^[126]

On 20 October 2015, a new batch of documents from a FOIA request filed by the Italian news magazine [l'Espresso](#) has been published online.^[127] They contains records of correspondence between the [Swedish Prosecution Authority](#) and the [Crown Prosecution Service](#), and they expose the role of the latter in advising [Sweden](#) not to interview Julian Assange in London as he has repeatedly offered over the past five years. A CPS lawyer wrote in an email to Marianne Ny that "it would not be prudent for the Swedish authorities to try to interview the defendant in the [UK](#)" and warned not to "think that the case is being dealt with as just another extradition request." Assange legal team stated that, following these revelations, they would probably challenge the extradition request in court again.^[128]

February 5, 2016 - A UN rights working group says its investigation found that [Assange is being arbitrarily detained](#) by the governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom.

May 25, 2016 - [A Swedish court upholds the arrest warrant for Assange](#), with a Swedish prosecutor saying there's still probable cause to prosecute him on a rape allegation and that "the risk of him evading justice is still large."

July 22, 2016 - WikiLeaks releases nearly 20,000 emails from Democratic National Committee staffers. The [leaked emails](#) appear to show the committee favoring presumptive Democratic nominee [Hillary Clinton](#) over [Bernie Sanders](#) during the US presidential primary. On July 29, [Assange tells CNN's Anderson Cooper](#) that the email release was timed to coincide with the start of the Democratic National Convention.

September 15, 2016 - WikiLeaks announces via Twitter that "If [Obama grants Manning clemency](#), [Assange will agree to US prison in exchange -- despite its clear unlawfulness](#)," referring to Chelsea Manning, the imprisoned former Army intelligence analyst convicted of violating the Espionage Act.

September 16, 2016 - A Swedish appeals court states again that [the arrest warrant for Assange on allegations of rape still stands](#). This is the eighth time the European arrest warrant has been tested in a Swedish court. All eight judgments have gone against Assange.

November 6, 2016 - Two days before the US presidential election, [WikiLeaks releases a new trove of emails](#) apparently hacked from the Democratic Party.

November 14, 2016 - WikiLeaks tweets that [Assange is giving a statement](#) in the presence of a Swedish prosecutor regarding allegations he sexually assaulted two women in the country six years ago. (<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/18/world/julian-assange-fast->

[facts/\)](#)

A former Icelandic minister has claimed that the FBI attempted to frame Julian Assange during a mission to Iceland.

Ögmundur Jonasson, who currently serves as a member of the Icelandic Parliament, said US authorities told him in June 2011 that hackers were trying to destroy software systems in the country. The authorities said there was an "imminent attack" on Iceland's government databases and that the FBI would send agents to investigate.

Jonasson said he was immediately skeptical of the FBI's intentions. "I was suspicious," he told **Katoikos**, "Well aware that a helping hand might easily become a manipulating hand!"

Jonasson said it was only when a "planeload" of FBI agents arrived in August that he realized the true reason for their visit.

The former minister claims the FBI was seeking Iceland's "cooperation in what I understood as an operation set up to frame Julian Assange and WikiLeaks."

Jonasson said he immediately told the FBI agents to leave the country.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4021166/Former-Icelandic-minister-claims-FBI-tried-frame-Julian-Assange.html>

John Napier Tye,

is a former official of the [U.S. State Department](#) who came forward in 2014 as a [whistleblower](#) seeking to publicize certain [electronic surveillance](#) practices of the U.S. government under [Executive Order 12333](#), signed by President [Ronald Reagan](#) and amended by President [George W. Bush](#).^{[1][2]}

Tye attended two classified [National Security Agency](#) briefings on [Executive Order 12333](#) in Fall 2013 and February 2014 so that he could help prepare the State Department's response to the high-profile leaks disclosed by NSA whistleblower [Edward Snowden](#).^[11] In January of 2014, Tye began to use internal channels at the State Department to press his concerns over the order.^[9] Prior to leaving the State Department in April 2014, Tye filed a complaint with the [Department's inspector general](#), asserting that the intelligence collection and [retention](#) policies being carried out under E.O. 12333 violated the [Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution](#).

Tye left the State Department in April.

On July 18, 2014, Tye put forth an editorial in the [The Washington Post](#) highlighting his concerns over U.S. signals intelligence activities performed under E.O. 12333.

