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There are so many awards these days, often for doing nothing more than your paid job (Oscars and Brits), that it is good to read about the Sam Adams award for Integrity in Intelligence.

The 2013 winner of the Sam Adams award is hero-come-traitor Edward Snowden.

Former CIA operative turned whistle-blower Edward Snowden has an increasingly small group of friends and allies. Instead of people condemning their governments for their sleazy antics too many people have decided to shoot the messenger. This means that Edward Snowden is viewed as the devil incarnate by many.

However, not all people are so quick to side with the authorities and refuse to acknowledge the service Snowden has done for people of the world. Among Snowden's fans are a group of former CIA operatives who annually hand out the Sam Adams award for Integrity in Intelligence. Wikipedia describes the award as: *The Sam Adams Award is given annually by the Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence, a group of retired CIA officers, to an intelligence professional who has taken a stand for integrity and ethics. It is named after Samuel A. Adams, a CIA whistleblower during the Vietnam War, and takes the physical form of a "corner-brightener candlestick". Many recipients have been whistleblowers.* In choosing Edward Snowden as this year's award winner the team "praised his decision to reveal the extent of US government electronic surveillance of people in the United States and around the world". The winners of the award since since 2002 are Coleen Rowley, Katharine Gun, Sibel Edmonds, Craig Murray, Samuel Provance, Frank Grevil, Larry Wilkerson, Julian Assange, Thomas Andrews Drake and Jesselyn Radack, Thomas Fingar and last, but far from least, Edward Snowden.

Who was Sam Adams though, you may be asking?

*In 1967, Adams discovered that there were over 500,000 North Vietnamese and Vietcong armed guerrilla fighters – twice the number that the U.S. command acknowledged. The Army feared that if Adams' information became public, the war effort would suffer. Adams pressed higher-ups for honesty and accountability, but chose to utilize only inside channels.*

*Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, in his first reported leak, provided Adams' data to The New York Times in March 1968. Later, at the trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo, Adams detailed his belief that political pressure influenced the military to depict the North Vietnamese and Vietcong in 1967 as weaker than they actually were. Adams died of a heart attack in 1988.*

For those who condemn Snowden for stealing official documents, take note; that is what blowing

the whistle invariably entails.

This week there are conflicting reports that Snowden has been offered asylum in Venezuela, accepted it and that the US administration has already sent in extradition request to that country pre-empting the arrival of Snowden.

How on earth he can get to that country is the big money question. As the US and other countries have already forcibly diverted and downed a presidential plane from Bolivia it is fair to say they will stop at nothing to prevent Snowden reaching asylum.

This leaves us wondering just what they have to fear from Snowden?

It is now widely accepted that any information still to be leaked is already in the hand of journalists and others, which could be why Snowden turned down Putin's strings attached asylum offer.

To quote Jack Nicholson in *A Few Good Men* it seems that many people "Cannot handle the truth". That is a sad state of affairs and I for one am glad that the Sam Adams award has gone to Edward Snowden, and that there are still such brave souls in this world.

Related reading:

Will Snowden accept Venezuelan asylum and how can he get there

Sources: Wikipedia, Consortium News, Democratic Underground, Whistleblowers

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