

J. Kirk Wiebe

J. Kirk Wiebe worked as a senior analyst at the NSA from 1975 to 2001. In the aftermath of 9/11, he was among a handful of NSA employees who stumbled upon a secret program at the agency to monitor the communications of millions of U.S. citizens. Wiebe and his colleagues decided to approach inspector generals at the Defense Department and Justice Department with what they found. He spoke to FRONTLINE's Jim Gilmore on Dec. 13, 2013.

What's SIGINT?

SIGINT is really all signals. Think of all signals and all electronic communications in whatever form they may be. In the old days it was Morse code, and then it was banded signals, and now it's packets, little bits of packages of data, of maybe your voice, floating through fiber-optic lines all over the world. They don't necessarily follow a Point A to Point B path. Sometimes they go from Point A to D to L to get to P, for example. It all depends on what is available, what is not full. ...

All right, so you end up as a senior analyst. What's a senior analyst?

Yeah. In this case I was trying to help market the concepts, the precepts upon which a project called ThinThread was built. ThinThread was a prototype capability to collect data from networks, sort through it, protect privacy and give the rest of it, foreign data, to analysts in a form that was readily digestible, if you will, didn't require a lot of code breaking or anything. It could just be consumed and put to use in terms of the context of an analyst's target activity.

And when you say protect privacy explain a little bit more. Protect domestic privacy? And why, how? Again, as we talked about before, how that was ingrained into the DNA of people at the NSA at this period of time.

From the first day of entry on duty at NSA it was immediately programmed into the minds and the souls of every employee at NSA that the NSA's job is foreign intelligence, and we never ever collect or analyze data on American citizens. It was a no-no.

And there was a law covering it, a procedure, a policy. Everything was laid out -- all t's crossed, i's dotted, because of the work that the Church Committee did in the mid-70s after NSA had been found spying on Americans. Two committees were formed, the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence, to perform oversight on NSA to make sure

this never happened again. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

... ThinThread: You described what the idea was. How far did it get, the use of it at that point? We're in the late '90s now. How far did it get?

Well, as I said, it had a data access, data collection component that was working very well. It had a data privacy section. That was working very well, protecting the citizens and innocent people by encrypting the data and not allowing analysts to look at it even. And it was successful in showing the relationships between people through electronic communications. For example, if someone called somebody from their phone number to another phone number, it would make that equation and that linkage between these two nodes, if you will.

If these foreigners, which was OK to collect, were talking to still other people, it would make those connections so that if you were an analyst and you had suspicions about this first node, you could look at one degree apart from that person to see who that person was talking to, investigate content and metadata associated with those, and build your target understanding through that kind of analysis.

So, for an agency at that point which was behind the eight ball technologically, this sounded like the perfect solution. It seemed to accomplish the needs of this modern age that we are now in. Is that the case? And if that is the case, how come it was sidelined?

ThinThread represented the foundation of the solution for NSA. What I mean is we never intended ThinThread, that particular version, to answer all of NSA's issues and subject matter needs and intelligence needs. We were trying to demonstrate that it was the fundamental basis for those solutions, but it would have to be grown larger and larger and larger and applied to more sources of information, and then bring that information together to be the ultimate solution.

But it was certainly that first mile marker, if you will, and it was successful. In fact, just before 9/11, nine months before 9/11 we tried to deploy it to demonstrate to the rest of the agency and all the analysts working the various requirements that they could gain confidence through its use, that it would provide results that no one else was producing and produce results quickly, because the whole problem was how do you sort through the huge volume and how do you deal with the speed of the communications that run at electronic speeds? All of the different what we would call protocols, which means different types of communications, such as phone, email, pager data, Skype, whatever was the electronic product du jour, because they were coming out rapidly and hitting the marketplace.

But the system did it all.

The system could do it all and could be adapted easily to do new ones as they appeared.

So why sideline it?

... Mismanagement. Mismanagement of the entire acquisition process. How does a large organization like NSA of some 30,000 or more employees acquire systems and put them into the bowels of the building so that they deliver to everyone's computers the right kinds of results? That requires huge discipline, very thorough planning to do that.