Unlike NSA leaker [Edward Snowden](#), Tye maintains that he has not, and will not release any classified information. Prior to publication, he submitted his *Post* editorial for approval by the State Department and the NSA, who deemed that no changes were necessary.^{[1][8][11]} In addition, Tye has insisted on having a third party present when speaking to reporters, to counter any later claim that he revealed classified information.^[9] Ben Wizner, an attorney for Snowden, called Tye's actions "entirely admirable", noting that not every whistleblower could be expected to take on the personal risks that Snowden did.^[11] Tye's own attorney, [Mark Zaid](#), a critic of Snowden, acknowledged that Snowden's disclosures had likely made it easier for Tye to come forward with his own revelation.^[9]

November 2nd 2016

Tye writes article warning President Obama to make changes before Trump takes office. His 3 recommendations are: "First, he should amend the executive order and require the NSA to delete all U.S. person data as soon as it is collected, as recommended by his own **Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies**. (Today U.S. person data is stored for five years and searched by domestic law enforcement agencies like the FBI. "U.S. person" means any individual within the borders of the United States, or a U.S. citizen anywhere in the world.) President Obama should leave a public trail of legal determinations on the issue that will be difficult for Trump to undo.

Second, Obama should educate all of Congress—not just the intelligence committees—in a far deeper way about precisely how much American data is collected, and how it is treated, with comprehensive secret briefings. Most members of Congress still know far too little about the particulars to properly legislate in this area. Congress and the judiciary, together with the executive branch, should establish clear, universal standards for U.S. person data.

Finally, the president should come clean with the American people about just how much of their data is "touched" by U.S. intelligence agencies. Without that, there can't be proper democratic debate and oversight."

http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2016/11/we_cant_trust_trump_with_today_s_nsa.html

[John Kiriakou](#), Central Intelligence Agency

The one person who is in jail for the CIA torture is the man who tried to stop it.

In an interview for ABC News on December 10, CIA officer Kiriakou

disclosed that the agency [waterboarded detainees](#) and that this constituted torture. He was convicted of releasing [classified information](#) and sentenced on January 25, 2013 to 30 months imprisonment. Having served the first months of his service, he wrote an open letter describing the inhuman circumstances at the correction facility.

"I believe I was prosecuted not for what I did but for who I am: a CIA officer who said torture was wrong and ineffective and went against the grain."

On February 3, 2015, Kiriakou was released from prison to serve three months of house arrest at his home in [Arlington, Virginia](#).^{[38][39]} Following his release, Kiriakou said his case was not about leaking information but about exposing torture, "and I would do it all over again." The journalist has now expressed interest in campaigning for [prison reform](#).^[39]

John Kiriakou maintains a great news website at <http://www.johnkiriakou.com/JKNews/>

Chelsea Manning (formerly [Bradley Manning](#)) [United States Army](#) Chelsea Manning is the US [Army intelligence](#) analyst who released the largest set of classified documents ever, mostly published by [WikiLeaks](#) and their media partners. The material included videos of the [July 12, 2007 Baghdad airstrike](#) and the 2009 [Granai airstrike](#) in Afghanistan, 250,000 [United States diplomatic cables](#), and 500,000 army reports that came to be known as the [Iraq War logs](#) and [Afghan War logs](#). Manning was convicted of violating the [Espionage Act](#) and other offenses and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

In 2014, 2014: [Chelsea Manning](#) was awarded the [Sam Adams Award](#) by Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence, a group of retired [CIA](#) officers. It is named after [Samuel A. Adams](#), a CIA [whistleblower](#) during the [Vietnam War](#) and takes the physical form of a "corner-brightener candlestick".^[2]

The Sam Adams Award is given annually to an [intelligence](#) professional who has taken a stand for [integrity](#) and ethics.

Icelandic and Swedish [Pirate Party](#) MPs nominated Manning and fellow whistleblower [Edward Snowden](#) for the 2014 [Nobel Peace Prize](#). In a statement to the Nomination Committee, the Pirate Party members said Manning and Snowden "have inspired change and encouraged public debate and policy changes that contributed to a more stable and peaceful world".

On February 12, 2015, [USA Today](#) reported that the commandant of

the USDB wrote in a February 5 memo, "After carefully considering the recommendation that (hormone treatment) is medically appropriate and necessary, and weighing all associated safety and security risks presented, I approve adding (hormone treatment) to Inmate Manning's treatment plan.

