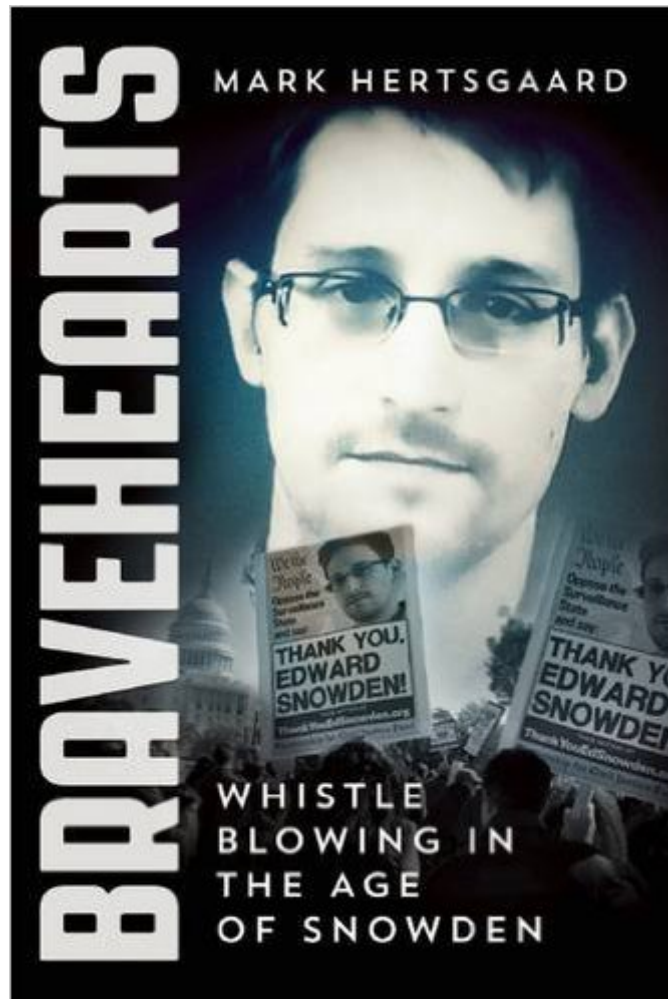


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# Bravehearts: Whistle-Blowing In The Age Of Snowden



## Synopsis

Whistleblowers pay with their lives to save ours. When insiders like former NSA analyst Edward Snowden or ex-FBI agent Coleen Rowley or Big Tobacco truth-teller Jeffrey Wigand blow the whistle on high-level lying, lawbreaking or other wrongdoing; whether it's government spying, corporate murder or scientific scandal; the public benefits enormously. Wars are ended, deadly products are taken off the market, white-collar criminals are sent to jail. The whistleblowers themselves, however, generally end up ruined. Nearly all of them lose their jobs; and in many cases their marriages and their health; as they refuse to back down in the face of increasingly ferocious official retaliation. That moral stubbornness despite terrible personal cost is the defining DNA of whistleblowers. The public owes them more than we know. In *Bravehearts*, Hertsgaard tells the gripping, sometimes darkly comic and ultimately inspiring stories of the unsung heroes of our time. A deeply reported, impassioned polemic, *Bravehearts* is a book for citizens everywhere; especially students, teachers, activists and anyone who wants to make a difference in the world around them.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Hot Books (May 23, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1510703373

ISBN-13: 978-1510703377

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #327,527 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#43 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Non-Governmental Organizations](#) [#277 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Environmental Policy](#) [#6253 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics](#)

## Customer Reviews

Hertsgaard reveals that Snowden revealed the secrets through the Guardian rather than face the consequences that two others faced by going through regular channels. A very good read about whistle blowing consequences and that many are not rewarded monetarily but only with the self

satisfaction realization that they did the right thing.