All of that was skipped, and especially with 9/11 happening all of a sudden in September of 2001. When that happened no one cared about doing things carefully and methodically. It was like everything is out the window. What can we make work as fast as we can make it work? Even the law wasn't abided by as it should have been. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

So take us to after 9/11. Where are you on 9/11? What does that do to people's psyches at NSA? What does it do to the direction that the NSA is going in? What does it do to the attitude about what is legal and what is not legal?

When 9/11 happened I remember listening to the radio in Baltimore; I believe it was the *Tom Marr Show*. And there was a network bulletin -- I forget which network it was -- that a plane had struck the first tower of the World Trade Center. I thought visions of King Kong and all of this stuff going back. I said, "What an unfortunate event, a plane hitting one of those buildings, just terrible loss of life." And it was unfortunate.

Then traveling a few more miles down the road, the news that the second airliner had hit. That's when I knew this was not an accident; we were being attacked through some method. I remember a deep sinking feeling in my gut as I pushed the accelerator even faster to get into work, because I knew something terrible had happened. My concern was, how did it happen, and why didn't we stop it? How could we have missed it? How could we have?

I got to the building, ran into the SARC with a little bit of extra security, because now troops were at the entrance ways with guns pointed at approaching drivers. People were afraid someone could drive up with a truck full of explosives, and all security measures were being taken. But I got into the building, went up to my place in the SARC. Everybody had the TV on, because the TV is where the news was. It wasn't coming out of NSA's computers. It was on the TV, because we had missed the entire event.

We began soul searching almost immediately after getting past being overwhelmed by the tragedy of it all, and the Pentagon and then Flight 93 in the fields of Pennsylvania. But we all felt like a great wrong had been done and that we were all somewhat if not all culpable in the fact that it had happened, because when you're at NSA, you know NSA was founded basically so that we would never experience another Dec. 7, 1941, another Pearl Harbor, and this was de facto a failure by NSA. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

... You guys are sitting in a weird situation, because you had been developing a program that would answer at that point an obvious need, that the problem was we missed it, that there is a way to have found this information, and since this was the beginning of something, nobody assumed it was the end of anything; there would be more need for the same thing. What was the feeling among the group that you worked with about where you could go next? ...

Well, we certainly were saddened that we had not been successful in getting ThinThread out into the field before 9/11, but then as we thought more about it, we thought, well, maybe we can get it into the fight now, especially with this having happened. The logical thing to do for any organization is put the best tools you have into the fight so that you can at least begin to get on the trail of those who perpetrated this terrible set of events.

Unfortunately, nobody listened. Nobody cared about what we were doing. Whatever they were preoccupied with was sufficient for them. No one asked us. No one wanted to listen to our suggestions that we get it into the fight. ...

Take me to one meeting and who was there and what you did and what you thought the possibilities were.

I can remember being at a meeting led by NSA's then-chief scientist. ... There at the meeting the attendees included people from all the key technology development organizations, and the idea was what could we name that could be put on the chalkboard to be considered as a group of good things to look at to move the agency forward in its ability to either access, process, or analyze information. And what could be done quickly? ...

I remember suggesting ThinThread and basically a nod of the head but no further questions about it. It was almost as if someone had told somebody, "Don't pay attention to that."

[↑ Return to top](#)

I also remember a bunch of computer servers showing up outside the area where we were housed in our organization in the hallway, something like 40 or 50 of them, destined for our organization or somebody in it, but we didn't know anything about it. And I asked Bill Binney; he didn't know.

I'm sorry. I stepped on you.

That's all right. We didn't know anything about it. What we came to find out was that there was a new program being introduced that involved some of the contractors that worked for Bill Binney. They needed those people's expertise in order to pull it off. And at that point later we found out it was data from the telephone company -- I think it was AT&T -- and it included data for American communications to other Americans, which was a shocker.

What did you feel when you heard that?

We had suddenly become criminals by association. The agency had gone down a path that we had been preached to you never do. ...

So you can imagine all these years having grown up, you never spy on America, and finding out your agency is importing data from a phone company involving domestic-to-domestic phone calls. We were very, very, very concerned.

... Why couldn't you guys go down and knock on the door to where all those computer servers and everything went into and say: "Hey, guys, what are you doing? We're hearing some rumors."

