



EDWARD SNOWDEN

by Edith Hathaway

PART 1: The Big Picture

Edward Snowden became known to the world since he first identified himself as National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower on June 11, 2013 from a hotel room in Hong Kong. His US passport was revoked shortly before he left Hong Kong 12 days later, sending him scrambling to seek asylum in at least 21 countries. Most of them could not guarantee him safe passage, including Ecuador, one of his viable destinations. Stranded for 40 days at Sheremetyevo International Airport near Moscow, Snowden received temporary residence in Russia on Aug. 1, 2013, initially for one year, and subsequently for the next three years, through Aug. 2017. Joined by his girlfriend in July 2014, he currently lives in Moscow.

The US government has charged Snowden with espionage after exposing secret massive NSA electronic

spying programs. He says that in its “War on Terror” the NSA has violated privacy rights and civil liberties. Snowden and his defenders cite the greater public good in exposing draconian surveillance programs that are illegal and unconstitutional. They also doubt he would ever receive a fair trial in the United States.

We will look at some background facts on the Snowden saga and see what astrology adds to the story. In the larger picture, first of all, we note that though conceived prior to Sept. 11, 2001, the NSA mass surveillance program expanded exponentially *after* 9-11. This is confirmed by previous NSA whistleblowers William Binney, J. Kirk Wiebe, Thomas Drake, and Edward Loomis, whose testimonies and commentaries remained mostly ignored by the press and public up through June 2013, when Snowden came forward via selected members of the press. Snowden flew from his

residence in Hawaii to Hong Kong on May 20, 2013. Upon his invitation, three journalists (Laura Poitras, Glenn Greenwald, and Ewen MacAskill) joined him there on June 3, 2013, and the first-ever installment of this explosive coverage was published in *The UK Guardian* on June 5, 2013. Along with citizens of other nations, the American public learned the true extent of government spying on its own citizens, contrary to previous public statements by President Obama, and sworn congressional testimony by NSA Director James Clapper and former NSA Director General Keith Alexander in March 2013. (These NSA Directors lied to Congress with no consequence.) *The Church Report* of Nov. 1975 was supposed to end such excesses in government overreach, but Snowden revealed they were by no means over. He informed us that among Americans alone – 22 ½ million e-mails were being collected every second. This is

in addition to mass collection of phone calls and search engine queries of citizens around the world.

“Billions of phone calls, faxes, emails, computer-to-computer data transfers, and text messages from around the world flow through the MDR [NSA’s Massive Data Repository in Bluffdale, Utah] every hour. Some flow right through, some are kept briefly, and some are held forever.”

James Bamford, “The Most Wanted Man in the World,” *Wired* magazine, Aug. 2014.

From fall 2001 to early June 2013 an entire 12-year Jupiter cycle had elapsed. In this case Jupiter returned to the sign of Gemini, re-entering Gemini (sidereal zodiac) on May 31, 2013. Jupiter and Saturn orbital cycles (12 and 29 years, respectively) and conjunction cycles (every 20 years) are extremely important in assessing socio-political-economic matters, and Gemini-Sagittarius is an axis representing a kind of global nervous system, highlighting communications, publishing, and travel. Technology linked with information systems and data storage (now called “metadata”) was especially favored in the 20th century since:

1) late Dec. 1980 to July 1981 – the notable triple conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in Mercury-ruled Virgo, marking the real start of the Information Age; and

2) Sept. 1989 to July 1990 – triple Jupiter-Saturn oppositions in Gemini-Sagittarius. Soon after that, on Dec. 25, 1990, the World Wide Web was invented by British scientist Tim Berners-Lee in Europe. Until the World Wide Web, enabling global use of the Internet, most of the NSA’s dragnet electronic surveillance could not exist.

Information is further expanded

when Jupiter transits the Mercury-ruled sign of Gemini – an air sign noted for promoting the accessibility and/or sale of information, as Gemini also has strong mercantile interests. Coincidentally, the USA chart contains natal Jupiter in Gemini. (James Kelleher chart, July 4, 1776, 6:30 pm LMT, Philadelphia, PA). All together there are four planets in Gemini in the USA chart: natal Mars, Jupiter, Venus and Sun. Natal Mars at 0 Gemini 40 makes it particularly ripe to be galvanized by the incoming Jupiter transit in Gemini from May 31, 2013 through June 19, 2014. In truth, all four planets in Gemini in the USA chart would be ignited by the presence of transiting Jupiter, soon to be followed by “T” (transiting) Sun entering Gemini on June 15, 2013 and T Mars on July 4, 2013. Starting on June 26, 2013, T Mercury turned Stationary Retrograde at 29 Gemini 03, and in retrograde motion in Gemini through July 20, 2013. Thus, up through Aug. 1, 2013, when Snowden received his initial 1-yr Russian residency, T Mars, Jupiter, and Mercury were all in Gemini, with T Sun also in Gemini June 15 through July 15, 2013. From June 5, 2013 and throughout the 40 days he was stranded at Sheremetyevo Airport near Moscow, his revelations and his legal status were major news around the world. Also, prior to June 11, 2013, when T Moon joined the three other planets in Gemini, a New Moon occurred June 8th at 23 Taurus 31 in *Mrigashira nakshatra*, whose imagery and mythology contain themes about a chase.

