WHISTLEBLOWERS AND LEAKERS NEWSLETTER,
Series 2, #4,
October 3, 2019.


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology

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Series 2

#1 May 18, 2015  http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/05/whistleblowers-and-leakers-newsletter.html


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Reporting in the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Whistleblower, the Newsletter of Government Accountability Project

Bravehearts by Mark Hertsgaard

Snowden’s New Book, Permanent Record

Jesselyn Radack’s memoir Traitor: The Whistleblower and the American Taliban

Whistleblowers Thomas Drake and John Kiriakou
TRENT S. PARSONS

I can’t compare its reporting of wb and leakers to that of other newspapers, but it is reporting these heroes of truth and democracy, and very well it appears at least at this tense moment in time. Here are examples I have gathered recently (and have in a file) in reverse chronological order.


I’ll stop here in order to finish the newsletter sooner rather than later.

If you would like to annotate these reports to help publicize the important work of whistleblowers and leakers, and assess the quality of the NADG’s reporting, please send your conclusions to me for publication. And you might yourself investigate the quantity and quality of Arkansas’ journalism schools’ teaching of investigative journalism. You would be celebrating and defending whistleblowers and leakers, important defenders of truth for a representative government.


Contents:


Louis Clark, GAP ED and CEO. “2018: A Year of Achievement.”
“Ten Years of Helping Make Food Safe.” Food Integrity Campaign.
“Private Contractor Under Scrutiny in Iraq.” A GAP investigation.
“GAP’s 40 Years of Fighting the Good Fight.”

New Book *Bravehearts* by Mark Hertsgaard Features Numerous Past and Present GAP Clients.  
Staff, May 31, 2016

An Investigative Tour de Force Revealing A New Chapter In The Edward Snowden Story And Highlighting The Whistle Blowers Who Pay With Their Lives to Save Ours

By now, almost everyone knows what Edward Snowden did: leak secret documents revealing that the US government was spying on hundreds of millions of people around the world. But if you want to know why Snowden did it, *the way he did it*, you need to know the stories of two other men.

The first is Thomas Drake, who blew the whistle on the very same surveillance ten years before Snowden did and got crushed. The other is The Third Man, a former senior Pentagon official who comes forward in this book for the first time to describe how his superiors repeatedly broke the law to punish Drake—and unwittingly taught Snowden how to evade their clutches.

When insiders such as The Third Man or Big Tobacco truth-teller Jeffrey Wigand blow the whistle on high-level government or corporate lying, lawbreaking, or other wrongdoing, the public can benefit enormously. Liberty is defended, deadly products are taken off the market, wars are ended. The whistle-blowers themselves, however, generally end up ruined when they refuse to back down in the face of ferocious official retaliation. This moral stubbornness despite terrible personal cost is the defining DNA of whistle-blowers. The public owes them more than we know.

In *Bravehearts*, Mark Hertsgaard tells the gripping, sometimes darkly comic stories of these unsung heroes. Deeply reported, impassioned but fair-minded, *Bravehearts* is for citizens of all nations, especially students, teachers, activists, and anyone wanting to make a difference.

Edward Snowden, the man who risked everything to expose the US government’s system of mass surveillance, reveals for the first time the story of his life, including how he helped to build that system and what motivated him to try to bring it down.

In 2013, twenty-nine-year-old Edward Snowden shocked the world when he broke with the American intelligence establishment and revealed that the United States government was secretly pursuing the means to collect every single phone call, text message, and email. The result would be an unprecedented system of mass surveillance with the ability to pry into the private lives of every person on earth. Six years later, Snowden reveals for the very first time how he helped to build this system and why he was moved to expose it.

Spanning the bucolic Beltway suburbs of his childhood and the clandestine CIA and NSA postings of his adulthood, Permanent Record is the extraordinary account of a bright young man who grew up online—a man who became a spy, a whistleblower, and, in exile, the Internet’s conscience. Written with wit, grace, passion, and an unflinching candor, Permanent Record is a crucial memoir of our digital age and destined to be a classic.
In 2001, Ms. Radack was a Justice Department attorney and specialist in legal ethics. In response to an official inquiry, she advised that the newly captured John Walker Lindh, the so-called “American Taliban,” should not be interrogated without an attorney present — which he then was anyway. When Department officials publicly denied having received any such legal advice, and even destroyed evidence to the contrary, she exposed the deception.

Ms. Radack was not looking for a fight, but only to do the right thing. For her trouble, she was forced out of her Justice Department position, put under criminal investigation, fired from her subsequent job, reported to the state bar, and put on the “no fly” list.

“Traitor” is the story of a young professional whose career is derailed because her ethical compass will not let her be silent in the face of official dishonesty. It is also the story of a political system that is seemingly incapable of tolerating honorable dissenting views within the government workforce.

While a handful of “whistleblowers” become figures of popular acclaim, or heroes of movies such as The Insider or Erin Brockovich, they are the exception rather the rule, Ms. Radack writes.