Interestingly, about the time these servers showed up in the hallway, I needed to go into our meeting room, so I opened the room almost to be personally pushed back out by a guy in a very secretive meeting, a guy that we knew, an analyst. I can remember backing out of the room, going over to Bill Binney and saying something like: "What's going on in there in our offices? I just went in, and so-and-so basically threw me out of the meeting." At that point Bill didn't know what was going on.

What we now know was going on were discussions about -- I'm forgetting the name of it.

Stellar Wind.

Stellar Wind, yeah. What was going on in that room were discussions about a new program called Stellar Wind.

So as days went by, what other hints were you getting about the fact that ... what was in fact happening and how pieces of ThinThread were being torn out and put in and not the pieces that had the domestic security or protection parts to them?

Some of the indicators that I had that something new had arrived besides the servers was I found out that one of Bill's contractors, the head contractor, had approached him and told him that data including domestic U.S. phone calls was being included in a new program, obviously Stellar Wind.

I also heard from Bill Binney that there had been a meeting called by one of the program managers under the Trailblazer program, and in that meeting, attended by both Bill Binney and Ed Loomis, this person said, "You know, we can milk this thing to 2015."

So here we have a national crisis, we have 9/11, and we have a program manager who is supposed to responsibly resource money needs across programs to develop new capabilities, intelligence capabilities talking not about what will be effective and what won't be but what a financial opportunity exists, not only for companies but for the agency to obtain huge sums of money, and stating we can milk it to 2015. And that was back right after 9/11 that this took place. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

Who is Tom Drake, and how does Tom Drake come into the party?

I first met Tom Drake when he came into the SIGINT Automation Research Center one day. I believe it was an afternoon. Tom was formally introducing himself to the larger group within this organization as someone who was fond of the work we had been doing, respectful of the technical breakthroughs and so forth, had even inspected the code, the programming associated with those capabilities, and found it to be highly effective and efficiently written, but whose new job was to liaise between the deputy director of operations by the name of Maureen Baginski, working side-by-side with her really as an aide, and to help her reach out to different organizations to improve everything basically that operations was doing, to get the agency where it needed to be to prevent another 9/11. And that's where I first met Tom.

Tom sees what you guys are doing, and he has seen it much earlier, of course, but he sees the same thing as you guys see, which is the fact that ThinThread is an answer, and it's got protection built in. It's a pretty damn good direction to go. And he goes to Baginski, knocks on the door, and says, "Hey, we're sitting on something here, and I think we maybe should move forward." Do you know about that story? What happens, and what is her response?

Well, yes. Tom Drake, of course, saw what we were doing, and one of his first acts in the job, which the first day was 9/11, was to inform Maureen Baginski that ThinThread needed to be put into the fight, that it should have been a long time, but at least now she needed to take steps to make sure that became part of the arsenal that NSA had at its disposal.

She basically pooh-poohed the idea and told Tom that he was hanging around with the wrong people, and that managers that be in senior management had chosen another direction. Well, of course she was alluding to what we now know became the failed Trailblazer program.

Of course Tom, being the free spirit and the dedicated person he was, kept in touch with us for the next six weeks until Ed Loomis, Kirk Wiebe and Bill Binney left the agency forever and took retirement offers, because we knew at that point in October of 2001 that we were not going to win the battle to include ThinThread in the arsenal that the NSA was building. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

... The need to go to [House Intelligence Committee senior staffer] Diane Roark, why did that come about?

Well, going to Diane was part of our strategy, because we knew that Diane had the chance to influence other people in decision making, either in the agency or external. She was very eloquent in her ability to converse with people at nontechnical levels and still make all the main points, was very good. So Diane was extremely useful as an advocate in addition to her oversight role, which she was trying to play for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

But the other indicator we had was the fact that the agency constituted

five separate technical review panels to examine ThinThread from all of its facets. All five recommended that NSA use ThinThread until something better comes along. All five of those studies were ignored by NSA management. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

Who is Gen. Hayden? Give me a description of the way that he ran the place, how people viewed him, how relations with you guys soured your attitude toward what he was doing.

Of course when any new director comes in, there is great anticipation, because you don't know what personality you're going to get, you don't know what direction he's going to cause the NSA to go in, what his personal axes are. You just don't have any sense of that. ...