As we shall see in Part 2 of this article, Gemini is also the most problematic area of Snowden’s natal chart, his 2nd house, and obviously receiving the strongest focus via transiting planets in 2013. He wanted to get the world’s attention and he succeeded. His subject reflected a lot about Gemini, i.e. making certain

information accessible to a larger public. Snowden has natal Mars, Rahu, and Sun in early Gemini in Mars-ruled *Mrigashira nakshatra* (repeating the theme of the chase), with Mars-Rahu reflecting both his deception prior to handing over his trove of documents and the heatedness with which these matters were all coming to a head in early June 2013. Rahu amplifies and destabilizes the traditional energy of the planet it contacts. With Mars in an air or mental sign, Rahu amplifies the warrior energy of Mars expressed here through the intellect or a technical informational subject. For him it was computer engineering and networking. Snowden became increasingly disillusioned with the NSA mass surveillance programs and considered taking action as early as 2007. He delayed it, inspired by Obama’s campaign promises to curtail the spy program and maintain the most transparent administration in history. But Obama abandoned numerous campaign promises and in fact greatly expanded the NSA surveillance program. This hardened Snowden’s resolve to dig deeper and expose the wrongdoing as he saw it, or as one journalist describes it: “wrongdoing masked as patriotism.” (James Bamford, investigative journalist, author of several books on the NSA, and consultant to NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake.)

President Obama also has natal Mars widely conjoined Rahu in Leo (2nd house in my preferred sunrise/Cancer Ascendant chart). After six years in office, his personal intelligence and rhetorical skills have not yet been matched by his actions in many areas – another manifestation of deception. Also, publicly he has more often catered to the Neocons (who previously promoted and planned the invasion of Iraq), while privately using his own more nuanced brand of diplomacy. Regarding whistleblowers specifically, during his 2008 campaign

he praised them as “part of a healthy democracy [who] must be protected from reprisal.” But Obama has prosecuted more whistleblowers than all other US presidents combined. So we see how this Mars-Rahu combination keeps reappearing in surprising ways, confounding our expectations, as befits the unpredictable and unconventional energy of Rahu and Ketu, two halves of the serpent.

Meanwhile, we should understand that Jupiter has the capacity to facilitate growth in whatever zodiacal area it is passing through for on average one year, more so in certain signs and elements. It was especially effective with T Saturn also in an air sign (Libra) during the entire period T Jupiter was in Gemini (June 2013-June 2014), enabling the two major timer planets to work more in tandem. Snowden wanted a public debate, and indeed during this time the topic of massive intelligence-gathering became a central, if not explosive topic, along with both praise and vilification of Snowden. Clearly an enormous boon for those involved in marketing and surveillance, metadata collection is also potentially threatening for personal privacy and communications that are no longer safeguarded. Personal information can be used indiscriminately to target and criminalize innocent citizens. Between nations, it can create enormous distrust.

Another important outcome of mass surveillance is that privileged and confidential exchanges between lawyers and clients, doctors and patients, priests and confessants are no longer sacrosanct. Furthermore, journalists and whistleblowers remain largely unprotected, rendering them unable to protect their sources and properly serve the public. People in the West are relatively less bothered and more complacent about this state of affairs than Europeans, especially Germans and Russians, who have lived

through the tyrannies of the KGB, the Stasi, and under Hitler – the SS and Gestapo. What Snowden has confirmed is that without proper oversight and knowledge of the public, the new information technology has given the shared British (GCHQ) and American (NSA) intelligence-gathering capacities of metadata that are light years beyond anything the KGB or the Nazi regimes had at their command. Calling the US a “pre-Fascist society,” and Germany a “post-Fascist society,” NSA whistleblowers William Binney and Thomas Drake comment about warrantless mass spying:

“I’ve been saying we’ve been on a very slippery slope towards a totalitarian state for a number of years. [Binney]... The problem is that Americans [unlike many Germans] are unaware this is happening.... We need to return to the principles of the Constitution. I’m not going to stand by and watch freedom and liberty disappear because national security has become the state religion consuming everything else, including the heart of what it means to be an American.” [Drake]

William Binney and Thomas Drake
quoted in the documentary film,
Before Snowden: Behind the Curtain, 2014.

The potential risks to any whistleblower have become enormous, including death, imprisonment, vilification and at the very least, years of harassment and/or criminal prosecution. He or she must have strong convictions to take action, much like the investigative journalist feels his or her duty as part of the Fourth Estate to report on events around the world, often in the process contradicting official narratives. Also, the whistleblower should have integrity. If not, they can be accused of taking action mainly for profit or inadvertently for profit. Some of these accusations have been leveled at Snowden. For instance, many book

and movie deals have been made with his close journalist colleagues, with Snowden often the central focus. Less than 2% of the NSA documents from Snowden have been revealed to the public from early June 2013 onward. And even when published they were vetted in advance by the US government at least 100 times. Some critics have asked whether any of these proceeds have been shared with Snowden and questioned why he would turn over all the documents to others without any further personal control. Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras are the chief recipients of the NSA documents from Snowden, and questions about conflict of interest have been raised since they formed a publishing partnership (*The Intercept*) with eBay founder Pierre Omidyar in late 2013, funded by Omidyar initially with \$250 million. As owner of eBay and parent company of PayPal, Omidyar is close partners with the US government and NSA, and hostile to whistleblowers in the past.

