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**2016**

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**CELEBRATING THE**  
**DOCUMENTARY FILMS THAT**  
**HAVE MADE THE GREATEST**  
**IMPACT ON SOCIETY**

# HOT DANG



The Doc Impact Award 2016 is presented by:



**We are so proud to share with you the story of the five remarkable winners of the Doc Impact Award 2016.**

To qualify for the Doc Impact Award, excellence in filmmaking is not enough. Doc Impact Award films must also have created significant and measurable social impact.

Since 2011 this annual prize has been celebrating the power of film as a driver of change. **Our aim:**

- To help build new fans for the films
- Create new partners for the campaigns
- To share best practice for the whole community

Read on to learn about the campaign strategy & impact achievements for **CITIZENFOUR**.

To read all five case studies and see previous winners go to [www.docimpactaward.org](http://www.docimpactaward.org) and follow the conversation online at **#docimpact**

Exposing the reality of mass surveillance and its consequences for personal privacy and public policy.



**WINNER:**  
**CITIZENFOUR**



The NSA.  
Photo by Trevor Paglen

# CITIZENFOUR

## The Film

**CITIZENFOUR is a real life thriller, unfolding by the minute, giving audiences unprecedented access to encounters with Edward Snowden in Hong Kong, as he hands over classified documents providing evidence of mass indiscriminate and illegal invasions of privacy by the National Security Agency (NSA).**

The film places you in the room as director Laura Poitras and reporters Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill meet Edward Snowden for the first time, having communicated securely for a number of months. As top secret information is revealed to the trio, they are forced to make quick decisions that will impact their lives and those around them, whilst attempting to manage the media storm picking up outside.

CITIZENFOUR explores the high-risk choices individuals make, their repercussions and why they choose to act in a particular way. When faced with seemingly all-powerful and pervasive state power in the form of mass surveillance, how do ordinary citizens and those on the inside, including NSA workers, resist? And what are the consequences of increased surveillance on our political community, our political values and the world around us? It's a film that captures history in the making and tackles issues with implications for many years to come.

### Critical Acclaim

**“A primal political fable for the digital age, a real-time tableau of the confrontation between the individual and the state.”**

—  
New York Times



# THE CAMPAIGN

## CONTEXT

***CITIZENFOUR* is Laura Poitras' last film in her post-9/11 Trilogy. It is a unique work of visual journalism, created whilst Poitras continued to work in combination with other storytelling mediums, embracing both short film and traditional newsprint. By the time *CITIZENFOUR* was released, her work had already started a global conversation about mass surveillance which the film pushed wider and deeper.**

**Her inter-disciplinary work continues. In 2016, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York debuted Poitras' first solo museum exhibition, which explores the themes of her post-9/11 Trilogy and expands her cinematic practice into a series of installations and immersive media environments.**

Part one of the post-9/11 Trilogy, *My Country, My Country* (2006), about the U.S. occupation of Iraq, was nominated for an Academy Award. Part two, *The Oath* (2010), focused on Guantanamo and the war on terror, and was nominated for two Emmy awards.

After returning to the United States from Iraq and filming *My Country, My Country*, Poitras was detained at the U.S. border every time she travelled. Between 2006 and 2012, she was searched, questioned, and often subjected to hours-long

security screenings at U.S. and overseas airports on more than 50 occasions.

Partially as a result of her own experience as a target, she became interested in surveillance and how the war on terror was unfolding in the domestic arena. An off-shoot of the fledgling featured documentary was the 2012 *New York Times* Op-Doc *The Program*, a short film about NSA whistleblower William Binney. He described "Stellarwind," a top-secret domestic spying program begun after 9/11.

This was the catalyst for an anonymous member of the intelligence community to contact Poitras using the rubric "CITIZENFOUR". After communicating through encrypted emails for five months, she believed the source was credible and wanted to go public with a trove of secret documents about how the United States had built a massive surveillance apparatus to spy on Americans and people across the globe. It was just a matter of time...

In May 2013, Laura and reporter Glenn Greenwald travelled to Hong Kong to meet the man who turned out to be Edward Snowden. Later commenting on record of his motivation for contacting Poitras, Snowden said, *"She had demonstrated the courage, personal experience and skill needed to handle what is probably the most dangerous assignment any journalist can be given — reporting on the secret misdeeds of the most powerful government in the world — making her an obvious choice."*

Laura, Glenn and Guardian security correspondent Ewen MacAskill spent eight days in Snowden's hotel room while he translated documents from NSA surveillance

programs thus exposing the depth and breadth of U.S. government infiltration into both its domestic citizens' lives and those in the international community. As they reported on Snowden's process from the hotel room, Poitras documented the unfolding story with her camera.

The video recorded with Snowden on June 6th 2013 and published on the Guardian website on June 9th, where he explained his motivation as a whistleblower became headline news around the world.

These and other articles appeared while they were still in the process of filming Snowden, creating news together, then watching it spread. Knowing that once the stories

went public, it was the end of their time together and indeed as the media circus was triggered, Snowden fled and went into hiding. As Poitras describes: *"We were all surprised at how much attention it was getting. Our work was very focused, and we were paying attention to that, but we could see on TV that it was taking off. We were in this closed circle, and around us we knew that reverberations were happening, and they could be seen and they could be felt."*

The impact of these revelations are continuing to reverberate across nearly all aspects of civil society: government, business, media, public opinion, and academia.



## THE CAMPAIGN



### How the Campaign Worked

*CITIZENFOUR* demonstrated how two leading democracies, the United States and the United Kingdom, are violating the fundamental rights of people across the globe. The film was a crucial tool in helping civil society and politicians understand the scale of the challenge, allowing them to seek a solution to the problem of unchecked mass surveillance.

The film's engagement campaign targeted the United States, Britain, and Germany. Britain is a traditional US ally in foreign policy,

and GCHQ was revealed in the Snowden papers as the closest allied agency to the NSA. Germany is of strategic importance as the leading political power in the European Union. Partly as a result of reforms and public debate relating to the experience of the Stasi and government spying on citizens, Germany has strong press freedom and anti-surveillance laws, which was one reason why Laura moved to Berlin to make her film. The United States, Britain and Germany are also the three co-producers and lead financiers of the film.

The campaign was first built around the widest and noisiest possible release of a hotly-anticipated film as a means to create and then leverage a cultural moment. The film team made a set of decisions about distribution (major distributor, big festival premiere, immediate theatrical) that were designed to create high visibility in the entertainment press, film industry and elite cultural circles.

The film was released 16 months after the first news stories on Snowden (many co-authored by Laura herself) had broken. After a wave of coverage and commentary all around the world, it gave audiences the opportunity to engage more profoundly with the issues and importantly, to experience whistleblowers like Snowden and others like Bill Binney directly and assess their characters and motives for

themselves. The film's success brought different audiences to the subject, different journalists and publications to the story and new high profile supporters on board.

**“The action is perilously real and the camera isn’t only capturing the historical event it’s part of the making of it.”**

—  
Washington Post



Whilst the revelations had come as a bombshell to many parts of society, for many human rights activists and surveillance campaigners, they finally had the evidence in the papers and the tool, in the film itself, that they needed to make headway.

#### Different Countries, Different Campaigns

There was a unified strategy in the three key territories, USA, UK and Germany simultaneously: starting with a major, high profile festival premiere in each country in October 2014 (New York Film Festival, London Film Festival, DOK Leipzig), immediately followed by a theatrical release within two weeks, avoiding the standard delays between festival premiere and distribution.

At that point, the campaign strategies differed and were tailored to goals for each country, matching the social and political context around mass surveillance.

In the U.S., where Snowden was charged under the Espionage Act, the public and press were passionately divided, with calls for an overhaul of NSA oversight juxtaposed against a backdrop of demonizing Edward Snowden as a traitor. Therefore the focus of the US strategy was on

audiences undecided but persuadable on Snowden's actions and on the larger debate about mass surveillance.

In the UK, the Guardian had led the initial coverage of Snowden's revelations with other papers and broadcasters taking a backseat, partly due to the government issuance of a DA notice (an official request to news editors not to publish or broadcast items on specified subjects for reasons of national security) asking for press restraint.

The official government reaction to the issues raised in the film was dismissive and the British public were less troubled by the revelations than their American and German counterparts. The revelations came in a period where the UK government was pushing parliament to significantly extend surveillance powers through the draft Communications Data Bill, powers that the Snowden revelations showed that GCHQ already had. Parliament had been misled. The entire debate pre-Snowden had been held in a vacuum with little real understanding of the significant powers the intelligence agencies already possessed.





Therefore the UK strategy was to engage the establishment — media, politicians and tech business leaders around the issue, sparking the first accurate public discussion about mass surveillance.