But when Hayden arrived in March 1999, the agency had already kicked off the largest planning activity in its history called Roadmap One, so the timing seemed right. If we could finish our planning activity, which was thought to go on for about three or four months and then have a large report and a plan -- here you have a new director.

What an opportunity to get him educated right away, because we obviously, the employees, have been there for many years, know where the skeletons are, we know how the system works or does not work, what it's doing, what it's not doing. He knows none of that. He has probably just heard the NSA is in the Dark Ages, needs to change; go see what you can do.

So we present Hayden, and Hayden does begin to share a vision, and here was the vision he shared with us early on when he arrived. He was pumped into all the rooms at NSA that had conference ability, that had TVs in them, as well as appeared on the stage of the auditorium where he was being filmed and televised to the rest of us. And he put up a slide -- actually I think this was freelance; he was actually just talking on stage.

He said: "You know, the agency is like this big transport airplane -- slow, a lot of capacity, but has difficulty changing course on a dime, not like an agile fighter aircraft which can dodge and maneuver and so forth. We have to go from this model, this bulky, slow-to-change model to this new model where technology is rolling over quickly. We need to become agile and adaptable."

Everyone was onboard with that vision. What we didn't know is how he expected to get there. He initially opened up the phones, if you will, invited communications from the entire workforce, ideas, and he would actually respond to some of them, or at least a surrogate did with his initials, either via email or you could call, so forth and so on. So this went on for several weeks. The Roadmap One activity was just completing, so there was great optimism initially.

But obviously things changed when Roadmap One was called and declared an unsuitable program or a program that was not, could not be funded or managed or whatever, which was really perplexing to all of us

who had participated. ...

So why did it go off the tracks?

It was announced as unsupportable, not doable, no details given. But we were very perplexed, because the same kind of thing happened inside the SARC one day when someone was sent down to tell us all that ThinThread would not solve the problems the agency had, because it was not scalable. ...

That was close to the time when we were ready to depart NSA and we were getting these other indicators, so there were several indicators that we were losing the battle. It was useless inside the building, and we really needed to leave and try to come in at it another path.

[↑ Return to top](#)

... *The New York Times* article comes out in December 2005. ... What are your thoughts about it? ...

... I actually found out about it from Bill Binney. Bill Binney did a better job of watching the press and googling things of interest that had to do with NSA surveillance than I did. But I really didn't think that much about it, although I wondered who told them, because it certainly wasn't us.

Bill and I and others in our group were not in the business of going to the press with family business, if you will. We were still trying to work things internally, even though we had failed up to that point.

But I never dreamt that that announcement would lead to the FBI coming to my front door on July 26, 2007, let alone the front door of Bill Binney, Ed Loomis and Diane Roark, all four of our homes being raided at exactly the same moment by a dozen or more agents at each of our homes, purportedly due, based on the affidavit we eventually saw, to some connection with [*New York Times* reporters] Eric Lichtblau and James Risen and this article. When we knew all along the NSA could have looked at our phone calls and our emails, etc., and seen that I never -- I didn't know who James Risen was, I really didn't, or Eric Lichtblau for that matter. None of us did.

So we began to wonder -- clearly the government was after us; we were wondering why. I didn't want to believe it was for the IG report that we had sent to the DoD IG [Department of Defense Inspector General] in December or September 2002. I didn't think our government was capable of that kind of nastiness after giving a whole life of honest meritorious service to the agency. But lo and behold, time would tell that that's exactly what it was. It was retribution for us having filed the DoD IG report reporting corruption and mismanagement at the National Security Agency.

[↑ Return to top](#)

Take me to the raid. What happens?

When I'm raided by the FBI, I am sitting at my computer, and I'm facing a double window out to my front yard. There is a couple of bushes that

block the window, but I can still see through if something crosses in front of my window. Well, I'm sitting there, it's 9:00 in the morning, and I see these blue-uniform-with-gold-FBI-on-the-back people coming across left to right, and I said -- well, it sent a chill through me immediately.