“The media glorifies those who risk everything to expose corruption and illegal activity and rightly so; these lionized individuals deserve every ounce of praise they receive. But their happy outcomes are not typical—for every success story, there are a hundred stories of professional martyrdom. Mine is one of them.”

Ms. Radack eventually found a measure of redemption as an attorney with the Government Accountability Project where she has turned her own experience to advantage in promoting whistleblower rights. She was among the most stalwart and effective defenders of Thomas Drake, the former NSA official and whistleblower whose dubious prosecution under the Espionage Act ended with the dismissal of all felony charges against him.

The Bush administration (in which she worked) was hostile to whistleblowers, according to Ms. Radack, but the Obama administration is even worse.

“The Bush administration harassed whistleblowers unmercifully,” she writes. “But it took the Obama administration to actually prosecute them.”

I don’t think it is true, however, that the prosecution of Thomas Drake “was a test case for the Justice Department to try a novel legal theory… that the Espionage Act could be used to prosecute leakers” (p. 159).

Far from being novel, the use of Espionage Act to prosecute unauthorized disclosures of classified information predates the Drake case by decades. At least since the conviction of Samuel L. Morison in the 1980s for providing classified intelligence imagery to Jane’s Defence Weekly — and the Supreme Court’s refusal to review the case — this application of the Espionage Act has been seemingly well established.

And there is some ambiguity about who qualifies for the appellation “whistleblower.” It is a loaded term both because it presumes the pure intention of the individual challenger, and because it takes for granted the corruption of his target. These need to be demonstrated, not simply asserted. It cannot be the case that a strong sense of personal conviction, untethered from legal or ethical constraints, is enough to entitle anyone to be called a whistleblower. If that were so, then Jonathan Pollard and other disreputable figures could claim the title.
Ms. Radack states twice that the Obama Administration has prosecuted leakers “who more often than not were whistleblowers” (p. 69, 92). This suggests that she thinks at least some of the six leak defendants to have been prosecuted by the Administration may not have been whistleblowers. But if so, she does not specify which ones they were, or why she came to that conclusion.

I would say that “whistleblowers” are not a separate category of people in any essential sense. Anyone can act with integrity under some circumstances. The whistleblowers that we honor are people who act with integrity under extreme duress and sometimes at great cost. Jesselyn Radack’s memoir is an eloquent account of one such case.

**Irrony-free zone: Congress "appreciates" whistleblowers**

**John Kiriakou, Tom Drake, RootsAction Education Fund**

10:05 AM (6 hours ago)

This month the U.S. Senate approved the Whistleblower Appreciation Day Resolution. But if the government had put you in prison for telling the truth about torture, you probably wouldn’t feel appreciated.

As CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou says, that Senate resolution is “no joke.” When whistleblowers reveal grim secrets that the public needs to know for the sake of democracy, the government’s goal is not only to punish -- “it’s to ruin, professionally, personally, and financially.”

John served two years in prison for shedding light on the CIA’s torture program -- a steep price for telling the truth about some awful consequences of undemocratic power. NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake has also paid a steep price. They need your help!

With vindictive prosecutions, the government wrecked their personal finances. Please click here to make a tax-deductible donation now. Half of every dollar will go directly to John and Tom, while the other half will go to the Whistleblowers Public Education Campaign that they co-chair.

Below are some comments from John and Tom.

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**John Kiriakou:**

“The United States Senate in July passed the Whistleblower Appreciation Day Resolution. No joke. Senate Whistleblower Protection Caucus chairman Senator Chuck Grassley said that the resolution would designate July 30, 2016 as a day to recognize the role whistleblowers play in shining a light on fraud, waste, and abuse... Workers who come forward to report fraud or misconduct in their agencies are frequently punished by their superiors for simply telling the truth. These brave citizens
should not be penalized, they should be praised.

“Somebody should tell the Justice Department. The War on Whistleblowers has been a hallmark of the Obama Administration’s judicial policy. Legitimate whistleblowers are charged under the Espionage Act, a draconian law meant to punish traitors and spies, not truth tellers. Leakers with political connections or who are friends of the President get a pass. The goal is not just to punish. It’s to ruin, professionally, personally, and financially.

“Still we went into this with our eyes open. It might sound crazy, but we would blow the whistle again. We don't need the Senate’s ‘appreciation.’ What we need is for the Justice Department to respect the laws already on the books, to support whistleblowers exposing waste, fraud, abuse, and illegality.

“Over to you, Tom.”

Tom Drake:

“Congress has yet to invite John or myself in front of Congress to testify before any committee regarding our whistleblowing on torture and mass surveillance, respectively. We both came forward at great risk and to this day are the only two people who have paid a very high price for exposing government wrongdoing and criminal conduct regarding these two state-sponsored programs.

“Prosecuting whistleblowers under the Espionage Act sends a most chilling message to anybody who dares to expose critical information on government conduct vital to the public interest done in the name (and under the cover) of National Security.