In Germany, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, “The outcry over NSA eavesdropping has been most pronounced, a country whose history of dictatorship has left the population particularly sensitive to violations of personal privacy.”

The aim of the German film engagement campaign was to support both calls for a review of the oversight of the secret services and calls for stronger whistleblower laws, targeting politicians, opinion leaders and influencers. During the course of the initiative, state surveillance became a highly polarised issue in Germany; a parliamentary investigation committee examined the extent and background of foreign secret services spying on Germany in partnership with the NSA.

In Spring 2015, the committee revealed shocking evidence that the BND (the German federal intelligence service) had colluded

with the NSA to spy on German & European corporate interests and diplomats putting pressure on Chancellor Merkel for her accountability and creating internal tensions within the German parliamentary coalition.

### **U.S. Campaign Public engagement**

In the U.S., when the film was released in October 2014, by RADIUS a division of The Weinstein Company, the campaign was perfectly positioned for high public and media visibility. Popular press coverage focused on issues raised in the film and was prolonged and heightened by the awards season run which followed shortly after.

When the film was nominated for an Academy Award, the campaign used that opportunity to keep the issue of NSA surveillance front and center of interviews & screening events.

Before and after the Academy Award was won, special screenings were hosted by Ford Foundation, American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, The Guardian, LA County Republican Library Caucus, University of Chicago Institute of Politics, Princeton

Public Library, Vanderbilt University, UC Santa Barbara, American Library Association, The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Libertas Institute and The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration among others.

**“The Significance of CITIZENFOUR’s Win: When Laura Poitras received the Academy Award for best documentary, civil society was pushing back against the deep state.”**

—  
The Atlantic

Snowden himself was only directly involved in the campaign very sparingly. This was a strategic move on the part of the filmmakers and the subject; to let the film speak for itself as work of art and cinema, not as advocacy for the subject. He spoke from Moscow on just a couple of occasions - the Times Talk with Laura, Glenn Greenwald and David Carr on February 12th 2015, and then after the film won the Academy Award, on the Reddit AMA.

Targeted social media from the @CITIZENFOUR account included a thematic strand focused on educating followers about the history of surveillance,



information on secret government programs (e.g. Stellarwind) and “pro tips” for surveillance self-defense. Overall the account netted one of the highest post to follower ratios, most likely due to the visual nature of the posts and the focus on issues more than the film per se.

#### Digital Security Training

A key aim from the beginning was the promotion of surveillance self-defense. The end credits of *CITIZENFOUR* lists the encryption tools and Free Software programs used in the film’s making. Laura, her film team and film subjects also routinely introduced the importance of encryption as a tool of resistance in their press

and public discussions. They highlighted the Free Software movement as a source of tactics and tools to support human rights and privacy in particular.

The film team prioritized making the film available for screenings with groups involved in open source organizing around surveillance self-defense. Laura directed some prize money to groups like the Tor project, a free system enabling its users to communicate anonymously on the internet.

In the US, partner organizations such as Freedom of the Press Foundation in cooperation with Participant Media conducted a series of digital security



workshops inside newsrooms. They held a major conference on digital security in Washington DC with many of the top national security journalists in the country. They also expanded their ongoing work of installing SecureDrop (to enable whistleblowers to securely share files) in newsrooms and training journalists on how to use secure digital communications.

**“Largely thanks to Edward Snowden, Laura Poitras, and CITIZENFOUR, digital security is increasingly being treated as a critical part of newsrooms in the US and around the world. Protecting journalists using encryption and anonymity tools is now one of the most vital press freedom issue of the 21st Century, and has sparked a movement among journalists that will benefit both their sources and the public for years to come.”**

Trevor Timm, executive director of Freedom of the Press Foundation.

#### UK Campaign

##### **Establishment engagement**

In Britain, the campaign sought specifically to engage center-right popular media and stakeholders and business leaders to contrast with earlier

coverage on the issue mainly lead by the Guardian, itself a subject of the film. This meant targeted special screenings, outreach to technology companies, politicians, and, crucially, giving priority to right-leaning media such as The Telegraph and The Financial Times.

Throughout the campaign, over 1,100 targeted individuals saw the film at more than 20 special influencer screenings in the heart of the establishment, including institutions such as The House of Lords and the Royal United Services Institute for Defense & Security Studies. In the UK, campaigns agency

89up was engaged to help support the impact distribution. Mike Harris the CEO was also an adviser to the Don't Spy On Us coalition of NGOs, so with his team, helped facilitate strong partnerships working with civil society, key influencers, interested media voices and corporates. Also bringing

significant international expertise to the campaign was Eric King from Privacy International.

The film played on Channel 4 on February 25th as early as possible around holdbacks, allowing the team to use the visibility from the Oscar campaign to create discussion



Code Names of the Surveillance State  
Photo: Trevor Paglen

and debate on social media during the broadcast. In April 2015 after broadcast, a special DVD was made (as the film was not yet released on DVD) for the Houses of Parliament. 700 copies were delivered - to every MP and selected Lords, with a letter from Channel 4 saying: 'Channel 4 has a statutory remit to support and stimulate well-informed debate on a wide range of issues, and that is reflected in our support of this, the third in a trilogy of films by Laura Poitras reflecting life after 9/11'.

#### Corporate Engagement

A partnership with privacy software company F-Secure led to a number of private preview screenings for tech companies

and trade press. Representatives came from industry groups like GSM Association, the telecoms regulator Ofcom, internet companies such as Twitter and Google and the following telecoms companies: Virgin Media, Sky, EE, BT, Vodafone, O2, FoneHouse, Three and Mobile Choice.

Conservative MP David Davis spoke at the first event urging companies to take the lead on responding to citizens privacy needs, **“most politicians think the public don't care about all this and they are wrong”**.

The film was also screened for staff of both Google and Twitter at their London offices.



#### Digital Security Training

As in the US, a number of Cryptography Workshops were organised with Cryptoclass and others specialists, the first for documentary filmmakers was hosted at Hackney Picturehouse. At each, attendees learnt cryptography infosec and opsec procedures.

#### Artistic Alliances

The UK team wanted to engage the art press and audiences, reaching out to communicate that *CITIZENFOUR* is a work of art as well as journalism. To underscore this point, two new public artworks by American artist Trevor Paglen, who also contributed cinematography to *CITIZENFOUR*, were launched at the film's public premiere at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts.

In collaboration with Abandon Normal Devices, "Circles" was an extended aerial view of the circular building that houses the GCHQ, has since been shown in additional galleries and continues to tour. "Code Names of the Surveillance State," was a video installation, projected onto public buildings that scrolled government surveillance program code names. The artwork toured public spaces for one week generating both direct public

engagement and indirect social media and press reactions. The work has also shown at CPH:DOX in Denmark and Metro Pictures New York.

#### Social Media campaign

The UK campaign invested heavily in social media to not only promote the reach of the film audience, but also increase associated press activity. Providing press outlets with tailored content made direct social media partnerships possible with celebrities, NGO's, corporations and media organizations including Penguin Books, BFI, ICA, Frieze and Amnesty International.

The campaign also identified and analyzed Twitter handles of 485 influencer screening targets. By filtering in terms of strategic importance, eg. reach and type of followers, they could then prioritize requests to specific supporters to support the campaign's social media engagement. These individuals were then invited to attend private influencer screenings to engage with the content and create a wave of online discussion about the film's central issues. For example, Vanity Fair co hosted a screening of *CITIZENFOUR* with author and journalist Henry Porter and

activist Jemima Khan bringing further press to the film and the issues.

A live twitter and facebook conversation was created during the TV broadcast. Content from the film - quotes and screen grabs as well as additional information about surveillance were tweeted out every few minutes. Journalist Ewen MacAskill, who features in the film, joined the BRITDOC, 89Up, Channel 4 and Bite The Ballot team in the BRITDOC Office. He responded to viewers questions live on the #AskEwen hashtag. The film trended No. 2 in the UK.

**“The reaction online to C4 in the UK is extraordinary - almost overwhelmingly positive from a country that has probably had the most negative reaction [to Snowden revelations].**

Glenn Greenwald

#### Schools campaign

At the same time that the film played on Channel 4, a set of free school lesson plans and clips of the film for the classroom were released by Doc Academy. Written by teachers for teachers they have been used in over 200 secondary schools in the UK to date.



### The German Campaign Political engagement

The German campaign was created using lessons from the UK campaign with 89up working in an advisory role. The strategy was to engage leading political decision-makers, as well as local and regional politicians just as surveillance was becoming a highly contentious issue in Germany as the scale of the the co-operation between the NSA and the BND was exposed.