First order of business for me was to get up, get to the door before they break it in, because I had heard these guys can play tough with doors, and I didn't want my house broken. So I went in, opened the door, greeted them, of course semi-invited them in. The lead agent held a search warrant and a badge of identification, came in. They asked me who else was in the house. I told them my mother-in-law was, one of my daughters and two Pembroke Welsh corgis. They wanted me to put the Pembroke Welsh corgis in the bathroom and lock them in there and to wake up Grandma and my daughter and have them come down and sit on the couch in the front room, which I did.

My wife and my other daughter had already been out for the day and didn't know any of this was going on until they drove in the driveway and saw about 12 unmarked vans and cars lining our driveway, which is 400 feet long, and thought something had happened to me like a burglary, a death, something. They didn't understand. Thankfully, one of the FBI people informed them that there was a search ongoing, took them into the house, had them sit in the front room for the rest of the day.

While that was going on, I was put on the back porch, my deck, which is uncovered in the sun, and I sat there for the next seven and a half hours, and during that time I was asked two questions. The lead agent came to me with a picture and said, "Do you know who this is?" The picture was poor, but it was a scanned version, if you will, of a newspaper picture of Siobhan Gorman of *The Baltimore Sun* who had of course authored the article that featured Tom Drake and some of the information about NSA corruption and mismanagement of programs.

They also asked me one more question based on something my daughter had said to another agent. They had actually asked my wife and my kids did I know Diane Roark, and of course they knew that I did. Upon hearing my oldest daughter tell them that Diane had just called the night before, [they] came outside and said, "Is it true that you spoke with Diane Roark last night about 9:30?" And I said, "Yes." "And why did you talk with her?" And I said, "Because we were talking about launching a new business effort, possibly with Diane and her son, involved in looking at Medicaid/Medicare fraud with Health and Human Services of the U.S. government," who was losing on the order of \$160 billion a year to fraud and so forth. And our process that we had in ThinThread could do a lot toward solving, connecting dots, corruption and so forth.

Other than that, there were no questions. That was it for seven and a half hours while the agents went through every room of the house, rummaged through papers, my medicine cabinet, grabbing -- I had six computers running, both for family and I had a couple extras doing some experimental stuff, rounding those up, loading them in. They took anything that recorded a digital piece of data, including phones with memories, cell phones. Took it all and took it all to the FBI for analysis.

What was your response on the question about whether you knew who Gorman was?

I told the FBI that I did recognize her as Siobhan Gorman and that Tom Drake had pointed her out to me at a meeting earlier that same year at Markle Foundation in Washington, D.C., to which I was invited, and obviously Siobhan Gorman attended, as a panel of technical experts discussed ways the government could deal with some sticky technical issues like mutual security concerns in communications etc., etc. And that's the only time I had ever seen Siobhan Gorman, but they were interested in that.

[↑ Return to top](#)

You're basically being labeled the enemies of the state here. What are you thinking?

The whole impact of this, of this losing the argument at NSA on ThinThread, ultimately being raided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was sending a clear signal that my government did not like me, and I was trying to understand why after -- you know, this button is NSA's second highest award, and I wonder what it was that I did personally so wrong that I deserve this kind of treatment.

So yeah, it created a lot of soul searching. I could come up with no answers, and later people in positions to know and lawyers have since said that it was retribution for truth telling. You put the agency, the NSA, on report through the DoD IG, you're out trying to sell concepts that work, they have concepts that don't, it's going to embarrass them -- a whole lot of reasons why people don't want to see you succeed and want to see you punished for certain types of behavior.

Take us through the next couple years and what it did to you, what it did to your family, what it did to your friends, and how it was hard to find answers.

... The questions do come. What was that all about? And then you have to put yourself in a position of explaining, "Well, there is this investigation because there was this article in the paper, and they want to see everyone connected with this project and see if you were involved," etc., etc.

But you feel pretty low; your self-esteem takes a big hit. There is discord in the family, because kids, family, wife may ask you: "Well, what did you do to bring this upon the house? Why was I held on a couch all day, and why was my daughter Meghan or Kristen crying?" So there are these tough periods you get through, but you do get through them. ...

Except for Ed Loomis.

Except for Ed Loomis. Yes, that's true. Ed probably took it worst in terms of cost to family and self, physically, mentally, because Ed went into the shadows. He became a recluse, quiet. He lost his wife. And I think he was actually afraid to talk to Bill Binney and myself and Diane Roark, because he also had a lawyer who was telling him, "You don't know for sure, Ed, what those other guys said to the government and what they

did, so protect yourself." And he abided by that.