The surprise is that as custodians of the documents from Snowden, Greenwald and Poitras are in partnership with a corporation with close ties to the NSA. But from June 2013, Omidyar is said to have been radicalized by Snowden’s revelations, and determined to support high level investigative journalism to hold corporations and governments accountable. *The Intercept*, part of Omidyar’s First Look Media, was launched on Feb. 10, 2014. At that time, T Mars and Rahu were in early Libra, repeating the Mars-Rahu combination from Snowden’s chart (his being in Gemini), this time receiving a benefic aspect from T Jupiter in Gemini, with waxing Moon also in Gemini. T Sun in Capricorn is surrounded by classic benefic planets, Venus and Mercury Retrograde, called a *Shubha kartari yoga* and considered protective and strengthening. Co-founded by editors Glenn Greenwald,

Laura Poitras and Jeremy Scahill, here is their mission statement for *The Intercept*:

“Our short-term mission is to provide a platform to report on the documents previously provided by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. Although we are still building our infrastructure and larger vision, we are launching now because we believe we have a vital obligation to this ongoing and evolving story, to these documents, and to the public. Our NSA coverage will be comprehensive, innovative and multi-faceted... Our long-term mission is to produce fearless, adversarial journalism across a wide range of issues. The editorial independence of our journalists will be guaranteed.”

A Mars-Rahu combination also occurs (this one in Taurus) in the chart of the US Dept. of Defense, established by President Harry Truman on July 26, 1947, 12:15 pm EDT, Washington, D.C. Prior to administrative restructuring and the establishment of the National Security Agency on Nov. 4, 1952, the US Dept. of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of staff had authority over the cryptological community. The Dept. of Defense chart has numerous excellent financial *yogas* (planetary combinations), as you might expect of the largest military establishment in the world by far, still outstripping all other nations combined. Mars and Rahu are in the 9th house of this chart, confirming the special role of intelligence in the American military, the potential for manipulating or bypassing national and international laws, and the ongoing expansion of the US military, now called the “military/industrial/surveillance complex.” Virgo is the Ascendant of this chart with Mercury and Venus in Gemini in the 10th house of highest status.

It may seem odd to realize that

prior to July 1947 there was no US Dept. of Defense.

But in 1940-1941 three **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunctions occurred in fiery Aries, ruled by warrior planet Mars. Major planetary harbingers of the Atomic Age, these conjunctions were followed 40 years later by three **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunctions in Virgo, ruled by Mercury, master of communications. To have two sets of triple **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunctions within the same century is relatively rare. It shows high intensity and acceleration in this case combining military motivation and technological inventions. The Atomic Age evolved out of the **Fire to Earth** Mutation period (1901-1961) and into the larger **Earth** period (1921-2199), when **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunctions occur predominantly in sidereal **Earth** signs. With focus on material security, technology thrives as never before, but is increasingly used for military purposes and promise of greater security for all.

PART 2: Youngest & Most Iconic NSA Whistleblower

Birth Data and Background

Edward Snowden was born June 21, 1983, 4:42 am EDT, Elizabeth City, North Carolina. (Class AA data) Using *Lahiri ayanamsha*, his Ascendant is 18 Taurus 37. He grew up in a Maryland suburb, where his parents and extended family worked in various ways for the government, including his older sister. It seemed a natural development that Edward too would gravitate to work in some way for the government.

In the short time since he became known as a NSA whistleblower in June 2013, the terms “Pre-Snowden” and “Post-Snowden” have been used

commonly. His own life could also be defined as “Pre-9/11” and “Post 9/11,” similar to that of many young Americans. From 1999 to 2001 Snowden’s family life was also disrupted by the dissolution of his parents’ marriage. In Feb. 2001 his mother filed for divorce and it was finalized three months later. (By 2003 his father remarried and moved to Pennsylvania.) In 2001 Edward Snowden was a young and patriotic 18-year old who wanted to serve his country after the traumatic events of 9/11. Aiming to join the Special Forces in the war in Iraq, he enlisted in the US Army and was admitted May 7, 2004. But he broke both legs in an infantry training accident, probably in late Aug. 2004, and was discharged from the US Army on Sept. 28, 2004.

This was followed by a series of jobs quickly evolving to high-level intelligence work but starting in security and training him further in computer engineering and networking, a subject that had ignited him since childhood and more seriously from age 16 – when he left high school after 10th grade. A 9-month bout of mononucleosis kept him out of school most of that school year. Rather than repeat the 10th grade he chose to drop out and complete his education in other ways, taking computer courses at a local community college, working for a friend with a startup tech company, and later taking the GED exams for high school equivalency. A big reader from childhood, especially of Greek mythology, he scored 145 on two separate IQ tests in his teen years. His high intelligence, his relatively more independent education and strong urge towards self-education combined to make him more thoughtful and independent. Apparently most at ease with his father’s Republican, libertarian politics, he also claims some distaste for politics in general. As a whistleblower he chose to remove his personal politics altogether from the equation. Some of his more

Rashi D1 General				Navamsha D9 Dharma/Spouse			
		Me16°41' As18°37'	Ma1°0' Ra1°9' Su5°48'	Mo28°10'	Ke10°26'		Me0°15' As17°36'
			Ve21°4'				
	Edward Snowden Tue. 6/21/1983 4:42:00 Elizabeth City, NC			Ve9°39'			
Ke1°9'	Jp9°31'	Mo19°47' Sa4°11'			Su22°14' Sa7°39'	Ra10°26' Ma9°2'	Jp25°44'

provincial viewpoints were expanded through work and residence abroad, on and off from 2007. Residence abroad is among the 7th or 12th house settings. The 20-year **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunction occurred at 28 Aries 52 in the 7th house from his Libra Moon and 12th house from his Taurus Ascendant, potentially impacting the next 20 years: May 28, 2000 to Dec. 21, 2020.