On March 5, in response to Manning's request for an order compelling the military to use pronouns that conform to her chosen gender identity, the [U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals](#) ruled, "Reference to appellant in all future formal papers filed before this court and all future orders and decisions issued by this court shall either be neutral, e.g., Private First Class Manning or appellant, or employ a feminine pronoun."^[159]

In March 2015, [Bloomberg News](#) reported that Manning can be visited only by those she had named before her imprisonment, and not by journalists. She cannot be photographed or give interviews on camera. Manning is not allowed to browse the web, but consults print news and has access to new gender theory texts.^[161]

[On August 19th, Chelsea was convicted of possessing contraband.](#) She was also charged with "medicine misuse" after a search of her cell on 9 July uncovered an expired tube of toothpaste. "A tube of anti-cavity toothpaste, MKIC, was found in your possession past its expiration date of 9 April 2015. You are involved in violation of ACC Policy Letter 16, using, possessing, handling or storing of medicine, except as authorized by the facility medical staff. Failure to take medication as prescribed by medical staff". Other items confiscated from her cell included the memoir [I Am Malala](#) by Malala Yousafzai, a novel featuring trans women called [A Safe Girl to Love](#), the LGBT publication [Out Magazine](#), the [Caitlyn Jenner](#) issue of [Vanity Fair](#) and a copy of [Cosmopolitan](#) that included an interview with Manning. Her lawyers said they had been barred from Tuesday's four-hour hearing and that prior to the hearing Manning was barred from accessing the prison's library. ACLU attorney Chase Strangio said the fact that Manning faced the disciplinary board without counsel sets a "concerning precedent" for the remainder of her incarceration.

"Not only does this punishment mean the immediate loss of library and recreation for Chelsea, but she also will carry these infractions through her parole and clemency process and will be held longer in the more restrictive custody where she is now incarcerated," said Strangio.(the guardian)

In July of 2016, Manning attempts suicide and receives 14 days of solitary confinement (with 7 days suspended). In September, Manning does a 5 day hunger strike to protest her treatment.

In October, Manning tries to commit suicide again. In the remaining days of the Obama presidency there have been many requests to

Obama to pardon Chelsea Manning before Trump takes office.
The Chelsea Manning support network maintains a very informative website: www.chelseamanning.org

Edward Snowden, National Security Agency

[Booz Allen Hamilton](#) contractor Snowden released classified material on top-secret NSA programs including the [PRISM surveillance program](#) to [The Guardian](#) and [The Washington Post](#) in June 2013.

In May 2014, U.S. officials released a single email that Snowden had written in April 2013 inquiring about legal authorities but said that they had found no other evidence that Snowden had expressed his concerns to someone in an oversight position. In June 2014, the NSA said it had not been able to find any records of Snowden raising internal complaints about the agency's operations. That same month, Snowden explained that he himself has not produced the communiqués in question because of the ongoing nature of the dispute, disclosing for the first time that "I am working with the NSA in regard to these records and we're going back and forth, so I don't want to reveal everything that will come out."

In his May 2014 interview with NBC News, Snowden accused the U.S. government of trying to use one position here or there in his career to distract from the totality of his experience, downplaying him as a "low level analyst." In his words, he was "trained as a spy in the traditional sense of the word in that I lived and worked undercover overseas—pretending to work in a job that I'm not—and even being assigned a name that was not mine." He said he'd worked for the NSA undercover overseas, and for the [DIA](#) had developed sources and methods to keep information and people secure "in the most hostile and dangerous environments around the world. So when they say I'm a low-level systems administrator, that I don't know what I'm talking about, I'd say it's somewhat misleading."

In a June interview with [Globo TV](#), Snowden reiterated that he "was actually functioning at a very senior level."

In a July interview with [The Guardian](#), Snowden explained that during his NSA career, "I began to move from merely overseeing these systems to actively directing their use. Many people don't understand that I was actually an analyst and I designated individuals and groups for targeting." Snowden subsequently told [Wired](#) that while at Dell in 2011, "I would sit down with the [CIO](#) of the CIA, the [CTO](#) of the CIA, the chiefs of all the technical branches. They would tell me their hardest technology problems, and it was my job to come up with a way to fix them."

Alternative Christmas Message

Snowden was chosen to give Britain's 2013 "[Alternative Christmas Message](#)," Channel 4's alternative to the [Royal Christmas Message](#) by [Queen Elizabeth II](#). The Message is normally given by non-establishment figures. In what was Snowden's first television appearance since arriving in Russia, the address focused on the importance of privacy and the need for an end to government surveillance. In the 1.5-minute segment, he said that the recently revealed "worldwide mass surveillance," a system resulting from teamwork between governments, is the danger of which [George Orwell](#) warned in [Nineteen Eighty-Four](#), a novel about a society controlled by an ever-present [Big Brother](#). The difference is, Snowden noted, that today's surveillance capabilities far surpass those Orwell described, saying "We have sensors in our pockets that track us everywhere we go ... A child born today [will] never know what it means to have a private moment to themselves, an unrecorded, un-analyzed thought. That's a problem because privacy matters; [it] allows us to determine who we are, and who we want to be. The piece was filmed, edited and produced by [Laura Poitras](#)."