But now that is all changed. Ed has come out. He has told his story. He now understands the greater totality of truth behind the whole thing.

But the irony that Ed was the guy who actually didn't even believe the things that you guys believed, that he just couldn't understand the possibility that the NSA would be doing the things that you guys had sort of discovered.

Ed did not believe Bill and I, or Diane for that matter or Tom, but I understand that. Probably of all in the group next to Ed I would understand that, because I was one of the last to come around to the notion that my government would actually work purposefully against me. It's a concept that never entered my mind ever in my entire career, either in the Air Force or as a government employee. I had always worked for my government, with my government toward noble ends. Little did I know it would go off the wrong path, violate the constitution, and try to turn all of this against me or Bill or Ed.

So I understand Ed's difficulty wrestling with the truth and the inevitable outcome there. I understand that. I do.

... And the other lessons you draw from this whole episode, how do you view now with a little bit of time behind it? What's your overview over what actually took place?

My reaction to the whole set of events and what has happened here is one of great sadness and despair almost. I am generally a pretty positive person. It takes a lot to make me negative. But I worry now for the way of life, for the type of government we once had and grew up under in which the Constitution was held sacrosanct more or less to one today where the Constitution is almost an afterthought and something that gets in the way of men's will.

You hear the expression, "Are we going to be a nation of laws, or are we going to be a nation of men?" We are clearly by anyone's measure moving toward a nation of men, whatever is expedient, whatever sounds good to those in power. We'll do it because we can. There are no checks and balances anymore. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

... The argument that the administration makes, both administrations made, that in the end, there might have been some problems. But it was very effective in what it did. Your overview of the effectiveness?

When talking about the effectiveness of the NSA program, as we've come to know it, I would say a couple of things. Number one, it isn't so effective. If it were effective, in my definition of effectiveness, we would have discovered a lot more terrorist attempts and so forth than we have. We certainly wouldn't fumble in trying to come up with them in front of Congress. ...

The whole issue of privacy, we keep hearing from Congress and others

that we have to reach a balance. Gen. Hayden will say, even today: "Well, you have to decide. Do you want more of this or less of that?" That's a bad argument. It's a red herring. I don't even think the general understands what I'm about to say.

But there is no reason, technologically, to sacrifice privacy for ability to catch bad guys. They are two separate things, separate, no need to mingle the two. There's no balance, there's no trade-off, no nothing. We can do both 100 percent. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

What's your overview of Snowden?

My overview of Ed Snowden is that he did a very brave thing. And why? Why do I say brave, courageous? Because he went counter to what is popular in government. ...

We know the Supreme Court has never had a thorough weighing discussion of bulk collection of metadata. And metadata bulk, persistent collection poses a greater threat to everyone's privacy than reading an occasional bit of your content. We know NSA cannot read everyone's content. There's too much content to read. But you can have computers process metadata very rapidly, because that's what makes the whole telephone system work.

When you dial a number, it's almost instantaneous. It's ringing to the person. When you send an email, it's just a matter of a few seconds, it's around the world. Not a problem. It's not people making that happen. It's the automated switching that's doing that.

And it's the same thing here. When I can do that with metadata, I can watch what you do, just about when you did it. So when you put that credit card at the Shell station in for your gas purchase, there's a time stamp, a location where you are and your name. That's all I've got to have to know where you work at that moment in time. And if I put that in with your E-ZPass, passive transponder, what ramp you went on, together with your bank deposit, your phone calls, and your emails, I know where you are just about all day.

That's all possible on domestic targets?

That is all possible under -- in terms of what the NSA is getting today, in terms of data, and the processing power that it has.

They say it's all legal; it's not illegal to gather the metadata; we're only going to go into content if we fish out and get a warrant for that individual. So you're saying there's no worries about people's privacy being invaded?

NSA's claim that all the metadata in the world does not constitute a violation of privacy is a lie, an unequivocal lie. Metadata reveals more about what you're doing now, and even over time, if I watch your patterns of behavior long enough to know what your work week's like, Monday through Friday, there will be a pattern. There will be another one for the weekend. I can then forget the actual date and time, and I can

say: "I know what you're doing. You're in your weekend mode. You're in this mode. Da, da, da, da, da. You call your wife, by the way, every day between 3:30 and 4, because she's just getting off work, and you like to talk to her on the way home, da, da, da."