The Saturn Factors

In late Sept. 1999, soon after he dropped out of high school, Snowden entered his 19-year Saturn *Dasha*. For a person with a Taurus Ascendant chart Saturn is an excellent planet, a *Raja yogakaraka* (king-maker planet), as it rules over Houses 9 and 10, a trinal and angular house, considered powerful and auspicious houses. Therefore Saturn can bring decisive changes and improvements to the life, depending on the placement of Saturn. Even so, Saturn is the planet of *Karma* and always a taskmaster. With exalted Saturn in Libra in the 6th house, his entry into technical and military work is logical. This chapter of his life

centers on 6th house matters, including employment, health and legal concerns, theft, open enemies, conflicts, wounds and accidents. Saturn is well situated and considered a protective force in the 6th house, a tough classical malefic that eagerly faces challenges – not flinching to deal with conflicts and controversies. The movement of transiting Saturn through the zodiac is especially important during the 19-year Saturn *Dasha*, when Saturn is also *Dasha* lord. Saturn is the elder, and brings greater responsibilities and pressures, demanding greater maturity during its *Dasha* and/or transits, all relative to the houses and planets it aspects.

Snowden's natal Saturn in Libra conjoins his natal Moon, and from Libra Saturn aspects his Ascendant lord Venus in Cancer. This gives him an air of authority, even from a young age, and one with likely substance. This comes in part from Venus in the 10th house from *Dasha* lord and also from Moon, the latter called *Amala yoga*. *Amala* is Sanskrit for "spotless." This *yoga* brings lasting fame and reputation, spotless character and

prosperity. A *Parivartana yoga* (mutual exchange) between Moon and Venus strengthens the whole configuration, while Saturn's involvement implies a more technical profession. Saturn is strong in Libra, its sign of exaltation, as well as in the 6th house. The Moon-Saturn placement and the timing of both his 19-year Saturn *Dasha* and Saturn transits to his chart describe a person likely to mature earlier in life or at the very least face big responsibilities then, including in this case emotional ruptures such as the parents' divorce. His 19-year Saturn *Dasha* starts Sept. 30, 1999, but this process truly starts with T Saturn in Aries (April 18, 1998 to June 7, 2000), impacting five natal planets, including his Sun and Moon. The Saturn effect accelerates when Saturn *Dasha* begins in fall 1999 and with T Saturn on his Taurus Ascendant. Saturn passes through Aries, Taurus and Gemini April 18, 1998 to May 27, 2005.

With T Saturn in Taurus (June 7, 2000 to July 24, 2002; Jan. 9 to Apr. 7, 2003), Snowden's family life was shattered by the parents' divorce and 9/11 motivated him to enter military



service. T Saturn in the 8th house from Moon (or Ascendant) can bring losses and/or separations, as in this case. Just prior to this, he was in the last sub-period of the 16-year Jupiter *Dasha*: May 6, 1997 to Sept. 30, 1999). This sub-period can cause dangers or troubles in domestic affairs if Rahu is in the 8th or 12th house from *Dasha* lord Jupiter and conjoining classical malefic planets. Both of these factors are present here. Natal Rahu closely contacts Mars and Sun, two planets symbolizing physical strength and stamina, and destabilized and/or exaggerated by Rahu's influence, an effect that is doubled by transiting Rahu-Ketu in Cancer-Capricorn Oct. 17, 1998 to Sept. 2, 2000, affecting his Ascendant lord Venus. A solar eclipse at 24 Cancer 30 occurred close to his Venus on Aug. 11, 1999. Snowden's high school career was short-circuited at that time by mononucleosis. Another key factor was the deterioration of his parents' marriage from 1999 or earlier, culminating in divorce in spring 2001.

T Saturn's return to the sign of Libra carried particular importance during Saturn *Dasha*. Further, Saturn's transits to the 12th, 1st and 2nd houses from the Moon comprise the pivotal years of *Sade Sati*, meaning literally "7 ½." This takes an average of 7 ½ years, and Snowden was also born in *Sade Sati*. With natal Moon in Libra, the *Sade Sati* involves T Saturn in Virgo, Libra and Scorpio.

SADE SATI: T Saturn in Virgo, Libra & Scorpio: Sept. 10, 2009 to Oct. 27, 2017.

- 1. T Saturn in Virgo:** Sept. 10, 2009 to Nov. 16, 2011; May 16, 2012 to Aug. 4, 2012. (Saturn aspects 4 planets: Mars, Rahu & Sun in Gemini, also Jupiter in Scorpio.)
- 2. T Saturn in Libra:** Nov. 16, 2011 to May 16, 2012; Aug. 4, 2012 to Nov. 2, 2014. (Saturn returns to natal position, contacting or aspecting 4 planets: Saturn & Moon in Libra, Ketu in Sagittarius and Venus in Cancer.)
- 3. T Saturn in Scorpio:** Nov. 2, 2014 to Jan. 27, 2017; June 22, 2017 to Oct. 27, 2017. (Saturn contacts or aspects 2 planets and the Ascendant: Jupiter in Scorpio, Mercury & Ascendant in Taurus.)

Some sort of pressure (probably in a 6th house setting, such as the workplace) would be likely to start from Sept. 2009, while the middle portion of *Sade Sati* promises to be the most intense due to contacts to both natal Moon and Ascendant lord Venus, activating both the *Parivartana* and *Amala yogas*. T Saturn in Libra coincided with his greater sense of urgency to collect a wide range of NSA documents and expose them publicly, while dealing with the likely radical consequences to his personal life for taking such actions. Meanwhile his natal Mars-Rahu-Sun in Gemini is the combination giving him the potential to be deceptive and to be involved in any of the themes defined by Mars-Rahu: political plots, scandals, or intrigues. He told no one of his intentions until Dec. 1, 2012, when he first contacted journalist Glenn Greenwald by email. But Greenwald was busy and put off responding more fully for many weeks, being unskilled with the use of encryption techniques Snowden was requesting.