The film team organised a screening for 50 parliamentarians at the Berlin City Parliament on July 7th 2015 followed by a panel discussion that focused on freedom of expression in light of the Snowden revelations. Speakers at this event included Klaus Lederer (Head of the Berlin Left Party), Anne Roth (staff member of the NSA-federal investigation committee), and

Matthias Spielkamp (Member of the Board of Reporters without Borders, Germany). The discussion raised the recent lawsuit issued by "Reporters without Borders" against the BND, which was based on the Snowden revelations.

The most influential political screening by far was the German language version of *CITIZENFOUR* which was hosted by the television company NDR just before the national broadcast on October 12th 2015. The German team organised a high-impact panel discussion afterwards including the leading members of the federal investigation committee into NSA surveillance from across the political spectrum including the head of the committee Patrick Sensburg (CDU), the head of the opposition on the committee, Martina Renner (Die Linke), as well as Christian Flisek (SPD) and Hans-Christian Ströbele (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen).

### Legal screenings

Part of the strategy, which mirrors attempts by German civil society to use the law and constitution to fight back against surveillance, was to engage leading judges, legal theorists and lawyers in the debate at two screenings.



The first on September 10, at Humboldt-University Berlin, 72 guests joined an influential panel discussion after a screening of *CITIZENFOUR* on "Constitutional law and the current surveillance". The speakers were significant legal figures including Ulf Buermeyer (a judge and lecturer in constitutional law) and Professor Dr. Tobias Singelstein (a Professor at the FU-Berlin in criminal law) who moderated. The audience consisted of members of the Law and Society network and leading social scientists from Switzerland, Germany and Austria. Among the audience were professors of political sciences, social sciences

and law from all over Germany including Prof Ingrid Schneider (Hamburg University), Dr. Stoppenbrink (University Münster) and others.

The second screening was aimed at the legal community to expand the reach of the film on October 10th 2015 at the Hotel Collegium Leoninum in Bonn. The screening for lawyers involved in the German Privacy Association (DVD) involved 20 senior lawyers at the Association's Annual General Meeting. The film was presented by Sönke Hilbrans, a lawyer and member of the board of DVD.

### Military screening

Another noteworthy event was a screening for former and serving members of the German military on 3 September at the Strasbourg Concert Hall. Over 60 former soldiers and officers attended out of private interest in the subject. A panel discussion followed by a Colonel of the German Army, Bernd Biedermann (Colonel a.D.) speaking with John Goez, an investigative Journalist. The event was moderated by Susanne Lang, who led the German campaign work.



## IMPACT DYNAMICS AT WORK

As a tool for analyzing campaign strategies, BRITDOC uses what we call the four Impact Dynamics; broad categories for the kinds of change you can make in the world. This has been developed by studying the films that we have worked with, as well as working with NGOs and activists to understand how they conceptualize their campaigns. More information on the impact dynamics can be found in [impactguide.org](http://impactguide.org)

Here we apply the Impact Dynamics to the campaign goals of *CITIZENFOUR*.

### CHANGING MINDS

*Mass awareness and understanding – creating a shift in public attitudes.*

**Public Awareness of the consequences of mass surveillance.**

**Engage citizens with a moral question. Who will resist the secret extension of state powers – only the few or all of us?**

**Targeted audiences:**  
United States, Britain, Germany.



### CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

*Actively mobilizing people to do different, not just think different – whether that's to buy or boycott, donate or volunteer.*

**Increase surveillance self-defense strategies, particularly among high value groups, such as investigative journalists and lawyers.**

**Targeted Audiences:** Journalists, Documentary Filmmakers, Lawyers

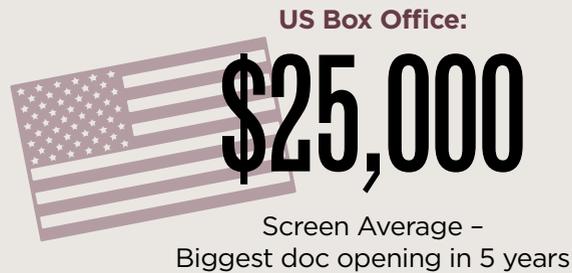
### CHANGING STRUCTURES

*Top down change whether in politics or business, directly influencing law and policy to change the context.*

**Spark a review of state and corporate policies around privacy and data capture.**

**Targeted audiences:** Politicians, business leaders, lawyers and judges

# WHO SAW IT?



**Internationally**  
 The film opened theatrically in the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Macedonia, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, UK



**Online Platforms**  
 HBO and HBO GO (US)  
 iTunes (US, Canada and Germany)  
 Channel 4's 4OD (UK)



# WHO SAW IT?



- Academy Award 2015  
Best Documentary Feature
- BAFTA Awards 2015 Best Documentary
- Directors Guild Award  
Outstanding Directorial Achievement  
in Documentary
- International Documentary Association  
Best Feature
- Satellite Awards Best Documentary Film
- Gotham Independent Film Awards  
Best Documentary
- New York Film Critics Circle  
Best Documentary/Non-Fiction Film
- Independent Spirit Awards  
Best Documentary
- Cinema Eye Honors Award  
Outstanding Achievement in  
Nonfiction Feature, in Direction,  
In Editing and In Production
- American Cinema Editors  
Best Edited Documentary Feature





# IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

# ***CITIZENFOUR***

## **TIMELINE**

# 2013

## WORLD EVENTS

### 2006-2012

- Poitras detained at airports over 40 times
- Poitras joins journalists in lawsuit challenging the National Defense Authorization Act

### 2012

- Poitras releases short film "The Program" on New York Times Op-Docs, which becomes the most viewed and shared Op-Docs in history

### JANUARY 2013

- Laura Poitras receives an encrypted e-mail from a stranger, "CITIZENFOUR," who identified himself as a high-ranking government official

### MAY 2013

- Poitras travels to Hong Kong with Glenn Greenwald to meet "CITIZENFOUR" where over 8 days, Snowden leaks a series of detailed disclosures of internal NSA documents revealing the massive extent of the NSA's foreign and domestic spying

### MAY 2013

- Edward Snowden leaves his home and flies to Hong Kong

### JUN 2013

- U.S. Department of Justice unsealed charges against Snowden of two counts of violating the Espionage Act of 1917 and theft of US Government or foreign government property
- Snowden flies to Moscow, Russia, where he reportedly remained for over a month

### JUL 2013

- French President Hollande refused negotiations with the US until they had security guarantees

### AUG 2013

- Russian authorities grant Snowden one-year asylum, which was later extended to three years

### JUN 2013

- Snowden reveals his identity and his motivation in a video published on the Guardian website

## THE CAMPAIGN

## IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

# 2013

# 2014

# 2015

# 2016

### SEP 2013

NSA's director confirms that the NSA collects and stores all phone records of all American citizens. Much of the data is kept in large storage facilities such as the Utah Data Center (as seen in the film)

### NOV 2013

—White House decides that Snowden will not receive clemency  
—Britain held a public intelligence hearing for the first time in history

### DEC 2013

Brazil ended their contract with U.S. company Boeing and awarded it to Sweden's Saab

### JAN 2014

India cancelled voter registration contract with Google

### JUN 2014

Germany ends contract with Verizon over concerns about network security

### NOV 2014

—European regulators threaten to block AT&T's purchase of Vodafone  
—German based server company, Protonet, promised 100% data sovereignty and crowd sources so quickly that many would-be investors did not get a chance

### JUN 2015

Congress passes the USA Freedom Act, placing restrictions on NSA's surveillance powers

### FEBRUARY 2016

Snowden remains in undisclosed location in Russia

## THE FILM

### JAN 2014

President Obama defends the NSA but orders a review for surveillance program reforms

### OCT 2014

—CITIZENFOUR International film premiere in the United States at the New York Film Festival  
—European Premiere at BFI London Film Festival  
—Leipzig Film Festival in Germany  
—UK General Release

### NOV 2014

German Theatrical Premiere at Kino International.Hamburg Abaton

### DEC 2014

—US theatrical release to 105 theaters  
—IDA Documentary Best Feature Award

### JAN 2015

Directors Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directing-Documentaries

### FEB 2015

—BAFTA Award winner  
—Awarded Best Documentary at the 87th Academy Awards  
—Channel 4 national broadcast with on the night live blog  
—Premiered on Home Box Office Channel 4 broadcast it in the UK

### SEP 2015

—Primetime Creative Emmy Awards (multiple)  
—Participated in the York Festival of Ideas on "Surveillance, Snowden and Security"