I can call your psychiatrist. Why are you constantly calling a psychiatrist? Something the matter with you? Why is it you're married, and you're constantly charging to this club over here, where we know there are dancers and -- I can begin to get all kinds of insight into your life just through metadata.

And the importance of the information that Snowden released is what? Why is that so important?

The Snowden data is irrefutable evidence that the government, on a large scale, is breaking our laws under the Constitution of the United States, breaking them unequivocally, and on a large scale. And if you want to think globally, it's doing the same for innocent people all over the world. And it has partners in crime doing the same thing. So we have a rogue bunch of intelligence people who think it's OK to do this. We've got a real problem, because now your privacy of thought and actions as an individual is gone. ...

[↑ Return to top](#)

Your overview, your thoughts on the way the government is going after Snowden, what does that say? ...

Clearly there's no adequate outlet for whistleblowers who have legitimate, honest complaints to make. I don't think we'd be sitting here today if Kirk Wiebe, Ed Loomis, Bill Binney, Tom Drake, Diane Roark and Ed Snowden had a good, robust path for whistleblowers to get an honest hearing about things wrong in their home organizations, especially those that violate the basic rights of Americans.

When that process is broken, there can be no truth. And there will be no truth, because all of this going after Snowden and going after us tells all other employees: "Don't you ever cross us by telling the truth. We don't want you to." Imagine running your family that way, teaching people to lie, or hold a lie. It's not a secret. This isn't about classified material. This is about corrupt, dishonest, criminal behavior. There's a huge difference.

[↑ Return to top](#)

 E-MAIL THIS

Tweet

Recommend { 61

 2

0

RELATED

November 16, 2015 / 6:21 pm
After Paris Attacks, CIA Head Reignites Surveillance Debate

August 17, 2015 / 4:23 pm
How AT&T Helped the NSA Spy on Millions

June 1, 2015 / 4:03 pm
With or Without the Patriot Act, Here's How the NSA Can Still Spy on

April 23, 2015 / 9:33 am
FRONTLINE Wins Peabody Award for "United States of

Comments for this thread are now closed.



0 Comments FRONTLINE

1 Login

Recommend Share

Sort by Best

This discussion has been closed.

Subscribe Add Disqus to your site Add Disqus Add Privacy

In order to foster a civil and literate discussion that respects all participants, FRONTLINE has the following guidelines for commentary. By submitting comments here, you are consenting to these rules:

Readers' comments that include profanity, obscenity, personal attacks, harassment, or are defamatory, sexist, racist, violate a third party's right to privacy, or are otherwise inappropriate, will be removed. Entries that are unsigned or are "signed" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. We reserve the right to not post comments that are more than 400 words. We will take steps to block users who repeatedly violate our commenting rules, terms of use, or privacy policies. You are fully responsible for your comments.

RECENT STORIES

November 18, 2015 / 5:27 pm In Fight Against ISIS, a Lose-Lose Scenario Poses Challenge for West

November 17, 2015 / 6:13 pm ISIS is in Afghanistan, But Who Are They Really?

November 17, 2015 / 1:59 pm "The Most Risky ... Job Ever." Reporting on "ISIS in Afghanistan"

JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

e-mail address

Subscribe

Like 1M people like this. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

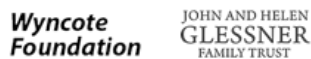
Follow @frontlinepbs 246K followers



Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Major funding for FRONTLINE is provided by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Park Foundation, the John and Helen Glessner Family Trust, the Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the FRONTLINE Journalism Fund with major support from Jon and Jo Ann Hagler on behalf of the Jon L. Hagler Foundation.



Supporting Investigative Reporting



FRONTLINE Watch FRONTLINE About FRONTLINE Contact FRONTLINE

Privacy Policy Journalistic Guidelines PBS Privacy Policy PBS Terms of Use Corporate Sponsorship

FRONTLINE is a registered trademark of WGBH Educational Foundation.

Web Site Copyright ©1995-2016 WGBH Educational Foundation

PBS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

