



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 26, 2021

Report: NSA Unmasked Carlson But Did Not Spy on Him

The National Security Agency didn't spy on Tucker Carlson, a new report says. But the agency did "unmask" the Fox talker's name in its surveillance of other intelligence targets.

The *Record*, a cybersecurity news website, [divulged the unmasking](#) on July 23, about a month after [Carlson accused](#) the super-secret spy agency of reading his e-mails. Unmasking is the procedure by which the identity of an American in an intelligence report is revealed if such knowledge will help make sense of the information.



AP Images

Early this month, *Axios* reported that [Carlson learned](#) the agency had tracked his effort to interview Russian President Vladimir Putin.

An NSA review found no evidence to support Tucker Carlson's accusations that the agency had been spying on him in an effort to knock his show off the air, via [@martinmatishak](#) <https://t.co/MatGBJ7hCC>

— The Record by Recorded Future (@TheRecord_Media) [July 23, 2021](#)

Carlson "Mentioned"

A month ago, [Carlson accused](#) NSA of "monitoring our electronic communications and [of] planning to leak them in an attempt to take the show off the air." Carlson also said the agency "read my emails without my permission."

A whistleblower, Carlson claimed, "repeated back to us information about a story that we are working on that could have only come directly from my texts and emails."

The [NSA denied](#) the spying charge in a cloudy statement. It did not deny seeing the popular talk show host's e-mails.

A statement from NSA regarding recent allegations: pic.twitter.com/vduE6l6YWg

— NSA/CSS (@NSAGov) [June 30, 2021](#)

Carlson surfaced in NSA surveillance, [Axios reported](#), because he was seeking the interview with Putin through possibly Russian intermediaries. "Carlson learned that the government was aware of his outreach — and that's the basis of his extraordinary accusation, followed by a rare public denial by the NSA that he had been targeted," the website reported.

But now the [Record has reported](#) that Carlson was at least partly right.

"The NSA has found no evidence to support Tucker Carlson's accusations that the agency had been



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spying on him in an effort to knock his show off the air,” two sources told the website.

Nor were his communications “intercepted through so-called ‘incidental collection,’ where the U.S. government sometimes obtains the emails or phone calls of Americans in contact with a foreign target under surveillance,” the sources said.

But Carlson was “unmasked,” the website reported:

Instead, the nation’s top electronic spy agency found that Carlson was mentioned in communications between third parties and his name was subsequently revealed through “unmasking,” a process in which relevant government officials can request the identities of American citizens in intelligence reports to be divulged provided there is an official reason, such as helping them make sense of the intelligence documents they are reviewing.

The NSA obscures the names of Americans mentioned in its finished products in an effort to protect their privacy.

The sources declined to comment on who mentioned Carlson in their communications.

Unsurprisingly, the agency called the [Puzzle Palace](#) was mum.

How Did Carlson Know?

As for how Carlson found out, the *Record* reported that the FBI might have seen the NSA report, then warned Carlson that “he was the target in a potential intelligence influence operation by foreign adversaries.”

So Carlson “could have concluded that he was being spied on.”

[Continued the Record:](#)

The second possibility is that there is a leak in the national security apparatus and someone illegally disclosed the classified information contained in the report to Carlson, which would trigger a series of actions within the NSA, the FBI and the Justice Department to potentially uncover it.

Though NSA has denied the eavesdropping, it has not denied viewing Tucker Carlson's emails. The agency might have picked up his communications inadvertently by eavesdropping on someone else. <https://t.co/IddBKLeqSd>

— TheNewAmerican (@NewAmericanMag) [July 9, 2021](#)

Either might comport with Carlson’s account of an insider who revealed that NSA had seen Carlson’s e-mails and unmasked him.

As *Axios* reported, if NSA has picked up Carlson’s e-mails during surveillance of a foreign national, then the Fox talker’s identity would have been masked and only revealed upon request. Again, intelligence officials only unmask someone to help them understand the information they have collected.

Democrat presidential legmen aren’t above using the NSA to target opponents.

Susan Rice, President Barack Hussein Obama’s national security advisor, [unmasked presidential](#)



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[candidate Donald Trump's campaign officials.](#)

Nor is the NSA above spying on American citizens, as [material leaked by](#) former CIA man Edward Snowden showed.



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