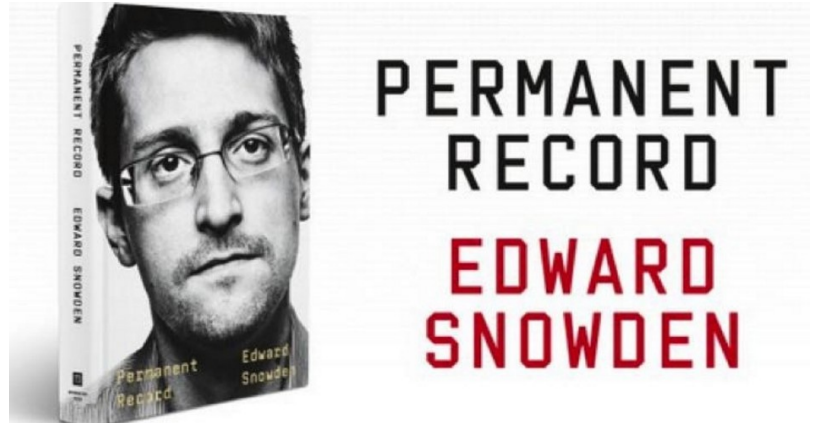




Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on August 2, 2019

Snowden Goes on the Offensive With New Book, Plans to Reveal How Social Media Spies on Users

When Ed Snowden blew the whistle on blanket-like NSA surveillance in 2015, his name almost immediately became a household word. Some — like this writer — see him as a patriot and American hero. Others — including many Republicans and other Surveillance State apologists — accuse him of treason and see him as an enemy of America. And while Snowden has — in Internet posts, articles, and television interviews — attempted to set the record straight, the end result is that those who like him, like him and those who don't, don't.



Now, Snowden is taking a more direct approach; he has written his memoir, *Permanent Record*, which will be released on September 17 — Constitution Day. *Permanent Record* will be published by Metropolitan Books, an imprint of Henry Holt, which is itself a division of MacMillan Publishing. Metropolitan Books describes itself as being “committed to publishing strong and unconventional points of view, controversial opinions, translations, and new voices.” MacMillan’s website says *Permanent Record* “reveals for the first time the story of his life, including how he helped to build that [surveillance] system and what motivated him to try to bring it down.”

In his typically playful and understated style, Snowden announced his memoir in a tweet, writing, “I wrote a book. pic.twitter.com/wEdlOFMnMn” In the video accompanying that tweet, Snowden says, “Everything that we do now, lasts forever. Not because we want to remember; but because we’re no longer allowed to forget. Helping to create that system is my greatest regret.”

The book will be released in 20 countries on September 17, and pre-orders — available in the United States, U.K., and Germany — are already showing that *Permanent Record* will likely be a best-seller right out of the gate.

According to a release by Metropolitan Books, the book tells the story of a young man who “helps to create [NSA’s] system of mass surveillance, and then experiences the crisis of conscience that led him to try to bring it down.”

MacMillan CEO, John Sargent stated, “Edward Snowden decided at the age of 29 to give up his entire future for the good of his country. He displayed enormous courage in doing so, and like him or not, his is an incredible American story. There is no doubt that the world is a better and more private place for his actions. Macmillan is enormously proud to publish *Permanent Record*.”

Releasing the book on Constitution Day is apropos, given that everything about the Surveillance State’s spying on American citizens is a violation of constitutionally protected rights, including those listed in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments. The violation of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments are the most obvious: If the government can — without a warrant — simply reach into your phone, computer, or



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other devices, and read, copy, and otherwise take your communications, notes, calendar appointments, etc., then the Fourth Amendment means nothing. Since you *own* that data and it is your property, then the government's ability to take it from you without due process is a clear violation of the Fifth Amendment. Add to that the salient fact that your private communications and notes can be used against you, causing you to, in essence, "testify" against yourself, and the violation is even worse.

But what of the Third Amendment's promise that "No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war but in a manner to be prescribed by law"? One of the purposes of that amendment's inclusion in the Bill of Rights was the fact that soldiers quartered in citizens' homes could be used to gather information on those citizens. What practical difference does it make whether the soldier is a human person or a robot. When the NSA or some other alphabet agency "quarters" a digital spy in your hard drive for the purpose of spying on you or restricting your ability to communicate, it may justly be seen as a violation of the Third Amendment's protection of your rights.

Releasing the book on Constitution Day — which is the phrase used in the promotional video — is a deliberate statement that Snowden did what he did as an act of patriotism.

And Snowden has timed the release of the book to coincide with his decision to go on the offensive where the Surveillance State and the Culture of Surveillance are concerned. In a series of tweets, Snowden is teasing his next move. On Thursday, Snowden — who has previously avoided Facebook and Instagram — tweeted, "These are my new accounts on other platforms. In the weeks ahead, I aim to explain how each of these sites spies on you, and methods to limit how much they know about you. If you use them, keep an eye out. [instagram.com/that_snowden/](https://www.instagram.com/that_snowden/) [facebook.com/ThatSnowden](https://www.facebook.com/ThatSnowden)"

This writer began his writing career in the wake of the Snowden revelations, with two articles about [why the surveillance state is wrong](#) and [the open source tools people can use to better protect themselves](#). And while my writing has expanded to include a litany of topics related to liberty, I know that — in a very real sense — I owe my writing career to Ed Snowden. I, for one, look forward to both his book and the steps and tools he will share for protecting privacy.

Image: [Screenshot from Twitter.com](#)



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