



Her Majesty's Government Forced 'Guardian' To Destroy Files on NSA-GCHQ, Editor Says

August 21st, 2013 • 9:22 AM

Her Majesty's government appears to be very sensitive about the exposure of its wiretapping of the entire world. Alan Rusbridger, editor of the [Guardian](#) [1], wrote in yesterday's issue that he was contacted by "a very senior government official claiming to represent the views of the prime minister," which led to two meetings in which the official "demanded the return or destruction of all the material we were working on." This was in the midst of the *Guardian's* publishing revelations about mass-surveillance programs against individuals and citizens carried out by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) and Britain's General Communications HQ (GCHQ), as part of the *Guardian's* cooperation with NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden.

Rusbridger claimed that he was told, "'You've had your fun. Now we want the stuff back.' There followed further meetings with shadowy Whitehall figures." He continued, "The demand was the same: 'hand the Snowden material back or destroy it... You've had your debate. There's no need to write any more.'" The editor said the government threatened to use the courts to obtain the leaked documents if the paper did not destroy them themselves. Rusbridger tried to explain to these "shadowy figures" that columnist Glenn Greenwald is actually based in Brazil and also has all the material HM Shadowy Figures want the *Guardian* to destroy. But the shadows were apparently unmoved.

"And so one of the more bizarre moments in the *Guardian's* long history occurred," he added. "With two GCHQ security experts overseeing the destruction of hard drives in the *Guardian's* basement just to make sure there was nothing in the mangled bits of metal which could possibly be of any interest to passing Chinese agents." Rusbridger also attacked holding David Miranda at Heathrow Airport, along with his laptop, cellphone, hard drives, and camera, and warned "it may not be long before it will be impossible for journalists to have confidential sources," asking, "I wonder how many have truly understood the absolute threat to journalism implicit in the idea of total surveillance, when or if it comes — and, increasingly, it looks like 'when.'"

Numerous voices are already being raised in protest about the over-the-top incident. A top British law firm, Bindmans, has taken up Miranda's case and has written a letter to Theresa May, the head of the Police commission and Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe. They warn that they are seeking the immediate return of David Miranda's laptop and all other electronic equipment within seven days, and that there should be "no inspection, copying, disclosure, transfer, distribution or interference, in any way, with our client's data," nor



Photo by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0.

should it be disclosed to third parties.

Likewise, the Brazilian government expressed its "grave concern" over the detainment of Brazilian citizen Miranda, saying it was "without justification

since it involves an individual against whom there are no charges that can legitimate the use of that legislation." Amnesty International also weighed in, calling it "unlawful and unwarranted."

Links:

[1] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/20/nsa-snowden-files-drives-destroyed-london>

W W W . L A R O U C H E P A C . C O M

<p>Paid for by the Lyndon LaRouche Political Action Committee P.O. Box 6157, Leesburg, VA 20178, www.larouchepac.com and Not Authorized by Any Candidate or Candidate's Committee</p>
