

Is Edward Snowden a hero or a traitor?

To this day Edward Snowden is one of the most polarizing figures in political intrigue. What he did in his leaks of NSA information revealed the secrets of the government and the NSA, however it broke many laws along the way. However, no matter how illegal the action was, the information Snowden released and the effect it had will forever place him as a hero in American History due to the unlawful treatment of him, the work he revealed, and the effect it had.

Edward Snowden was a computer programmer who worked in a contracted subdivision of the NSA. He worked in various areas of the NSA as a talented programmer frequently moving from place to place with his girlfriend. However over time he started to notice some disturbing aspects of the NSA, such as how widespread NSA surveillance was, with them being able to watch almost anyone at any time. He copied the files associated with this and then took a medical leave so that he could leak them. He then traveled out of country and leaked the files through *The Guardian*. Snowden was charged with "theft of government Property," "unauthorized communication of national defense information" and "willful communication of classified communications intelligence information to an unauthorized person" all under the Espionage Act, however he has been hiding in Moscow so he cannot be tried.

One of the main arguments to paint Snowden as a traitor is that if he isn't a traitor, then why is he hiding. While still in office, former president Barack Obama said, "I don't think Mr. Snowden was a patriot, if in fact he believes that what he did was right, then like every American citizen he can come here and appear before the court with a lawyer and make his case". This is a good point in theory, however Snowden was charged under the Espionage Act, which in essence makes it impossible for the defendant to reveal his motives for his actions, not giving him a fair trial, to avoid getting tried he has moved to Moscow. The act of him only staying out of the country because of the threat of unfair treatment is another reason many point his as a traitor.

Another argument that paints him as a hero is the actual work that he revealed. The NSA at the time (and probably currently) had access to everyone in the country at anytime. All they had to do to look it up is have a sliver of belief that you could be connected to some illegal activities. This was probably very useful in solving crimes, however it was largely overused on people who had done nothing wrong, also it was monitoring everyone. Another disgusting aspect of this was that there were hundreds of people who were working for the NSA who knew of this, but none of them acted as Snowden did. Snowden was the only person who saw this wrongdoing and had a strong enough moral compass to stand up and do something about it, which instantly made him.

One of the most important parts of Snowden's act was the effect it had on the country. It instantly sparked the debate onto what powers our government should have, and revealed the 'Big Brother' acts of the NSA. There were many rallies against the NSA and it must President Obama and the government under a lot of stress. To appease the people, Obama ordered US

General Attorney Eric Holder to review the country's surveillance program. Overall, based on what Snowden did in revealing the truth, and the effect it had on the country, it is obvious that he is a hero of American history.