

Student 6

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## Edward Snowden: Not So Guilty After All?

Thesis: Even though what Edward Snowden did could be considered wrong, it still revealed the truth to Americans exactly how the government was invading their privacy.

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### I. Introduction

- A. Whistleblower Definition
- B. Why They Do It

### II. Background on Snowden

- A. Where He Was Born
- B. When He Was Born
- C. Schooling
- D. Army
- E. Employment

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### III. What Snowden Did

- A. Went to Work at Dell
- B. Noticed Government Programs Involving NSA
- C. Copied Secret NSA Documents
- D. Flew to Hong Kong

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### IV. Why (Motivations)

- A. Does Not Want Citizens to Be Spied On
- B. Did Not Hide

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### V. Why It Was Right

- A. The General Public

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B. Pros Outweigh the Cons

C. About the Leak

D. Exposed That the U.S. Was Spying On Its Allies Too

VI. Why It Was Wrong

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A. Revealed Secret Government Documents

B. Could Endanger the U.S.

C. Violated His Contract

D. NSA Was Not Doing Anything Illegal

VII. Conclusion

A. Whistleblowers

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B. Pros and Cons Overall

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A whistleblower is someone who calls another person or group out for doing something wrong or committing an act that they are not supposed to be doing. The

agent

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whistleblower can be internal, as in they are a part of the corporation or company they are calling out and noticed the wrongdoing. The whistleblower can also be external. That means that they casually noticed or stumbled upon the wrongdoing.

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Depending on who the whistleblower is and the situation, there can be different or multiple reasons why they expose the wrongdoing. One reason could be to protect themselves. The crime being committed could be harming the person's future or relationships ("Why"). The whistleblower could also expose the crime to protect others. They feel that it is their duty to make the wrongdoing known to the public.

This was the case with Edward Snowden and his controversial whistleblowing. Even though what Edward Snowden did could be considered wrong, it still revealed the truth to Americans exactly how the government was invading their privacy.

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Edward J. Snowden was born in North Carolina on June 21, 1983. After dropping out of high school, he went to Anne Arundel Community College to study computers. He left after two years. Snowden then served for four months in the army reserves, training to be in the Special Forces. However, he was not able to

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complete his training because he suffered breaking both his legs in an accident and was discharged. Later, he went back to Anne Arundel for two more years and earned a GED. He then became a security guard for the National Security Agency, or NSA. Eventually, he worked his way up to an information-technology job for the CIA ("Edward Joseph").

1 Eventually, Snowden started to work for private contractors such as Dell and  
 Booz Allen Hamilton as a tech consultant. It was with Booz Allen that Snowden was  
 working as a subcontractor when he was assigned to work in an NSA office. It was  
 there that he started to compile his collection of NSA documents. As Snowden was  
 5 working, he began to notice some government programs involving the NSA. These  
 specific programs explicitly involved the NSA monitoring Internet usage and tapping  
 phone calls of citizens of the U.S. Some of these people that were being spied on  
 were possible terrorists, according to the information that the government had  
 acquired on them, but there were some other seemingly average people mixed in  
 10 with the bunch too. Snowden was disgusted and disturbed at how the NSA was able  
 to just invade people's privacy like that without permission and snoop around in  
 their lives. He began to compile a collection of every single document he could find  
 that detailed the NSA's actions in any way ("Edward Joseph"). In May of 2013,  
 Snowden flew to Hong Kong to meet with journalists Glenn Greenwald and Laura  
 15 Poitras. He told them about the documents that he had obtained from the NSA and  
 gave them each copies of the documents. In turn, each journalist published the  
 documents in their respective newspapers (Maass). The NSA's dirty little secret was  
 out.

1968 transition

20 There are some speculations as to exactly why Edward Snowden exposed the  
 NSA. He did give an explanation, that he did it because he did not want to live in a  
 world where innocent citizens were being spied on for no reason, but some people  
 think he had additional motives (Tugend). Snowden did not keep his identity secret  
 23 once he had released the documents. He believed that he had done nothing wrong,

expecting evidence of this claim next, not evidence to the contrary

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so he had nothing to hide. However, he did keep his face anonymous because he wanted the news to be about the documents, not himself.