Agency to the public eye, whistle-blowers have come under increased scrutiny. Snowden's courageous act has highlighted the earlier efforts of other men and women whose names are familiar to many Americans: Daniel Ellsberg (Pentagon Papers), Mark Felt (A "Deep Throat"), Frank Serpico (NYPD), Jeffrey Wigand (tobacco), Karen Silkwood (nuclear industry), Coleen Rowley (FBI " 9/11), Sherron Watkins (Enron), and Chelsea Manning (Wikileaks). As Mark Hertsgaard makes clear in his study of contemporary whistle-blowing in the U.S. government, *Bravehearts*, we owe a great deal to these brave people, who have helped keep democracy alive in America. However, he makes clear that these high-profile cases are among those involving hundreds of other men and women who have brought to light wrongdoing both in government and in private industry over the past several decades. National security or insecurity? Though whistle-blowers come to light in corporations as well as government agencies, Hertsgaard's focus in *Bravehearts* is on those who have worked in the federal government. Much of his information comes from a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization, the Government Accountability Project, known as GAP. The author himself witnessed GAP's creation in 1978 as a project of the Institute of Policy Studies, and he has reported on its findings on several occasions in the years since then. One constant theme in Hertsgaard's book, and in GAP's work in general, is a pattern of retaliation that almost invariably greets any well-meaning whistle-blower. Those who go through channels to report lawbreaking are typically fired and sometimes subjected to far worse. Those who go public in hopes of avoiding the harsh treatment that has greeted so many of their predecessors typically receive the harshest treatment. For example, as Hertsgaard points out, it's not just Edward Snowden who has borne the brunt of the government's antipathy. "The Obama administration has brought charges against seven whistle-blowers under the Espionage Act, far more than any previous administration has charged." Given the importance of what came to light as a result of Snowden's disclosures, it's important to ask whether his act made the American people less secure, or more so. I believe, as Hertsgaard clearly does as well, that national security in a democracy must rest on the rule of law. It was lawbreaking that led Snowden to do what he has done. The same is true of so many others cited by the author in this superb little book. Without question, we are more secure as a result rather than less. Why do they do it? In explaining the motivation that leads whistle-blowers to act, Hertsgaard quotes Thomas Devine, GAP's long-time legal director: "Whistle-blowers don't start out as dissidents. Usually, they

are the ones who believe most strongly in the institution where they work. That's why they speak out to help the institution live up to its mission. It's the indifference and retaliation from management many whistle-blowers face that can turn them into dissidents.

Hertsgaard's book comes to grips with a question that no doubt has puzzled many Americans: why did he do what he did how he did it? Why did he go public instead of going through channels, as President Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton belatedly (and, I believe, disingenuously) suggested he should have done? In answering this question, the author cites the experiences of two other whistle-blowers in the national security community: Thomas Drake and John Crane. Like Snowden, the former was employed at the National Security Agency though in a much more senior position. He tried to blow the whistle on the same illegal practices that Snowden successfully brought to light only many years later. His mistake was to go through channels; the result was that he was fired, stripped of his federal pension, indicted and threatened with prison, the FBI raided his home at gunpoint, his security clearance was removed, and he became unemployable to the extent that he was reduced to clerking at an Apple store in suburban Maryland.

Crane, whose testimony [is] published here for the first time, was the assistant inspector general of the Department of Defense in charge of supervising the Department's whistle-blower office. When he acted as expected and took his complaints about Drake's shabby treatment to his superiors, he was ordered to shut down his investigation and identify Drake to the FBI. To his horror, Crane watched as Drake and . . . four other NSA whistle-blowers were secretly ratted out to the Justice Department and then had their homes raided at gunpoint by federal agents.

As GAP's Tom Devine explained, "Crane was our fly on the wall, letting us understand after the fact what really happened to Drake." Hertsgaard notes: "Crane's account illuminates how a system that in theory is supposed to protect whistle-blowing can in practice do just the opposite, a lesson Snowden took to heart when planning his own disclosures."

About the author Mark Hertsgaard is best known as the author of *On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency* and as the environmental correspondent for *The Nation*. *Bravehearts* is his seventh book. Six years ago, he published *Hot: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth*, a discussion of the consequences of climate change that I reviewed in this spot.

A must read for every American. It's time that Whistleblowers be treated as the Patriots that they are and that the public starts thinking for themselves and recognize to the degree that everything is overclassified as protection for the malfeasance of those in power. "Whistleblowers" are the people

storming today's beaches in our/the nation's/the citizenry's interest. The hail of "gunfire" they face is this nation's legal system which leaves them in financial ruin after having found them, in so many cases, innocent but then barred from returning to their jobs and silently blacklisted from any other gainful employment, in short, left on the trash heap. It's to this nation's discredit that so many, an essential number, of the citizens so blithely and easily swallow the government's propaganda and allow the wrongs imposed on these people who truly support, and want to defend, the constitution as so many of them have sworn oaths to do. And what's sadly laughable is that all those who turn their backs on these "soldiers" and speak of them as criminals heap scorn and contempt on Barack Obama, the guy who, after having promised "Open Transparent Government", has mandated the prosecution of more of these Patriots than all other Presidents combined and pursued government intrusion and eavesdropping beyond the scope that George W. began. Once you cross that line.....

Great book. SNOWDEN = HERO = deserves medal of honor. Period. End of discussion.

Great book -- really puts together history of famous and not-so-famous whistleblowers to give you a theory on why Snowden did what he did. It really makes you think about the Snowden revelations in a different perspective. Definitely worth reading.

Surprisingly attention holding as you work your way through the chapters. If even half of the information is accurate, it paints a negative picture of the government and associated industries manipulation and greed. Recommend this as a critical read to anyone even remotely interested in the topic.

heard the author on NPR and immediately ordered the book. Confirmed that Snowden is a true hero, and that Obama should just keep quiet and then pardon him before he leaves office.

This book should be a mandatory read for anyone who thinks an even more powerful government is a good idea for the people.

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