Then in Jan. 2013, Snowden first contacted journalist Laura Poitras through encrypted email messages. Poitras brought Greenwald into the exchange as of April 18, 2013 when they met in New York City. And on June 1st they boarded a plane to Hong Kong.

Youngest & Most Iconic NSA Whistleblower

From Snowden's numerous interviews from June 2013 onward, including in the Laura Poitras documentary film about him – *Citizenfour* (Oct. 2014) – his strongest motivation for exposing the NSA mass surveillance appears to be his outrage at not only the secret and excessive nature of the data collection – being both illegal and unconstitutional, but also the lack of oversight. Over 5 million Americans have security clearance, enabling them to access extremely sensitive information on mostly unsuspecting and law-abiding private citizens or public officials, any of whom could be framed without their knowledge.

Natal Moon in Libra amplified by its exchange with Ascendant lord Venus in Cancer gives a sense of idealism and a certain vision of harmonious living. The shock to his idealized vision came when he perceived that this was the end of privacy and the ruin of the Internet by mass surveillance. Born in June 1983, Snowden was the first generation to grow up with the Internet, in his case from the age of 8. The World Wide Web was invented Dec. 25, 1990. (See Part 1 of this article on the triple **Jupiter -Saturn** oppositions in Gemini-Sagittarius: 1989-1990.) He was only 18 when a mostly un surveilled Internet still existed, or as he says: "before we were watched" – when the Internet was a "free and unrestrained" global exchange between individuals without the monitoring of governments and corporations. He says: "I remember what the Internet

was like before it was being watched, and there's never been anything in the history of man that's like it." (from the Laura Poitras documentary film, *Citizenfour*, 2014.) The aesthetic idealism of Moon and Venus combined with the intellectual and technological heat of Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini portrays someone who acts on his principles and may steal something in the process – in this case to save a great invention in any way he can, and in his view keep it from being destroyed by mass surveillance. For such a dangerous undertaking he will need protection. We will discuss shortly the various ways in which the planets help out.

As we now know, Sept. 11, 2001 was also when the Security State quickly became a reality, expanding into cyberspace and beyond. The 12-year Jupiter cycle from 9/11 would be likely to bring some serious consequences that would hit the mark in various ways. Other similar and strong revelations about NSA surveillance had preceded Snowden's, and by older NSA analysts with more years of experience. A series of *New York Times* articles on US government surveillance programs appeared in Dec. 2005, earning Pulitzer Prizes for journalists James Risen and Eric Lichtblau. This was followed in Jan. 2006 by Risen's book *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*. These reports and revelations prior to Snowden's deserved the same attention as his, but lacked the power of timing from a Jupiter or Saturn return from 9/11. This timing, together with the influence of Snowden's astrological birth chart and his personal timing enabled his revelations to have more sway and to bring more international attention to the issues he sought to expose. Snowden's professional positions and computer tech skills gave him access to a far wider range of documents, especially from 2012, enabling him to

unmask the long denied NSA spying programs and offer definitive proof. Then in 2013 he went directly to some top investigative journalists whom he admired and whose special expertise was national surveillance.

The US government has charged Snowden with espionage. Even so, he has garnered widespread support around the world for what he has revealed about warrantless mass surveillance. By early Dec. 2014, even the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe weighed in with a 120-page report saying that the mass surveillance exposed by Snowden is "not justified by the fight against terrorism" and that "suspicionless mass retention of communications data is fundamentally contrary to the rule of law ... and ineffective." Previous NSA analysts-turned-whistleblowers have agreed, citing the example of how critical intelligence gathered in the months prior to 9/11 was systematically ignored by decision-makers at various high levels of government.¹

Considering his message and his mission, Snowden's unintended destination contains some ironies. Russia is not an open civil society as it has evolved for the last several decades, and is even more constrained under Putin. Snowden is critical of the lack of press freedom in Russia, among other issues, but is probably safer there than many places. He is not employed by a Russian organization, but is financially secure from his substantial savings, along with remuneration from numerous awards and speaking fees. His relocation chart for Moscow is arresting, with Mercury/Mars/Rahu midpoint at the MC (top of the sky) at Moscow. Mercury with Mars is intense or impassioned communications, and Rahu amplifies whatever planets it touches. From the modern city of Moscow Snowden has been able to continue to communicate with the world electronically. For Vladimir

Putin, harboring Snowden is no doubt a political advantage and a diplomatic coup, providing yet another source of contention with the US.

Physical Health and Well-Being

To assess physical health we look at three planets: Ascendant lord (Venus here), Sun and Mars. Venus in the 3rd house in Cancer shows a major focus on the nervous and communication systems. The mutual exchange (*Parivartana yoga*) between Venus in Cancer (House 3) and Moon in Libra (House 6) brings in the controversy and complexity that 6th house contacts add to these matters. Any contacts between the *Dusthana* houses (6, 8, and 12) and the Ascendant lord can cause health problems, and in this case the vulnerable areas are the nervous system and the arms and legs. Natal Sun and Mars are very close to Rahu, especially Mars (within 9/60ths of one degree) and Mars is combust the Sun (i.e. so close it cannot be seen with the naked eye). As the two hottest planets, Sun and Mars together heat up the physical body and Rahu added to this combination can bring various hidden ailments to the surface, among them epilepsy, accidents or injuries, especially during the *Dasha* or *Bhukti* (sub-period) of Sun, Mars or Rahu. He contracted mononucleosis in 1998-1999 during Jupiter-Rahu *Dasha*; and in 2012, probably during his Saturn-Mars *Dasha* (April 2, 2012 to May 12, 2013), Snowden suffered some epileptic seizures for the first time and requested medical leave in May 2013 to undergo treatment. (His mother has epilepsy.)

