



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 14, 2013

## Snowden Says NSA Targets Journalists Critical of Government

Controversial whistleblower Edward Snowden (shown) has [levied](#) a variety of accusations against the National Security Agency. The latest allegation asserts that the NSA has specifically targeted journalists who wrote critically about the federal government following the September 11 attacks. According to Snowden, this facet of the NSA's spying is what helped him [decide](#) which journalists to whom he should reach out and report on the NSA's unconstitutional activities.



Snowden is a former NSA contractor who blew the whistle on the NSA's warrantless searches of e-mails and phone calls of American citizens, a story first reported by the U.K. *Guardian*.

The Obama administration has targeted Snowden as a traitor, charging him with theft of government property and violating the Espionage Act of 1917, while others have celebrated Snowden as a hero.

While a great deal of attention is given to Snowden's accusations against the federal government, little has been reported on just why Snowden chose to bring his story to documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras and Glenn Greenwald (shown) of the *Guardian*.

But in an [interview](#) with the *New York Times Magazine*, Snowden provides some insight into his decision.

During the interview, Snowden said that Laura is one of "the few who reported fearlessly on controversial topics throughout this period, even in the face of withering personal criticism."

"After 9/11, many of the most important news outlets in America abdicated their role as a check to power — the journalistic responsibility to challenge the excesses of government — for fear of being seen as unpatriotic and punished in the market during a period of heightened nationalism," he said. "From a business perspective, this was the obvious strategy," he continued. "But what benefitted the institutions ended up costing the public dearly. The major outlets are still only beginning to recover from this cold period. Laura and Glenn are among the few who reported fearlessly on controversial topics."

Snowden contends that in doing so, Poitras became "targeted by the very programs involved in the recent disclosures."

According to Snowden, the agency tracked her e-mails and placed her on countless travel watch lists, causing her to have to repeatedly undergo airport interrogations.

For Snowden, it was Poitras' willingness to report critically on the government that compelled him to reach out to her. He contacted her through an encrypted network, and that is when it all began. "I was surprised to realize that there were people in news organizations who didn't recognize any unencrypted message sent over the Internet is being delivered to every intelligence service in the world," he said. "In the wake of this year's disclosures, it should be clear that unencrypted journalist-source



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communication is unforgivably reckless,” he added.

Further, Poitras earned Snowden’s full trust when she appeared skeptical of Snowden. “We came to a point in the verification and vetting process where I discovered Laura was more suspicious of me than I was of her, and I’m famously paranoid,” Snowden indicated.

Ultimately, this communication would result in a meeting in Hong Kong between Snowden, Greenwald, and Poitras that lead to the revelations about the NSA’s surveillance programs.

*Photos of Edward Snowden and Glenn Greenwald: AP Images*



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