### JUN 2015

—Awarded German Film Fest Award for Best Documentary

## THE CAMPAIGN

### OCT 2014

—David Davis, MP accuses Parliament and press of complacency towards surveillance  
—Harvey Weinstein hosts Hollywood screening event that prompts debate around NSA surveillance under Obama's presidency

### NOV 2014

Screening for the Labour Campaign for Human Rights

### DEC 2014 — FEB 2015

Screening by Conservative blogger Guido Fawkes and right-of-centre media. High profile screenings continue. Interviews and appearances surrounding Oscar nomination and award

### JAN 2015

—Screening for the House of Lords  
—Screening for corporate Google offices

### FEB 2015

—Poitras featured at the *New York Times* Talk about the state of surveillance  
—Poitras speaks at the Ford Foundation's NetGain

### APR 2015

DVD copies given to every Member of Parliament (UK)

### FEB 2016

"Astro Noise" opens at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art representing Poitras' first solo exhibition

### APR 2014

Washington Post and The Guardian receive the Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of the NSA story shared with Poitras, Greenwald, MacAskill and Gellman

### DEC 2014

Retired naval officer and oil executive filed suit against CITIZENFOUR's producers "on behalf of the American people"

### FEB 2015

U.S. District Court dismissed lawsuit against CITIZENFOUR's producers on grounds of the First Amendment

### APR 2015

Over 10 million people watched comedian John Oliver interview Edward Snowden on an episode of "Last Week Tonight"

### JUN 2015

Congress passes the USA Freedom Act, placing modest restrictions on NSA's surveillance powers

## IMPACT & MOVEMENT

### APRIL 2014

Poitras, Greenwald, MacAskill and Gellman receive the George Polk award for National Security Reporting

### OCT 2014

—DOK Leipzig "Leipziger Ring" Award  
—Conservative Party Chairman and Shadow Deputy Prime Minister, David Davis, accuses parliament and press of complacency around surveillance

### JAN 2016

Poitras supports first crowd-sourced fundraising campaign for Tor (network of volunteer operated servers) netting over \$200,000



**“*CITIZENFOUR* allowed the public to see Snowden’s humanity, see his bravery, and understand the scale of the secret surveillance state. Even the most hardened securocrat couldn’t watch the film and still call him a traitor afterwards. *CITIZENFOUR* put wind back in our sails and allowed us to make headway for our campaign that was previously impossible”.**

—  
Eric King  
Privacy International

# IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

## Summary

*CITIZENFOUR* was just a part of a body of journalistic and artistic work by Laura Poitras and her collaborators. Together these works made mass surveillance public knowledge for the first time and put a number of highly complex personal, political and philosophical questions into the public domain.

These revelations and questions will now continue to be framed and understood, contested and assimilated for a generation. Their ramifications and implications are profound for the way we all understand ourselves as individuals as well as our understanding of societies and states.

The public and political engagement efforts made around the film's release must therefore be seen as just the beginning of a far longer process. The priority at launch was to contextualise the Snowden revelations for the

American, British and German publics in a way that made easy counter-narratives about security by their states impossible and led to a more demanding public discussion.

## Changes in Public Opinion

The primary logic of building the impact campaign around the release of *CITIZENFOUR* was to create and leverage a cultural shift in public perception. The revelations that emerged from *CITIZENFOUR* do appear to have resulted in important changes relative to perceptions of Edward Snowden and public sentiment about NSA surveillance.

### For example:

Through an analysis of Google, search results for "Edward Snowden" increased 450% post release of the film.

### Google searches for "Edward Snowden"

<b>2013:</b> (prior to film release)	<b>2,800</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>6,670</b>
<b>2015:</b>	<b>8,730</b>



Similarly, Google search results for “NSA Surveillance” increased 300% post release of the film.

#### Google searches for “NSA Surveillance”

<b>2013:</b>	<b>3,230</b>
(prior to film release)	
<b>2014:</b>	<b>5,910</b>
<b>2015:</b>	<b>6,980</b>

Around the issue of privacy and surveillance more generally, in the U.S., Reuters and Pew polling shows that between 2013 and 2015, Americans who do not approve of the government collecting bulk data increased from 37% to 54% respectively.

#### In the UK

Polling organisation YouGov had already done two polls, in June and November 2013 which showed that initial support for Snowden directly after the first revelations was slipping - with the number of people thinking he was right going from 56% in June 2013 to 48% by November.

YouGov conducted a repeat poll the week before the film opened - to establish the benchmark - and found it largely unchanged since the year before with 49% saying Snowden was right to give his information to the press (up from 48% a year before). However

those with a favourable impression of Snowden had slipped a little from 36% to 34%.

In March 2015, following the theatrical and TV launch of the film, the poll was repeated and showed a rise with 53% saying Snowden was right to give his information to the press. YouGov’s founder Stephan Shakespeare attributed the rise to the effect of the film.

#### Internationally

The Pew Research Center’s 2014 Global attitudes survey asked 48,643 respondents in 44 countries what they thought about the American government monitoring communications, such as emails and phone calls, in the U.S. and other countries. Specifically, global publics were asked whether the U.S. government’s alleged monitoring of communications from individuals suspected of terrorist activities, American citizens, citizens of the survey countries or the leaders of the survey countries is acceptable or unacceptable.

**In nearly all countries polled, majorities oppose monitoring by the U.S. government of emails and phone calls of foreign leaders or their citizens.**



In contrast, Americans tilted toward the view that eavesdropping on foreign leaders is an acceptable practice, and they are divided over using this technique on average people in other countries. However, the majority of Americans and others around the world agree that it is acceptable to spy on suspected terrorists, and that it is unacceptable to spy on American citizens.

The CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust, undertaken by the Centre for International Governance

Innovation (CIGI) and conducted by global research company Ipsos, reached 23,376 Internet users in 24 countries, and was carried out between October 7 2014 and November 12 2014 also provides some useful data points:

- **60% of users have heard about Edward Snowden**
- **Of those aware of Edward Snowden, 39% have taken steps to protect their online privacy and security as a result of his revelations**
- **Compared to one year ago, 43% of users now avoid certain websites and applications and 39% now change their**

**passwords regularly – two thirds (64%) of users are more concerned today about online privacy than they were compared to one year ago**

#### Changes in Government Policy and Legal Frameworks

The American, UK and German governments were all put under pressure by the continued spotlight on the workings of the surveillance state but despite many debates, special committees and legal challenges there has been little policy progress, with Britain arguably moving to legalise and extend data collection.

**United States**

President Obama admitted there would be no surveillance debate without Snowden. In January 2014, Obama said he was

**“...not going to dwell on Mr. Snowden’s actions or his motivations.”**

But acknowledged that the roiling, yearlong debate over surveillance would not have happened without him.

**“We have to make some important decisions about how to protect ourselves and sustain our leadership in the world, while upholding the civil liberties and privacy protections that our ideals and our Constitution require.”**

The secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court also nodded toward the “considerable public interest and debate” that

Snowden’s leaks created. And even Director of National Intelligence James Clapper acknowledged, “It’s clear that some of the conversations this has generated, some of the debate, actually needed to happen.” He was also later forced to admit he lied to congress when he denied that NSA was collecting telephone metadata.

Judicial opinion was divided across America when U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon issued a ruling in a lawsuit against the NSA program in November 2015, citing that it is unconstitutional and “almost-Orwellian.” Then, just a week later U.S. District Judge William Pauley III dismissed an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit finding that the program was lawful and constitutional, and relied on a disputed NSA talking point to suggest that it could have been used to stop the 9/11 attacks.

 **President Obama**  
@POTUS

**Glad the Senate finally passed the USA Freedom Act. It protects civil liberties and our national security. I’ll sign it as soon as I get it.**



However, the U.S. Congress did move to reform one surveillance program out of the multitude; In June, 2015, the USA Freedom Act passed with an overwhelming vote, marking the first time in over thirty years that both houses of Congress have approved a bill placing real restrictions and oversight on the National Security Agency’s surveillance powers.

Meanwhile a slew of additional legal challenges were initiated by NGO’s and corporates. Wikipedia went to court represented by the ACLU, arguing that the NSA’s “upstream” surveillance program — where the spy agency has

access to entire Internet streams coming into and out of the country - is illegal and unconstitutional. The Electronic Frontier Foundation lost a case on the 9th Circuit challenging the constitutionality of the same program, focused on the expansive and secret partnership between AT&T and the NSA that has allowed the agency to siphon off huge amounts of data directly off AT&T’s fiber optic cables all over the country.

In July 2015 the UN Human Rights Council appointed Joseph Cannataci as its first Special Rapporteur on the right to

privacy, with a mandate to make recommendations ensuring the promotion and protection of the right to privacy on the international and national level.