A combust planet can lose power by being overwhelmed by the Sun's heat and light. Since a combust planet cannot be seen, its qualities often assume a larger importance in the life. Paradoxically, it is also harder to judge the extent of its capacities, often

resulting in overcompensation. With Mars, an already hot planet, there is an overheating; and in Gemini the intellectual abilities can be galvanized considerably or on overdrive. In this case it resulted in a computer-genius-turned-whistleblower. Mars here is ranked by *Shadbala* (a Vedic rating for planetary strengths) even higher than the Sun, in part due to being in a *nakshatra* that Mars owns: *Mrigashira nakshatra*.

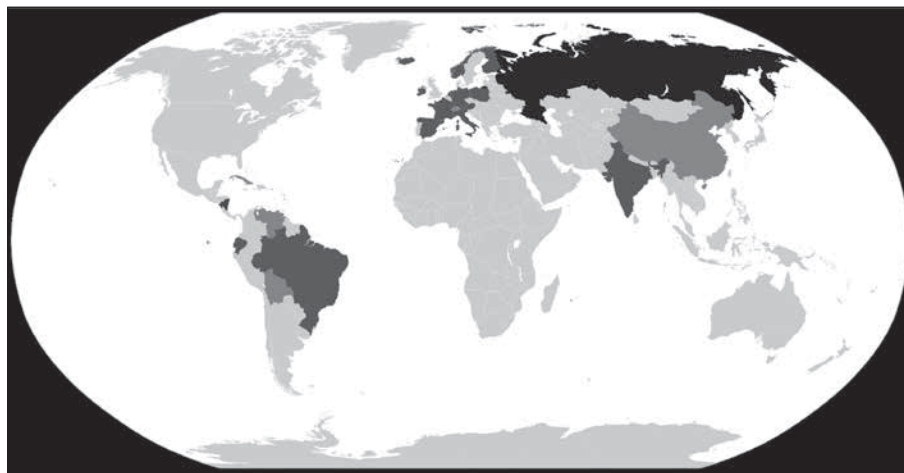
“Of the several planets who are in conjunction with or aspected by Rahu, the strongest one gives the results indicated by it.”

Bhavartha Ratnakara
Chapter 12, Stanza 24.

Rahu’s influence is foreign or iconoclastic, and Snowden’s chosen form of physical exercise throughout his 20s was kung fu and the martial arts, at which he became very competent. In 2007 his colleagues in Geneva, Switzerland noted his mastery in the martial arts. Now living in Russia, Snowden remains slim and says he eats relatively little – mostly a vegetarian diet, with no alcoholic beverages. He says his computer-related work gives him less time for physical exercise.

While living and working in Switzerland in 2007, Snowden loved to drive fast cars, again reflecting his Mars-Rahu-Sun in Gemini. With so much focus in the chart on either Gemini or the 3rd house, we expect to encounter large themes about travel, writing, and information, primarily its accessibility and/or sale. With two hot planets (Sun and Mars) amplified by Rahu, this not only speeds up his mind and nervous system, but gives him an interest in speed. That can and did make him prone to accidents (both legs broken in a military training in 2004), and to exhaustion or over-stress to the nervous system, impacting the physical body (mononucleosis in 1998-1999; epileptic seizures in 2012).

His 9-month bout of



mononucleosis occurred from late 1998 through spring 1999, during his Jupiter-Rahu *Dasha*. Missing most of 10th grade, he dropped out of high school by June 1999. The 4th house of education and home is ruled by the Sun, whose heat is further amplified by its close contact to Mars and Rahu. Their mutual interdependence indicates that a major or minor period of Mars or Rahu affects the Sun and vice-versa. Jupiter-Rahu *Dasha* brought disruptions on several levels: physical health, education, and family life. His parents’ marriage was disintegrating at this same time and was thought to be a factor in both his illness and his aborted high school education.

In spring 2013, during his Saturn-Rahu *Dasha* (May 12, 2013 to March 18, 2016) Snowden took a job with Booz Allen, a giant NSA contractor. This gave him access to what he considers some of his most important documents among the largest cache of NSA documents ever stolen. His Saturn-Rahu *Dasha* coincided with T Rahu in Libra: Jan. 15, 2013 to July 15, 2014. In Jan. 2013 Snowden was able to reach Laura Poitras, the first among several journalists to be of great importance to him and the first to trust his authenticity. T Saturn previously re-entered Libra Aug. 2012 to Nov. 2, 2014.

If the *Dasha-Bhukti* planets are also conjoined in the heavens by

transit, the significance of the sub-period is magnified. T Rahu conjoined T Saturn in Libra four months prior to the start of Snowden’s Saturn-Rahu *Dasha*, confirming what would be the most pivotal part of his Saturn-Rahu *Dasha*: May 12, 2013 to July 15, 2014. Eight days after it began, on May 20, 2013 he flew to Hong Kong. On June 3rd he met for the first time with journalists who published the first story on his NSA documents two days later in *The UK Guardian*. Snowden chose to identify himself to the world, and the first article to do so in *The UK Guardian* was on June 11, 2013. Two days earlier a 12 ½ minute video of him made by Poitras was posted on-line. By the end of Saturn-Rahu period in mid-July 2014 more of his NSA documents were shared with the world via Greenwald and Poitras, and Snowden’s 3-year residency permit in Russia (up through Aug. 2017) was nearly set. Also in July 2014 his girlfriend Lindsay Mills joined him in Russia.

