
I am a real spy, not low-level system administrator - Snowden

28/05/2014



"I was trained as a spy in sort of the traditional sense of the word, in that I lived and worked undercover, overseas — pretending to work in a job that I'm not — and even being assigned a name that was not mine," Snowden told Brian Williams, anchor on NBC's on Nightly News?

"So when they say I'm a low-level systems administrator, that I don't know what I'm talking about, I'd say it's somewhat misleading," he said.

The NBC News pointed out that once Edward Snowden started to leak sensitive information about the methods and scale of NSA global surveillance, the Obama administration tended to speak about him as small fry, a thievish hacker that happened to be a system administrator at the NSA quite by chance.

"No, I'm not going to be scrambling jets to get a 29-year-old hacker," President Barack Obama said, shrugging Snowden off last June.

Edward Snowden specifically stressed that he did not *"work with people,"* being busy securing IT data for the US intelligence.

"I am a technical specialist. I am a technical expert," Snowden told NBC. *"I don't work with people. I don't recruit agents. What I do is I put systems to work for the United States. And I've done that at all levels, from the bottom on the ground all the way to the top,"* he said.

Snowden specified that he was not only involved in undercover work for the CIA and the NSA, but actually taught others the specific skills he knew.

"What they are trying to do is that they are trying to use one position to distract from the totality of my experience, which is: I've worked for the Central Intelligence Agency – undercover, overseas, I've worked for the National

Security Agency – undercover, overseas, and I've worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency as a lecturer at the joint counter-intelligence training," Snowden revealed.

The agency confirmed to NBC that Snowden delivered at least three lectures at DIA conferences. Two unspecified sources also confirmed to NBC that Snowden really used to be a CIA IT and communications specialist working overseas.

"I developed sources and methods for keeping our information and people secure in the most hostile and dangerous environments around the world," Snowden claimed.

The CIA refused to give an official comment.

US intelligence has been trying to hunt Snowden down ever since he flew from Hawaii to Hong Kong. In late July 2013, he was granted temporarily asylum in Russia, as the US government had charged him with espionage, revoking his passport so he couldn't move onto Latin America as he had planned.

NBC News spent 'months' preparing the interview in an atmosphere of total secrecy, while putting to use some of the documents leaked by Snowden and preparing three exclusive digital reports this year alone. They also put together a special Nightly News report on British cyber spies monitoring YouTube and other social media services.

According to the New York Times report, NBC's Brian Williams conducted a four-hour interview with Edward Snowden at the Kempinski Hotel in Moscow last week, after *"months of negotiations"* with Snowden's intermediaries.

Kerry: 'We'd be delighted to have Snowden back'

In response, US Secretary of State John Kerry live on NBC's "Today" show challenged Snowden saying he should *"man up and come back to the United States."*



US Secretary of State John Kerry (AFP Photo / Ronaldo Schemidt)

"For a supposedly smart guy, that's a pretty dumb answer, frankly," Kerry said. "If Mr. Snowden wants to come back to the United States today, we'll have him on a flight today."

"We'd be delighted for him to come back. He should come back. That's what a patriot would do. A patriot would not run away and look for refuge in Russia or Cuba or some other country. A patriot would stand up in the United States and make his case to the American people," Kerry added.

"He can come home but he's a fugitive from justice which is why he is not being permitted to fly around the world," he said.

Kerry added that Snowden is guilty of "stealing" information and he did "great damage" to the United States.

"The fact is if he cares so much about America and he believes in America, he should trust in the American system of justice."

It is believed that Snowden, now 30, used to work for the CIA, but then opted to leave the government to become a freelance intelligence contractor working for various NSA branches, in Japan, Hawaii and other locations. At his last place of work he made a copy of up to 1.7 million secret US intelligence documents revealing the unprecedented scale of internet surveillance and other communications worldwide.

Snowden's revelations exposed the NSA as the world's largest collector of phone and internet metadata, capable of intercepting diplomatic and personal communications from everywhere, including undersea fiber-optic cables and tapping the mobile phones of foreign leaders.

NBC News will air the full version of the Edward Snowden interview on Wednesday night at 10 PM EST. This will be the first interview the former NSA contractor has given to the US television news organization since he found

himself at the center of the *“most staggering theft of American intelligence secrets in the modern era,”* NBC News claims.