Then in October 2015, California passed a new law preventing the government from accessing citizen’s digital records without a warrant, becoming the fourth state to do so since Edward Snowden revealed the extent of the government’s data collection. Privacy watchdogs hail the bill, known as CalECPA, as a victory for the Fourth Amendment in the digital world.



### UK

Britain held its first-ever open intelligence hearing, especially relevant since the GCHQ (UK Government Communications Headquarters) had recently asked the NSA for ‘unsupervised access’ to the NSA data pools. The Snowden disclosures have been used by civil society to test the legality of the surveillance programmes exposed. A group of NGOs in the Don’t Spy On Us coalition including Privacy International initiated a series of cases in the British courts, the European Court of Justice and the

European Court of Human Rights to potentially curtail GCHQ’s mass surveillance capabilities and overrule the permissible scale of surveillance in Europe. Judgements in these cases are expected in 2016.

One early case brought by Privacy International among others at the secretive Investigatory Powers Tribunal found that GCHQ had acted unlawfully for seven years for receiving private information on British citizens through the NSA PRISM programme. The case has set a legal precedent in the UK and

is the first time the IPT has ruled against the intelligence agencies.

With civil society challenging the intelligence agencies powers in court, the UK government is attempting to legislate to justify the legality of the most intrusive surveillance programmes that Snowden exposed. Parliament is now presented with the draft Investigatory Powers Bill, a piece of legislation that would give the UK’s intelligence agencies the most sweeping surveillance powers of any advanced democracy.

Yet, the tone of the debate has shifted. The intelligence agencies have accepted they can no longer operate in the dark and oversight is significantly improved in the legislation. Judges not politicians will now sign off on warrants for surveillance. Parliament will get additional powers to hold the agencies to account. MPs have also raised serious concerns over the legislation, with the chair of the once supine Intelligence Services Committee of Parliament criticizing the draft bill and calling for the government to reconsider. It now looks likely that parliament will water down this attempt at a ‘Snooper’s Charter’ but with the government still holding a small majority there is a lot still to do.



### Germany

During the period of this project, state surveillance became a highly polarized issue in Germany. Early outrage on behalf of the political class to the NSA tapping of Chancellor Merkel’s mobile phone was complicated by later revelations, highlighting the role of Germany’s own intelligence agency the BND. A federal investigative committee revealed evidence in Spring 2015 that the BND had colluded with the NSA to spy on both German and European corporate interests and diplomats.

As resulting tensions within the government rose, a blogger covering the German NSA-federal investigation committee was charged with treason - and the second attempt at a data retention law was launched by the government with a provision that would penalise media working with materials provided by whistleblowers.

With many politicians increasingly tied into positions in favour of greater state surveillance, the debate became increasingly divided.

In October 2015, the Council of Europe condemned the German intelligence agencies for their collusion with the NSA and public polling shows 81% of Germans oppose the NSA's programmes of mass surveillance. *CITIZENFOUR* has helped to raise the visibility of this issue, in a period where the German political establishment has attempted to hide it. The film has also helped to galvanize civil society action in Germany where the public remain sceptical of state intrusion into privacy.

The same month, as a result of a political screening and panel discussion hosted by the television company NDR just before the national broadcast, NDR's chairman took up key issues raised in the debate. In particular better provisions for whistleblowers in the German law that he is personally following up. The event crucially touched upon the possibility that Edward Snowden may be able to secure political asylum in Germany as well as emphasizing the importance of Snowden giving testimony to the NSA-committee. The debate received headline coverage on the specially developed ARD website (ARD is a consortium of German public broadcasters, the largest public

broadcaster in the world) on *CITIZENFOUR* and Snowden that accompanied the TV premiere on November 23 2015.

#### Business "Not As Usual"

The journalism around and in *CITIZENFOUR* gave corporations a stark choice; over issues of privacy, would they side with governments or with customers? Portrayed in the film as too often either complicit with state surveillance or ignorant of their failure to protect customers data, the business sector is now emerging as perhaps the most open to change.

In financial terms, the impact on business in the U.S. of the Snowden revelations can not be understated. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a business-friendly think tank, found that the revelations could cost the U.S. cloud computing industry between \$22 and \$180 billion by 2016 with foreign customers less willing to store their data with U.S. companies. Additionally, the revelations seem to be prompting foreign countries to deny large contracts to U.S. companies. For example, in 2015, the German government announced that it was canceling its contract with Verizon (who provided internet



services to some German agencies); Brazil denied a contract to Boeing citing NSA activities as cause and awarded the contract to Swedish Saab.

In August 2013 Lavabit was the first technology company to shut down rather than comply with a court-sanctioned government surveillance order. While in December 2013, six months after Poitras and Greenwald reported on Snowden's revelations in *The Guardian*, Apple, AOL, Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Twitter, and Yahoo sent an open letter to Washington urging reforms that ensure that

government surveillance efforts are clearly restricted by law, proportionate to the risks, transparent and subject to independent oversight.

Stung by Snowden's revelations about how the NSA had secretly breached company networks — often without the companies' knowledge — Apple, Google and Microsoft are working to reassure customers around the world that they are fighting efforts to give the United States government access to their communications. They say they are seeing greater demand than ever for built-in encryption. While Apple has

introduced a new high security operating system for the iPhone, Google is testing a new extension for the Chrome browser that could make encrypting email easier.

In February 2016 the CEO of Apple, Tim Cook, did something unthinkable, even in late 2013. He wrote a letter to all customers to inform them that he was fighting off US government requests for a 'back door' into their iPhone operating system which he believes would fundamentally undermine every phone users guarantee of privacy.

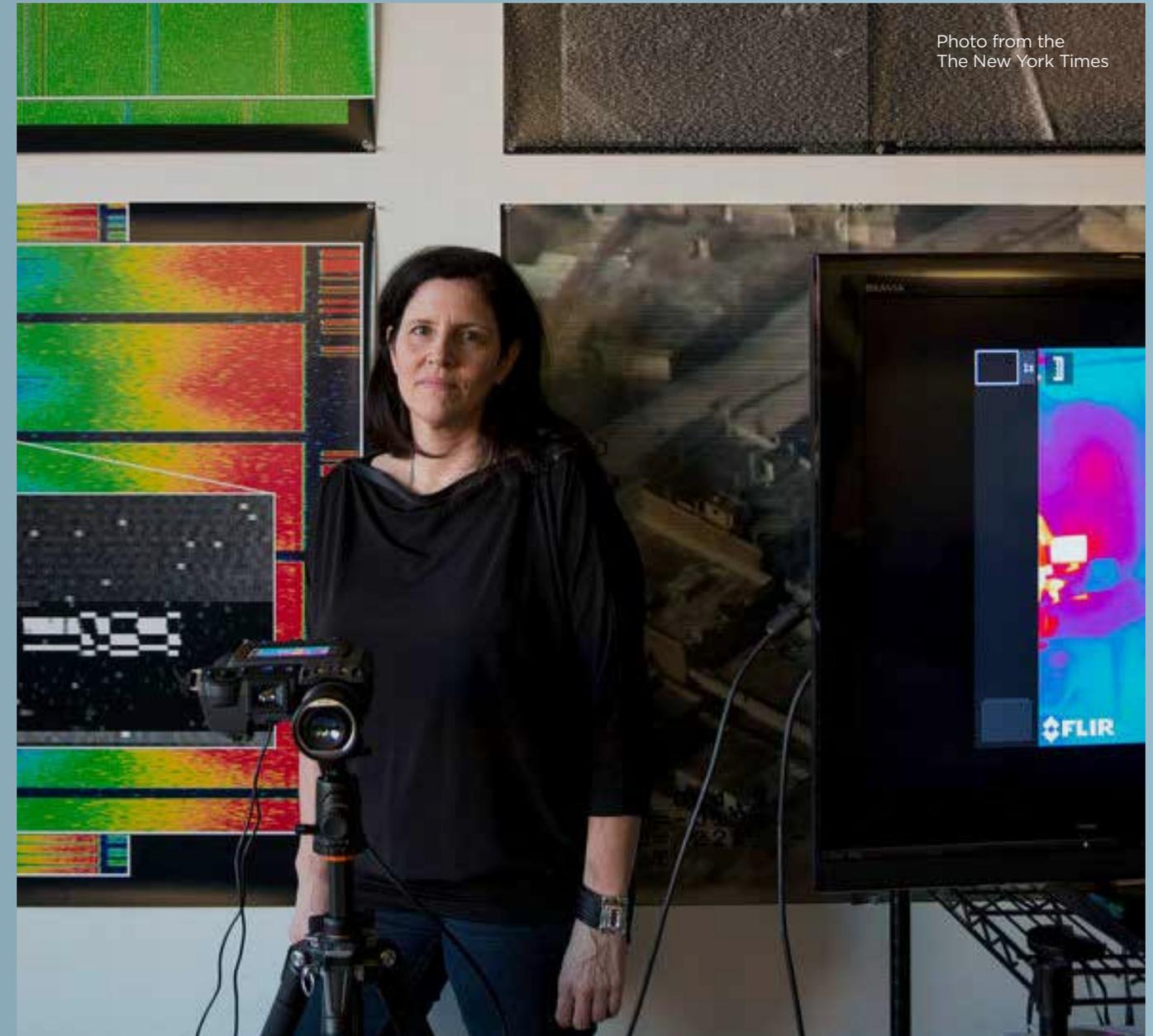
### Work Still To Do

The civil society partners to the campaign such as ACLU, Freedom of the Press Foundation, Amnesty and Privacy International are continuing their work to counter mass surveillance, some still including screenings of the film.