The chart (*see opposite page*) is set for Tues. June 11, 2013, the day Edward Snowden’s identity was officially revealed in an article in *The Guardian* (UK). The Moon is exactly rising at 6:59:10, London, UK, which works well as a logical (though speculative) time when many readers would be learning the news. Moreover, a Moon Ascendant chart (*Chandra Lagna*) is considered a very important

Rashi D1 General			Navamsha D9 Dharma/Spouse		
	Ma13°37'	Jp2°33' As24°33' Ve15°54' Mo24°33' Me20°37'		Me5°37'	Ma2°36' As10°57' Mo11°2'
	Ke21°0'	Su26°26'		Ra9°5'	
	Snowden identity revealed Tue. 6/11/2013 6:59:10 London, UK			Ve23°14'	
				Sa12°9'	Su27°56'
	Ra21°0'			Jp22°58'	
	Sa11°21'			Ke9°5'	

[This chart and the author's comments on it were included specifically for the French translation of this article by Patricia Depasse, March 2015]:

chart in Vedic astrology, when the Moon is exactly rising on the Eastern horizon. Though a short 12 ½ min. video about Snowden's identity was released June 9, 2013, most of the world did not learn about it until two days later with this article. A case could be made for setting the chart in Hong Kong, where Snowden was then located along with journalists from *The Guardian*; but London, UK also has merit as headquarters for *The Guardian*. On Sunday June 9, 2013, 7 am GMT the planets were distributed in the same houses, with T Moon just entering Gemini. But an announcement on a Tuesday gives Mars more power.

Mars is planetary lord of the day Tuesday and is situated in the 12th house of hidden places or foreign residence. As owner of the 6th house of enemies or competitors (the NSA and/or other purveyors of mass surveillance, in this case), Mars is greatly protected by being the 6th lord in the 12th house, a *Viparita Raja yoga* (*Harsha*). The Gemini Ascendant represents both Snowden and/or news of his identity. Either way, he has strength as Mercury is Ascendant lord and located in the Ascendant, *Digbala*, i.e. Mercury's best possible angle of the

chart. With Mercury in its own sign it is further elevated in a *Bhadra Mahapurusha yoga*. In addition, ALL the classical benefic planets (4 of them) are in the Gemini Ascendant. There is also a *Shoola yoga*: All planets except Rahu and Ketu are in 3 houses of the chart. *Shoola* means "thorn" and is associated with struggle and with a "thorn in one's side." This *yoga* gives a very intense life, with certain major upheavals and opportunities. Journalist and filmmaker Laura Poitras also has a *Shoola yoga* in her birth chart. In Hong Kong with Snowden, Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, she was Snowden's first actual contact as a journalist in early Jan. 2013. She is covered in my March 2015 article on the award-winning documentary film *Citizenfour* and its two key collaborators, Laura Poitras and Glenn Greenwald.²

Mental & emotional health and well-being

Moon and Mercury tell us about the mind and emotions. First we will discuss the Moon. Even though he loves speed in the form of computer games, fast cars, and martial arts, at

least in his 20s, Snowden's natal Moon with Saturn protects him from acting too quickly on a number of fronts. Saturn is *Shani* in Sanskrit, or *Shanishchara*, slow-moving one. He waited six years before coming forward publicly as whistleblower on NSA mass surveillance. Prior to that, he tried to raise some of these issues through internal channels within his jobs but quickly learned that any criticism of the modus operandi was neither acceptable nor acted upon. There were also the potent precedents of NSA whistleblowers William Binney, J. Kirk Wiebe, Thomas Drake, and Edward Loomis, Binney and Drake in particular, who suffered ongoing harassment and criminal investigation. (See Part 1 of this article.)

Natal Moon in *Swati nakshatra* bestows the quality of independence, especially an independent mind. The person is an explorer, a wanderer, and a messenger dedicated to spreading information, ruled as it is by Vayu, the Vedic deity presiding over the wind. Its *shakti* or special power is "to scatter like the wind." This can bring a lack of focus, but with Saturn's influence on the Moon that flaw is greatly reduced. Individuals with this Moon placement

are often dedicated to making information accessible to a larger public, especially, in this case, where there are four planets along the Gemini-Sagittarius axis: the personal and global nervous system.

We notice too that from Moon in Libra (as an important sub-Ascendant), Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini are in the 9th house, raising their intellectual status somewhat, though without reducing the heat generated from two fiery planets magnified by Rahu, and giving him a large capacity to receive and decipher information. His independence provided by Moon in *Swati nakshatra* is also shown in his ease in educating himself throughout his childhood, reading widely, and from 10th grade onward, gaining much of his computer expertise through self-directed study and very few academic credentials.

Situated in the 6th house from Taurus Ascendant, natal Moon is not comfortable, either in this house or with Saturn, requiring a sense of duty and hard work. Moon-Saturn contacts can show a depressed mind, especially in the 8th or 12th houses. But in the 6th house the disturbance is due to conflicts in life the person observes and cannot just observe without having concerns or strong opinions, including crises of conscience. Note that whistleblowing is a political act legally protected in democracies such the US and U.K., and in many ways serves as “the regulator of last resort” (Annie Machon, UK). Even so it is fraught with peril, as is the world when regulators no longer regulate.

With the Moon in a *nakshatra* owned by Rahu (*Swati*), it is more intimately connected with Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini. All these factors contribute both to the

superior intellect and to the possibility of boldness combined with political intrigue, scandal, or theft. There is a tendency to want to learn more and to be master over some field of knowledge, which in this case will be technical due to the influence of Mars and Rahu in Gemini and Saturn in Libra, again and again bringing us back to the five planets in air signs: Gemini and Libra, signs associated with mental activity and commerce.