Rector of the University of Glasgow

On February 18, 2014, Snowden was elected as [Rector of the University of Glasgow](#), a position widely described as symbolic. Snowden became the first American Rector in the position's 366-year history. Snowden beat three competitors and received over half of the 6,560 votes. The nomination was arranged by a group of [Glasgow University](#) students along with the help of Snowden's lawyer. Snowden was officially installed on April 23. Like past rector [Winnie Mandela](#), Snowden will not visit the campus in person and will not be expected to fulfill his duties as rector, a job which involves representing student issues to senior management. He will serve for three years.

German "positive" Big Brother Award

At German [Big Brother Awards](#) gala on April 11, 2014, Edward Snowden was honored with the first-ever "positive" award, named the "Julia and Winston Award" after the two main rebellious characters in [George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four](#). The award was endowed with one million stickers calling on the German government to grant asylum to Edward Snowden. The award's organizers, [Digitalcourage](#), made the stickers available for free online orders to enable the public to distribute the stickers throughout Germany.

Ridenhour Truth-Telling Prize

In April 2014, Snowden, together with [Laura Poitras](#), was awarded the [Ridenhour Truth-Telling Prize](#), given by [The Nation Institute](#) and [The](#)

[Fertel Foundation](#) for transparency and whistleblowing. Snowden and Poitras each appeared on video at the [National Press Club](#) to accept the award.] Snowden gave a speech and took questions from the audience, who according to [The Nation](#) greeted him with "numerous standing ovations". During his speech, he questioned why [James Clapper](#) had not been reprimanded for his "famous lie," whereas charges were filed against Snowden soon after going public as the source of the NSA leaks. He said, "When I began this, I never expected to receive the level of support that I did from the public. Having seen what happened to the people that came before, specifically Thomas Drake, it was an intimidating thing."

Right Livelihood Award

In December 2014, Snowden shared a [Joint Honorary Award](#) with [Alan Rusbridger](#), editor of [The Guardian](#), from Sweden's nonofficial Right Livelihood Award Foundation.

The Right Livelihood Award is an international award to "honor and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today." The prize was established in 1980 by [German-Swedish](#) philanthropist [Jakob von Uexkull](#), and is presented annually in early December.

An international jury, invited by the five regular Right Livelihood Award board members, decides the awards in such fields as [environmental protection](#), [human rights](#), [sustainable development](#), [health](#), [education](#), and [peace](#). The prize money of 200,000 Euros is shared among the winners, usually numbering four. Very often, one of the four laureates receives an honorary award, which means that the other three share the prize money.

It is promoted as an "Alternative Nobel Prize", but does not have any organizational ties to the awarding institutions of the Nobel Prize or the Nobel Foundation.

On December 10th, in response to the CIA torture report, Snowden told Amnesty International via a Paris-Moscow video link, "The world cannot accept efficiency as an excuse for what is essentially "criminal behavior" on the part of the CIA".

Snowden, who still resides in Russia under an asylum request, told Amnesty International that morality cannot be tossed aside for the sake of so-called "efficiency" when it comes to the activities of the CIA.

"A government could say that rape has a positive effect because we have a declining demographic crisis in the country... Efficiency has no place in the debate about right and wrong," Snowden said, agreeing to

the question about whether the US is in deep moral crisis.

"Individuals actually lost their lives – they died – after being chained to a concrete floor in an unheated room, half naked. And rather than having the officer who ordered that behavior be prosecuted, he actually received a monetary bonus from the CIA of \$2,500. These are things that leave a stain on the moral authority of the US government," he said.

2015

January: Laura Poitras' Film on Edward Snowden, "Citizenfour," Nominated for Best Documentary

February: In her acceptance speech for Best Documentary "Citizenfour" — the inside account of how Edward Snowden exposed NSA surveillance — Laura Poitras thanked Snowden and all other whistleblowers exposing government wrongdoing (DN).

May: A new article by The Intercept details how the National Security Agency is converting people's private phone conversations into searchable text. According to documents released by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, the agency can now automatically recognize spoken words by generating rough transcripts and phonetic representations that are easily stored and combed for information (DN).

May: A federal appeals court has ruled the National Security Agency's bulk collection of millions of Americans' phone records is illegal. The program was exposed by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden (DN).