Laura has been highly active post-*CITIZENFOUR*. She partnered with journalists Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill to launch, *The Intercept* in 2014, an online platform originally to report on the NSA documents launched by Snowden in the short term and dedicated to 'fierce, adversarial journalism' across a range of issues in the long-term. As a further development of this innovative journalism project, Laura launched a visual journalism division called Field of Vision in 2015 with collaborators AJ Schnack and Charlotte Cook. Conceived as a unit to commission short films expanding the language of visual journalism, it embraces the inter-disciplinary way of working that she evolved with *CITIZENFOUR*.

In February 2016 Laura opened at New York's Whitney Museum for American Art with her installation "Astro Noise." Her immersive installation of new work as an artist-journalist-filmmaker builds on topics including mass surveillance, the war on terror, the U.S. drone program, Guantánamo Bay Prison, occupation, and torture. The book which accompanies the exhibition (*A Survival Guide For Living Under Total Surveillance*) features contributions from artists such as Hito Steyerl and Ai Weiwei and writers Kate Crawford and Dave Eggers.

**Laura is currently working to finish an episodic documentary series called *Asylum* about Julian Assange who she has been filming over a number of years.**



## CONCLUSION

Whilst *CITIZENFOUR* and the associated work of Laura Poitras and Glenn Greenwald has significantly raised visibility and understanding of the issues of privacy and mass surveillance, government reform on these policies requires long-term and sustained efforts.

The implications of Snowden's actions may not be truly appreciated until the long view of history allows.

While rolling back on mass surveillance will be a lengthy process, in many countries the debate is active and legislation likely. Surveillance that was once hidden from citizens is now publicly avowed giving people the chance to modify their behaviour to avoid their privacy being invaded.

The film has galvanised civil society action across the globe - giving a wider audience an accessible and fascinating account of the Snowden disclosures and what they mean for fundamental human rights. The film has given space for civil society groups to take unprecedented coordinated

legal actions to prove the illegality of these programmes. Some of these legal actions have already been successful.

People often ask what art, and film in particular, can do to propel more opportunity, better functioning democracies, and access to fundamental rights. Through the elegance and simplicity of sitting in one room, telling one person's story, *CITIZENFOUR* offered one answer. Amid a growing global conversation about inequality and injustice, *CITIZENFOUR* focused on creating conditions for expanding justice. The film challenged us to think through the concepts of privacy in a digital age, the role of journalism, the dangers of government secrecy and the role of the US in the world.

Poitras' decision to use cinema to "*understand complex, contradictory global forces as they play out in individual lives*" has quite literally changed our world in ways we are only beginning to understand. This kind of deeply humane, committed practice is the heartbeat of artistic expression, creating an experience of engagement where authenticity and empathy meet and become irrefutable.

—  
Peer Review Committee

"*CITIZENFOUR* is filmmaking as an act of justice."

—  
Cara Mertes, Director, Just Films Ford Foundation

WATCH THE FILM  
[CITIZENFOURFILM.COM](http://CITIZENFOURFILM.COM)

TRAILER  
[CITIZENFOURFILM.COM/TRAILER](http://CITIZENFOURFILM.COM/TRAILER)

FOLLOW  
[FACEBOOK.COM/SEARCH/TOP/?Q=CITIZENFOUR](https://FACEBOOK.COM/SEARCH/TOP/?Q=CITIZENFOUR)

CONTACT  
[CITIZENFOURFILM.COM/CONTACT](http://CITIZENFOURFILM.COM/CONTACT)

ES: Hey.

ES: Are you there?

LP: yes!

LP: Are you ok?

# THE TEAM



## THE FILMMAKER

### LAURA POITRAS

#### Director/Producer/ Cinematographer

Laura is a filmmaker, artist and panelist. She has received many honors for her work, including a *MacArthur Fellowship*, *Guggenheim Fellowship*, and a *Peabody Award*. She has attended the Sundance Institute Documentary Labs as both a Fellow and Creative Advisor. In 2006, the U.S. government placed her on a secret watchlist and, through 2012, she was detained and interrogated at the U.S. border each time she traveled internationally. To protect her footage from being seized at the U.S. border, she relocated to Berlin in 2012. Her reporting on NSA mass surveillance based on Snowden's disclosures won the *George Polk Award* for national security journalism, and shared in the 2014 *Pulitzer Prize for Public Service*. She has taught

filmmaking at Yale and Duke Universities, and is on the board of the *Freedom of the Press Foundation*. Along with Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill, she is co-founder of *The Intercept*. In 2016, she will have her first solo museum exhibition at the *Whitney Museum of American Art*, where she will create an environment of immersive installations that build on the themes she has been exploring in her filmmaking.

## OTHER KEY MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

#### Producers

Mathilde Bonnefoy  
Dirk Wilutzky

#### Co-Producers

Katy Scoggin  
Kirsten Johnson

#### Executive Producers

David Menschel, Steven Soderbergh, Jeff Skoll, Diane Weyermann, Tom Quinn

#### Distribution Producer

Brenda Coughlin



## PARTNERS THAT ACTIVATE

### American Civil Liberties Union

ACLU sponsored numerous series of screenings and events, to an extent greater than any other film in their past.

### Don't Spy on us Coalition (UK)

Hosted screenings including an event for the Labour Campaign for Human Rights that was introduced by actor and director David Morrissey and Chris Bryant MP and a right-of-centre event with Conservative blogger Guido Fawkes. Some members of the coalition were very active in helping devise and execute strategy and provide venues and speakers in particular Privacy International, Open Rights Group, Big Brother Watch and coalition affiliate Amnesty International.

### Electronic Frontier Foundation

Promoted film extensively on their website and directs viewers to the privacy tools referenced in the end credits of the film.

### F-Secure

The privacy software company helped organize screenings

and invite industry peers.

They also helped to generate trade press and took out mainstream press adverts in support of the film.

### Freedom of the Press Foundation

Laura Poitras sits on the board of the Freedom of the Press Foundation and they collaborated extensively with Participant Media and hosted many special events and screenings, as well as all the encryption workshops in the United States.

### Participant Media

Developed an online letter writing campaign to "Tell Congress: Preserve Our Democracy and Protect Whistle-Blower Rights (over 1,600 letters sent to date) and a twitter campaign to support the RightToReport: Call on the White House to Respect Journalists' Right to Gather and Report the News in the Digital Age.

### Bertha Foundation

Bertha were early funders of the film and also provided major support for the public and political engagement work in the UK.

### Rowntree Reform Trust

Rowntree funded the political engagement work in the UK, enabling the team to hire surveillance expert Mike Harris and his 89Up team.

### Participant Media

Participant Media, one of the film's US co-producers, is dedicated to entertainment that inspires and compels social change. They supported the work of Freedom of the Press Foundation around the film in the US.

### Open Society Foundation

The Open Society Foundation funded the campaign work in Germany. The team worked with Vera Franz who oversees the Digital Civil Liberties and Intellectual Property Reform portfolios at the Open Society Information Program.