“Our whistleblowing turned our lives upside down. It will take years for us to recover from the ordeal of the government criminally prosecuting both of us as vindictive and malicious punishment for exposing their criminal conduct involving torture and mass surveillance.

“We would not break faith with the Constitution. We upheld our oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic (including our own government), faithfully serving our country in the line of duty at the CIA and the NSA -- even when our agencies didn’t and wouldn’t.

“We are eyewitnesses to the dark side of history. It is the truth tellers and the whistleblowers who are key to sounding the alarm and holding our own government to account. Please support our education campaign to get the word out that informs the public and holds up a mirror to those in power who abuse power.

“Thank you for your continuing support.

“Please donate generously to the RootsAction Education Fund to support this important work of getting the word out to people, so they can know the truth and choose wisely. The choice is further erosions of our rights and slide into dystopia -- or a fundamental renewal and rebirth of our birthright freedoms and liberties. Our
future is at stake."

PS from the RootsAction Education Fund Team:

We hope you can take a minute now to make a tax-deductible contribution in solidarity with Thomas Drake, John Kiriakou and the Whistleblowers Public Education Campaign. Thank you!

Background:
> The Huffington Post: "The One Man Jailed for CIA Torture Tried to Expose It"

www.RootsAction.org

FILM

Sessions’ War on Whistleblowers

Brave New Films 8-5-17

Dear Dick,

Yesterday Attorney General Jeff Sessions warned of a crackdown on the “culture of leaking,” threatening whistleblowers, journalists, and the free press.

But there is something far more dangerous than these repeated threats. The most dangerous thing would be our silence. Sessions can’t stop us from speaking up and exposing the truth. Instead, we share stories, and together we amplified the voices of Americans to #Resist. We’re showing this Administration that our resistance can be more powerful than their incompetence.

That's what we do as documentary storytellers.... we put a human face to policy, give a voice to the voiceless, and challenge silence by calling for action.

We'll continue that tradition and use our expertise to fuel and sustain this movement. Don’t stand idly by, will you opt-in to the resistance with us?

Become an Agitator with a monthly contribution of $10 or more within the next 24 hours, and you will receive a subscription membership to Brave New Films.

What does it mean to be an Agitator? It means you will be helping to produce compelling video campaigns that put a human face on policy, hold the political elite accountable, and flip the dominant power structure on its head.

Campaigns like:

Indivisible: A Practical Guide for Resisting the Trump Agenda. We are helping educate audiences with a step-by-step guide on how to take the most important actions and navigate the political
world to make sure your voice is heard. 500,000 people have already downloaded this guide.

As a social justice nonprofit and activist media company we rely on subscribers like you to support our work and help spread our message. Your monthly subscription ensures vital resources for the production and distribution of our content.

Now is the time to opt-in to resist. Make a monthly contribution of $10 or more to join thousands of other activists using film to build and sustain the opposition.

It’s time for us to fight like hell, and I am glad to have you standing with us.

Jim Miller, Executive Director
Brave New Films

P.S. Keep spreading awareness about the importance of whistleblowers, journalists, and the free press by hosting a screening of War on Whistleblowers: Free Press and the National Security State. This film features Edward Snowden, Franz Gayle, Thomas Drake, Glenn Greenwald and more. Click to check out the FILM and ACTION GUIDE.

Brittany won't be silenced, do you have her back?

Maggie Martin, About Face: Veterans Against the War (formerly IVAW) via mail.salsalabs.net

Dear Dick,

Have you heard about the brave acts of truth-telling by Army Reserve Captain, Brittany Ramos Debarros? Well the military has heard about it and they aren't happy. They're currently doing mental gymnastics to try to find a way to punish Brittany for her damning tweets that simply share facts about US military operations, with much of the data coming from the government itself.

Brittany has been doing social justice work and organizing for years but things escalated when she gave this powerful speech about the harm caused by US militarism and her chain of command began threatening to have her investigated.

Let Brittany know you have her back by contributing to her legal defense fund.

Brittany has refused to be silenced. On her last regular two-week assignment of training and war preparation, she set up daily tweets sharing one fact per day about US militarism. Multiple media outlets have covered Brittany’s truth-telling campaign and since then she has been informed she’s formally under investigation and subject to court martial.

Help Brittany fight these attempts to silence and punish her by donating to her legal defense fund today.

Let Brittany know we have her back. We need more people like her speaking out against never-ending war so that the public will realize that supporting war is not supporting the troops. We all deserve better and with your help we will keep demanding more.

In Solidarity,

Maggie Martin
Co-Director
Put following at end

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Whistleblowers and Support Organizations
Great Whistleblowers, Google Search
Government Accountability Project (GAP)
National Whistleblower Center (NWC)

Books
Mark Hertsgaard, Bravehearts, google search

Reporting on Whistleblowing in the NADG
Contents of Series 2, #2

END WHISTLEBLOWERS AND LEAKERS NEWSLETTER
Series 2, #4

OMNI Peace Newsletter | OMNI Facebook | OMNI Website

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