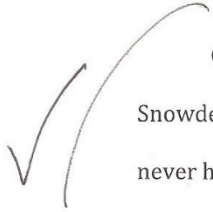
Much of the facts about the whole incident point towards Edward Snowden being in the right. The general public has the right to know if they are being monitored. They should know if their private information is being gathered, possibly to be used against them if necessary. On top of that, citizens have a right to privacy in general. If the information is private matter, then that means no one, even the government, should be snooping around in it. When comparing the pros and cons of Snowden releasing the documents, the pros outweigh the cons. Even though the information released was supposed to be secret for the government's eyes only, the fact that the NSA was collecting it without the subjects even knowing it should be known. Also, even though some of the documents released could be considered sensitive and dangerous, there was no permanent harm done. Yes, terrorist groups might now know that they could be being spied on, but they already knew that. The leak was also just a synopsis of what the NSA did. The documents did not describe how the NSA collected their data. If the collection methods had been included in the documents, then that would be considered endangering. Terrorist groups could find a possible way to hack in to government systems, but that is not what happened. Finally, the leak exposed that the U.S. was spying on its allies along with its citizens and enemies. This angered some of our country's friends and increased tensions. This would mean that other countries of the world might not be so trusting in the United States' government from now on.

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a problem?  
if so, how do  
we handle  
it?

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On the other hand is the opposite side of the argument: what Edward Snowden did was wrong. It also has some valid points; mainly that Snowden should never have revealed the documents in the first place. This is true, but it is a citizen's duty to report any acts of a company or individual that they think is illegal. Another argument is that the documents that were released could endanger the United States. That could be true, but if the danger is real, it is minimal, and would not matter in the long run ("Blog"). It could only be bad in the here and now. The NSA's "cover" might be blown, but they will find new ways to secretly gather data.



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Terrorists now know that they are being spied on, but they already knew that. It is also worth mentioning that Snowden violated the contract he signed when getting on board with the NSA. The contract he signed said that he would not release any secret documents. However, that contract did not say that he had to keep an oath of secrecy. Finally, the NSA was not technically doing anything illegal. Because they are an information branch of the government, they are allowed to gather data. The NSA was simply exercising the parameters it was given and did not step outside of them ("Edward Snowden").



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Whistleblowers call out wrong-doers. Sometimes they succeed and the wrong-doer is punished. Other times they fail and the whistleblower is imprisoned for their beliefs. Edward Snowden revealed that the American government was and is spying on its citizens, and his freedom is being jeopardized because of his beliefs. He might have temporarily endangered The United States and its citizens. However in the long run, he helped tremendously.

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*have policies changed?*



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## Work Sample Evaluation

**Subject Area:** Composition 2

**Task Title:** Whistleblowers: Traitors or Patriots?

**Student Work Sample Title:** Edward Snowden: Not So Guilty After All?

The document was scored using the *CCR Task Bank Rubric*. The final scores are indicated in the following chart.

Scoring Criteria	Insufficient Evidence	Developing	Progressing	Accomplished	Exceeds
Research and Investigation				X	
Ideas and Content			X		
Reading and Analysis			X		
Communication			X		
Organization			X		
Accuracy			X		



**Annotations:** The following evidence from the work sample and the reviewer’s comments support the scores above. Page and line numbers refer to the original work sample.

Scoring Criteria	Page #	Line #	Commentary about the work sample
<b>Research and Investigation:</b> <i>Locating resources independently and/or identifying information within provided texts</i>	7	ALL	The work sample includes a number of sources.
<b>Ideas and Content:</b> <i>Presenting a thesis and understanding concepts</i>	3	11-13	The thesis is clear and both sides of the argument are covered within the essay.
	6	4-9	There is a repetition of several ideas, even though this section is supposed to represent the opposing standpoint.
<b>Reading and Analysis:</b> <i>Evaluating sources and selecting evidence to support the central idea</i>	3	7-9, 20-22	At times, the student provides information from sources that isn’t needed for support.
	4	13-14, 15-19, 20-22	The student includes some relevant sources in the work sample.
	6	6-7, 14-16	More relevant sources.
<b>Communication:</b> <i>Using subject-appropriate language and considering audience</i>	3	1-10	The student does not fully consider the audience and can tend to over-explain definitions in the work sample.
	3	14-22	In this section, the student provides further unnecessary supporting details.
	6	12-16	There are areas of the paper that are well written.
<b>Organization:</b> <i>Structuring main ideas and supporting information</i>	3	1-13, 14-22	The student provides a main idea but supporting transitions between paragraphs are lacking in the paper.
	4	1-18	See above.
	5	3-22	See above.
	6	1-16, 17-22	See above.
<b>Accuracy:</b> <i>Attending to detail, grammar, spelling, conventions, citations, and formatting</i>	3	1-5	The student demonstrates control of language with a few errors.
	5	5-6, 12-17	See above.
	7		The format of the Works Cited page does not follow conventions.