# ORGANOGRAM

## DISTRIBUTION

**Lead distributor:  
Radius TWC (US)**

**Film and Distribution  
Management:  
Participant Media (US)**

**International  
broadcast premiere:  
HBO Documentary  
Films (US)**

**BRITDOC  
Artificial Eye  
(UK & Ireland)**

**Dorothy Byrne,  
Channel 4  
(UK & Ireland)**

**PIFFL Medien  
(Germany)**

**Digital Communications  
and Marketing:  
Radius TWC (US)**

**PIFFL Medien  
(Germany)**

**Press & Public Relations:  
Elizabeth Benjamin (UK)**

**Ryan Werner (US)  
Nancy Willen (US)**

**Claudia Tomassini  
(Germany)**

## IMPACT CAMPAIGN

**UK Team  
Government Relations  
and Strategic  
Communication:  
Mike Harris, CEO 89UP**

**Social Media Strategist:  
Josh Feldberg, 89UP**

**Online Content  
and Social Media:  
Caroline Christie,  
Content Editor, 89UP**

**Advocacy and Events:  
Charlene Badibanga,  
Advocacy Executive,  
89UP**

**Advisor:  
Eric King, Privacy  
International**

**US  
Freedom of the Press  
Foundation  
Trevor Timm**

**ACLU, Amnesty  
International**

**Germany  
Privacy Consultants,  
Campaign leads:  
Anne Roth  
and Susanne Lang**

**Campaign Consultant:  
Mike Harris, CEO 89UP**

**Advocacy and Events:  
Charlene Badibanga,  
Advocacy Executive,  
89UP**

## PRODUCTION BUDGET

# \$2.1M USD

### Production Funders

- Vital Projects Fund
- Sundance Institute  
Documentary Film Program
- BRITDOC Bertha Journalism  
Fund
- Channel 4
- BRITDOC Circle Fund
- NDR (Germany)
- BR (Germany)
- Participant Media.
- Fiscal sponsorship through  
Women Make Movies

## IMPACT CAMPAIGN

## BUDGET

# \$170,000 USD

### Impact Campaign Funders

- Bertha Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust
- Wallace Action Fund  
(Tides Foundation)
- Open Society Foundation
- In addition, direct and indirect  
support from Ford Foundation  
supported the campaign. The  
North American P&A budgets  
of RADiUS-TWC, Participant,  
and HBO were also used  
explicitly for targeted audience  
outreach, workshops, digital  
marketing on issues, and  
influencer screenings.



# PRESS



NEWS CULTURE BOOKS SCIENCE & TECH BUSINESS HUMOR CARTOONS MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 22, 2015

## WHY "CITIZENFOUR" DESERVED ITS OSCAR

BY AMY DAVIDSON




*Laura Poitras, Dirk Wiltzky, Glenn Greenwald, Lindsay Mills, and Mathilde Bonnefoy onstage during the Academy Awards.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

**“T**hank you to Edward Snowden for his courage,” Laura Poitras, the director of “Citizenfour,” said as she accepted the Oscar for best documentary. Neil Patrick Harris, the award show’s host, noted that Snowden couldn’t be there “for some treason.” Treason isn’t one of the crimes Snowden has been charged with—the government wants to prosecute him under the Espionage Act—but both the praise and the joke point to why this Snowden Oscar mattered. What he did was useful, and dangerous.

That wouldn’t have been enough if the movie were bad. But “Citizenfour” is worth watching, as well as celebrating. One still has to ask where the cinematic romance is. At the Oscars, an answer was provided by the young woman onstage with Poitras: Lindsay Mills, the woman whom Snowden at first left behind when he left his job and everything else for a hotel room in Hong Kong. One of the minor revelations of “Citizenfour” was that Mills had joined him in

“Just walk me through it,” Glenn Greenwald tells Edward Snowden, in that Hong Kong hotel room. The guidance Greenwald and his colleagues look for is of three distinct kinds: How do you keep secrets? Why would Snowden tell secrets? And what has the government been hiding?

The first is the most one-sided. Greenwald, as the narration delicately makes clear, initially can’t figure out or can’t be bothered to set up the encrypted line of communication needed to satisfy the mysterious source who e-mails him—this is why Snowden turns to Laura Poitras, who knows exactly what he’s talking about when he asks, in their first exchanges, about her public keys. (George Packer wrote a [Profile of Poitras for \*The New Yorker\*](#).) Snowden shows Greenwald how to do it (“It seems hard, but it’s not—this is super-easy”), and why he should. Here is one of the practical, paradoxical gifts of the Snowden affair: don’t give up on the idea that your words can be secret, at least slightly more secret than is convenient for companies or spies. If you are a little disciplined, you can be freer. There is a lovely shot of Greenwald’s face when Snowden, who is about to enter a password, asks for his “magic mantle of power,” a red sweatshirt, and pulls it over his head, as if he were a man running in the rain, or a teen-ager with a flashlight under his blankets. Looking at him, Greenwald, whom we’ve already encountered as a big talker, is, for a moment, only quiet and curious, with barely a flicker in his expression before he asks, “Is that about the possibility of—overhead?” Greenwald adds that nothing will surprise him anymore. His tone in that instant is one that the film, for all the scenes with angry activists, ultimately shares, and why the film works—neither titillated nor portentous, and just abashed enough to keep its importance from becoming self-importance.

Narcissism is the charge that’s thrown at Snowden—that he thinks he gets to decide what’s secret. His character, or, rather, his motivation for leaking, is the second puzzle for Greenwald and for Ewen MacAskill, the *Guardian* reporter also in the hotel room. Here, it is MacAskill’s face that is revealing. Greenwald seems sure of what category to put Snowden in, once he is persuaded that the leak is for real and the information is good. (“The fearlessness and the ‘fuck you’ to, like, the bullying tactics has got to be completely pervading everything we do.”) MacAskill, though, begins by telling Snowden that he doesn’t know anything about him; when Snowden starts talking about the N.S.A.’s relation to Booz Allen Hamilton, his on-paper employer, MacAskill stops him: “So, I don’t know your name.” He takes notes; his glances, when he looks up from writing in the scenes that follow, suggest a skeptic’s trust being earned.

THE  
NEW YORKER

The New Yorker  
Magazine  
Amy Davidson  
2/22/2015  
Why CITIZENFOUR  
Deserved Its Oscar



**The Nation**  
 Ali Gharib  
 2/23/2015  
**The Necessity  
 of CITIZENFOUR**

<http://www.thenation.com/article/necessity-CITIZENFOUR/>

A screenshot of a web article from The Nation. At the top is the site's logo and navigation menu with links for Politics, World, Economy, Culture, and Take Action. Below the navigation is a sub-header for the article: "FILM SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS EDITORIAL MARCH 16, 2010 ISSUE". The main title is "The Necessity of 'Citizenfour'" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title is a subtitle: "A win for the Edward Snowden documentary is a win for democracy." and the author's name "By Ali Gharib" with a Twitter icon. The date "FEBRUARY 25, 2015" is displayed below the author's name. There are four social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, Email, and Print. Below the text is a photograph of three people at the Oscars: Mathilde Bonnefoy, Laura Poitras, and Dirk Wilutzky, all holding their Oscar awards. At the bottom of the page is a caption: "Mathilde Bonnefoy, and from left, Laura Poitras and Dirk Wilutzky at the Oscars, 2015 (Photo by Joedan Strauss/Invision/AP)".

Last year, I thought *The Act of Killing*. Joshua Oppenheimer's innovative examination of mass slayings in Indonesia during the 1960s, deserved to win the Oscar for best feature documentary. Instead, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave the award to a film with broader appeal, *20 Feet From Stardom*, a review of life as a background singer on pop records. At the time, a friend quipped, "20 Feet From Politics." This year, however, the academy didn't shy away from awarding a nakedly political film: Laura Poitras's *Citizenfour*, a stunning *vérité* account of the initial reporting on Edward Snowden's National Security Agency leak, took home the biggest documentary prize of the year.

At a moment when the most powerful nation in the history of the world is going astray, upending the very foundations of liberal democracy, *Citizenfour's* victory was urgent and necessary. The *New York Times* film critic A.O. Scott might have put it best, calling the picture "a primal political fable for the digital age, a real-time tableau of the confrontation between the individual and the state."

The stakes are established early in the film, when Poitras reads aloud an e-mail she got from Snowden at the start of their conversations: "From now, know that every border you cross, every purchase you make, every call you dial, every cellphone tower you pass, friend you keep, article you write, site you visit, subject line you type is in the hands of a system whose reach is unlimited but whose safeguards are not."

In the course of the documentary, Poitras travels to Hong Kong with Glenn Greenwald to meet Snowden, who explains on camera who he is and what he is handing over to the journalists: a trove of documents detailing worldwide spying operations of the NSA and its partners. The challenge of exposing such information seems considerable, but Snowden handles it with an ease that betrays his intelligence and determination; he remains his own best spokesman.