August: Documents from NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden have exposed how extensively the NSA relied on telecommunications giant AT&T for its vast spying operations. Records described by The New York Times and ProPublica laud AT&T's "extreme willingness to help" the NSA's spying efforts (DN).

October: NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald, Brazilian privacy activist David Miranda and others have launched a new campaign to establish global privacy standards. The proposed International Treaty on the Right to Privacy, Protection Against Improper Surveillance and Protection of Whistleblowers would require states to ban mass data collection and implement public oversight of national security programs. The treaty

would also require states to offer asylum to whistleblowers. It is being dubbed the "Snowden Treaty." At a launch event last week, Edward Snowden spoke about the need for the treaty via teleconference from Russia. "This is not a problem exclusive to the United States or the National Security Agency or the FBI or the Department of Justice or any agency of government anywhere. This is a global problem that affects all of us," Snowden said (DN).

Democratic candidates sparred on Tuesday about what should happen to NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. "He stole very important information that has unfortunately fallen into a lot of the wrong hands," said Hillary Clinton. "So I don't think he should be brought home without facing the music." Lincoln Chafee praised Snowden's actions: "What Snowden did showed that the American government was acting illegally per the Fourth Amendment. So I would bring him home. SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: "I think Snowden played a very important role in educating the American people to the degree in which our civil liberties and our constitutional rights are being undermined." "He did—he did break the law, and I think there should be a penalty to that. But I think what he did in educating us should be taken into consideration.

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[Edward Snowden](#) has set out the case for Barack Obama granting him a pardon before the US president leaves office in January, arguing that the disclosure of the scale of surveillance by US and British intelligence agencies was not only morally right but has left citizens better off.

Cmdr. John Bitterman,

April 2015: The [Navy Times is reporting](#), Cmdr. John Bitterman, commanding officer of the cutter Steadfast since July, "was fired for loss of confidence on Monday in the midst of an ongoing investigation..."

Cmdr. Bitterman says he is being fired not because of his performance, but because he reported the unsatisfactory condition of his ship, "... it was in such a state of disrepair — with moldy mattresses, lead contamination, bad decking — that he asked his leadership for money to fix things up...His requests were denied...and the mix of the ship's condition, the high operational tempo and the crew's already rock-bottom morale led to his temporary relief."

Darrin Gibbons, Bitterman's attorney, said Bitterman, who has been temporarily assigned to Coast Guard Sector Columbia River in Warrenton, will challenge his removal. He may also seek protection under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act.

"He absolutely is going to defend himself to the maximum degree under the law," Gibbons said.

I am also saddened by President Obama's legacy in regards to peace. As Obama's presidency ends, we find ourselves involved in more wars and conflicts than when Obama took office in 2009. We are at war with Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. We have drone wars in [Pakistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Yemen](#). We have "two advise-and-assist missions" in Cameroon and Uganda.

We expected more, much more, all of that "Hope and Change".

But instead of prosecuting Bush for all of his transgressions, Obama said, "Let's not look backward," and let Bush off of the hook for everything.

On Aug. 20, 2013, Obama filed court papers with the United States Department of Justice requesting that George W. Bush, Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and Paul Wolfowitz be granted procedural immunity in a case alleging that they planned and waged the Iraq War in violation of international law.

Obama now leaves all of these enhanced powers to Donald Trump. Things don't look so good for the future. On the upside, some of those citizens who slept through Obama's transgressions are finally out in the street. We have missed them and we are sorry that it has taken Trump to wake them up.

We can thank the DNC for delivering us Trump. Oh no, it was the Russians or the FBI or the third party candidates or the Berners, everyone but themselves.

The Democratic Party has not learned anything from this election. They want business as usual, keeping the old guard and its neo-liberalism in place: Chuck Schumer for Senate minority leader and Nancy Pelosi for House minority leader; a foreign policy of regime change and an economic policy of Wall Street knows what is best and can be trusted.

One can only wonder what would have happened if Bernie Sanders had been allowed to participate in an honest primary contest. Too bad the party leaders had other plans.

This election was about change. Everyone but the DNC knew that it was time for a change. Now it looks like we will be getting a different

kind of change than we need.

As Americans, we should all be ashamed of the choice that that our two leading political parties gave us. We should be ashamed that our elections are more about exclusion of voters than inclusion. We should be ashamed that we allow private corporations to control our elections with voting machines that are unverifiable and have no paper trail. Our Electoral College is a system set up because our government does not trust us.

It's our system and it is broken. What are we going to do about it?