Snowden himself couldn't have been more clear about understanding all of this in a statement he released shortly after the announcement of *Citizenfour's* Oscar. "When Laura Poitras asked me if she could film our encounters, I was extremely reluctant. I'm grateful that I allowed her to persuade me," Snowden

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December 12, 2014 11:50 am

## Women of 2014: Laura Poitras

Stefan Wagstyl

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### Whistleblower Edward Snowden needed a formidable ally. He found one in this journalist and Oscar-nominated film-maker



The first time Laura Poitras was stopped and questioned at an airport, she thought it was a mistake. Flying home to the US from the Sarajevo film festival in 2006, she was paged at Vienna airport and asked to go to security. She was put on a bus, taken to a baggage inspection room and questioned about her trip. She asked: "Why are you stopping me?" The answer: "Well, you know, your name came up on a US government list, and you have a threat score that is really high."

If it was high then, today it is stratospheric. Poitras has played a key role in the world's greatest leak of espionage secrets — American whistleblower Edward Snowden's revelations of a huge US electronic surveillance programme. Poitras is one of only two journalists to whom Snowden last year entrusted his treasure trove of documents taken from the National Security Agency, the cyber intelligence organisation. She is also the director of *Citizenfour*, a film about her encounter with Snowden, which is tipped for an Oscar as best documentary of 2014.

EMAIL BRIEFING

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TIM HARFORD **Oil** The consequences of cheap oil

FT SPECIAL REPORT **Mobile Technology**

Europe and Asia race to set 5G standard

Telecoms networks 'Dumb' phones for

### Women of 2014



- Politician: Marina Silva
- Leader: Nicola Sturgeon
- Tennis ace: Li Na
- Activist: Naomi Klein
- Ebola campaigner: Joanne Liu
- Fighters: Women of the YPJ
- Tech stars: Women of Alibaba
- #BringBackOurGirls: Hadiza Bala Usman
- Entrepreneur: Lily Cole
- Banker: Arundhati Bhattacharya

Poitras now assumes she is under surveillance, night and day. "I am lit up like a Christmas tree behind the scenes," she says, quite casually. "Which means there is probably a graph, and the graph shows who are the people that I am in contact with." She is speaking in Berlin, where she now lives. Milky autumn light streams through the windows, gently illuminating her. She looks younger than her 52 years and gestures fluidly when she speaks. If she worries about the perpetual monitoring of her daily life, she does not show it. "The choice is, either I say: 'Well, I'll stop doing this kind of work,' you know, because the harassment is really bothersome, or 'I'll keep doing it.'"

The incident at Vienna airport occurred soon after she had finished *My Country, My Country*, a 2006 film that followed the lives of ordinary Iraqis under the US occupation after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Nominated for an Oscar, it also caused the US intelligence agencies to put Poitras on something she now knows is a "watch list" — a roster of people the US authorities seek to track. Next came another documentary that may have irritated the US government — *The Oath*, a 2010 film about two Yemeni brothers who served Osama bin Laden as driver and bodyguard, one of whom ended up in Guantánamo Bay.

That first Vienna questioning has been followed by about 40 others at US airports. Poitras has had her computer, notebooks and mobile phone taken away, sometimes for weeks. She says she assumed that when officials realised she was "just a film-maker", she would

be taken off the list. But it didn't happen. "And then, I became more confrontational at the airport, you know, taking notes while answering questions, asserting my rights as a journalist."

When Snowden got in touch last year, she quickly realised his story had the potential to cause a much bigger shock than anything she had done before. "The minute I thought Snowden was real, of course, I was fearful. I mean it was clear this was going to be dangerous — to anger the most powerful people in the world."

The 31-year-old computer expert had electronic files containing more than one million documents Snowden had taken from the NSA, where he worked as a contractor until he fled for Hong Kong in May 2013. He decided to hand them over to Poitras and Guardian journalist Glenn Greenwald. Hiding in a Hong Kong hotel, he arranged a secret meeting with them and another Guardian journalist. As Poitras portrays in *Citizenfour*, Snowden spent hours in his cramped room explaining his secrets and convincing the three reporters. Later she asked Snowden why he had chosen her. He emailed in reply: "You asked why I picked you. I didn't. You did." He



Financial Times  
12.20.14  
Women of 2014:  
Laura Poitras



**Newsweek**

*Paula Mejia, Sean Elder, Elijah Wolfson, Lauren Walker, Zach Schonfeld, Leah McGrath Goodman, Shaminder Dulai, Lucy Westcott, Zoe Schlanger, Nicholas Wapshott, Matthew Cooper, David Cay Johnston, and John Walters*

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12.21.14

**Our Favorite Films of 2014**

<http://www.newsweek.com/our-favorite-films-2014-staff-list-293593>

**CULTURE**

# OUR FAVORITE FILMS OF 2014: NEWSWEEK STAFF PICKS

BY **PAULA MEJIA**, **SEAN ELDER**, **ELIJAH WOLFSON**, **LAUREN WALKER**, **ZACH SCHONFELD**, **LEAH MCGRATH GOODMAN**, **SHAMINDER DULAI**, **LUCY WESTCOTT**, **ZOË SCHLANGER**, **NICHOLAS WAPSHOTT**, **MATTHEW COOPER**, **DAVID CAY JOHNSTON**, **JOHN WALTERS** ON 12/21/14 AT 6:52 PM



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NEWSWEEK

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### Edward Snowden: the true story behind his NSA leaks

Laura Poitras, the director of Citizenfour, tells the Telegraph how the whistleblower entrusted her with revealing to the world his secrets about American government mass surveillance

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Edward Snowden has joined Twitter @Snowden Photo: Reuters



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By Mick Brown 6:00PM BST 24 Oct 2014

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When, in January 2013, sitting in her Berlin flat, Laura Poitras received an anonymous email requesting her public encryption key (which would allow the sender secure communication), she says she thought little of it. As a filmmaker, Poitras had made documentaries about the American occupation in Iraq and Guantánamo Bay that had earned her international praise and numerous awards. They had also – so it seems – put her on an American government watch list that had resulted in her being detained going in and out of the country more than 40 times over six years. It was no secret that she was now working on a film about government surveillance.

In his next email her anonymous correspondent told her he was a member of the intelligence community, and explained the need for high security, promising Poitras, 'This won't be a waste of your time.'

'That's when I thought, OK, I need to rethink how I'm approaching this,' Poitras says. Over the next three or four weeks she continued to exchange emails with the person who called himself Citizenfour, 'setting up protocols', as she puts it, and establishing a more secure way to communicate. It was then that she received the email that she describes as 'the shocker'.

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It was at that point that Poitras stopped using the telephone in her apartment, bought a new computer for cash and started checking her email account only in public places.

On June 1, following instructions from Citizenfour, Poitras, along with two Guardian journalists, Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, boarded a plane to Hong Kong. Eight days later a 12%-minute film shot by Poitras was broadcast, revealing Citizenfour as Edward Snowden, a 29-year-old IT specialist working for the contractor Booz Allen Hamilton on behalf of America's National Security Agency. 'I have no intention of hiding who I am,' Snowden said to camera, 'because I know I have done nothing wrong.'

The information purloined by Edward Snowden about NSA activities is among the most significant leaks in American political history. It revealed that the NSA has maintained a number of mass-surveillance programmes over its own citizens, including accessing information stored by some of America's biggest technology companies, often without individual warrants, and intercepting data from global telephone and internet networks to build up a store of information on millions of US citizens, regardless of whether or not they are 'persons of interest' to the agency.



'If I really want to have a private conversation I won't have it in my home; I go to a public place. I certainly don't trust my electronics – that's a given.' (Photo: Olaf Becker)

Snowden himself has described it as 'the largest programme of suspicionless surveillance in human history'. The leaked documents also revealed details of Tempora, a programme run by Britain's spy agency, GCHQ, to collect, store and analyse vast quantities of personal information gleaned from global email messages, Facebook posts, internet histories and telephone calls, which Snowden describes as 'probably the most invasive intercept system in the world'.

Poitras's role in disclosing the Snowden revelations has already won her a number of awards. In April, along with the Washington Post and the Guardian's American edition, she won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for public service journalism. She was also a co-winner of the George Polk Award for national security reporting, and last year she won the International Documentary Association's Courage Under Fire Award for her reporting



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Edward Snowden: the true story behind his NSA leaks



# HUGE CHEERS

**Huge cheers to all our partners who have worked together over the past year to realise this program.**

**In particular we would like to recognise the significant work invested in the Impact reports which were produced by Erin Sorenson in collaboration with the team at BRITDOC and then lovingly visualised by Involved Design in London.**

**The Impact Award trophies which were designed and manufactured by Susan Banks, Professor at New World School of the Arts in Miami and photographed by Arion Doerr in New York.**

**Finally the graffiti art made for this year's announcement was created by Victor Ving, working on location at the Container Yard in Los Angeles. In a film concept devised by BRITDOC and executed by Director and DOP Dallas Sterling and Producer Shelby Hill.**

**Thank you one and all.**

**docimpactaward**