The Moon is in a *Chara* sign (Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn), making it action-oriented, as is Venus, the Ascendant lord, and the planet interacting with the Moon in a *Parivartana yoga* (mutual exchange of signs). With the Venus-Moon interchange, and Saturn’s influence on both Moon and Venus, Snowden is bound to be very serious and dutiful. Always a hard worker and ascetic by nature, he is a teetotaler and follows a mostly vegetarian diet.

Strong intelligence and intellect

As noted earlier, Snowden’s IQ was measured at 145 in two separate tests in his teens, showing very high intelligence. Mercury rules over the rational intelligence and the intellect, and is extremely well placed here in the Ascendant, its best angle of the chart, called *Digbala*. In the birth chart Mercury is in Taurus (sign of great good

friend Venus), and is even stronger in the *Navamsha* Ascendant in Gemini, Mercury’s own sign. The latter creates a *Bhadra yoga*, one of the five *Maha Purusha yogas* (Great soul *yogas*), in this case giving Mercury additional strength and power and bringing out its finer qualities. These factors confirm the intellectual prowess shown by Snowden by his early teen years. For some years the lack of a high school diploma was an embarrassment to him, but his superior intelligence was so evident in his computer work that credentials became less and less important to his career advancement or his ability to earn a good income. Considered “a computer genius” by his co-workers and employers, he often solved their most challenging computer problems. Classic texts would equate such abilities with those of a “logician.” Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini (2nd house here) is also an excellent combination for a mathematician or technician, further elevated by Mercury’s strong placement as ruler of Gemini.

“If Sun and Mars are in the 2nd [house] the person becomes a logician.... If Mars is in the 2nd, the person becomes learned in logic.”

Bhavartha Ratnakara

Chapter 2, Education Stanzas 4, 9.

Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini can also be unpredictable. As recently as 2009, Snowden’s remarks on social

media indicate he was appalled about someone sharing government secrets. (See References: Harding, Luke... *salon.com*.) But he later reversed himself when he witnessed the full extent to which the NSA surveillance together with the British surveillance (GCHQ) were out of control, even by modest



standards. Thus, Mars together with Rahu and Sun works on several levels, accounting for genius but also for intellectual overdrive.

Taurus Ascendant with Mercury in Taurus is not in a hurry, and will only strike when all the evidence is in. With Jupiter's influence on Mercury, he always has a lot to say. And if Mercury is the planet of language, the 2nd house is speech, in which Mercury also plays a part here both as House lord and natural significator of speech. Some linguists say that the mind is visible through language. If so, then Snowden's mind is revealed as being clear, calm, well organized, and with virtuosity for reviewing large amounts of information and data and quickly recognizing what is most important within a vast framework. Longtime family friends describe him as "always articulate, even as a child."

Planetary protection

It is very beneficial and protective to have a *Shubha Kartari yoga*. We know that 2nd house matters – including speech, personal income, *kutumba* (happiness from the family of origin), or anything related to occupants of the 2nd house, Mars, Rahu, and Sun in Gemini, including physical health – will turn out well somehow. This is due to the *Shubha Kartari yoga* surrounding the 2nd house. This occurs when classical benefic planets straddle the house in question, serving as a benign protective force over the affairs of the 2nd house as well as those over which the three occupant planets rule. Mercury is on one side in House 1 (Ascendant), Venus on the other side in House 3.

When planets other than Rahu or Ketu straddle houses either side of the Sun, there is an *Ubhayachari yoga*. This *yoga* brings an ongoing network of friends, colleagues and/or family who can be supportive through life.

Many people have stepped up to help or support Edward Snowden since he came on to the world stage in early June 2013, offsetting the severity of the actions of the US government, which immediately charged him with espionage and revoked his passport. Many countries also fell in line behind the United States. Snowden instantly became a hunted fugitive, though eventually reaching a safe haven with some assistance, part of it from Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

Further protection is provided by three classic benefic planets situated in the angles of the *Navamsha* chart. Moon is aspected by Jupiter and angular to it (a *Gaja kesari yoga*), another positive influence. If unafflicted, as in this case, the person can enjoy many relations and have a good reputation that lasts even after death. *Navamsha* Moon in Pisces (the sign of sacrifice and surrender) in the 10th house improves his public visibility over time, while Mercury and Jupiter in mutual angles of the *Navamsha* chart bestow both ongoing protection and optimism.

The main negative for Snowden's physical safety is Ascendant lord Venus (birth chart) situated in the *Navamsha* 8th house, though at least in the sign of planetary friend Saturn and aspected by Saturn. *Navamsha* Venus also forms a *Viparita Raja yoga*, giving personal and financial protection, especially the latter. This *yoga* occurs when lords of Houses 6, 8, and/or 12 are located in one of these houses (*Dusthana* houses). One of these *yogas* occurs in the birth chart, 8th lord Saturn in the 6th house aspecting its own house, and two *Viparita Raja yogas* occur in the *Navamsha* chart. Since residing in Russia, he is in demand to speak on a range of subjects within his expertise, all of this either in Moscow or via cyberspace for his personal safety. In general, if 8th house energies are manifested on other levels they can be less dangerous. He

deals with research and secret information (8th house) and lives with his longtime girlfriend (Venus), who gave up a lot to join him in Russia (*Navamsha* 12th lord in the 8th house).

Further, Snowden has the *Amala yoga*, as mentioned, when a classical benefic planet is in the 10th house from either Ascendant or Moon. *Amala* again means "spotless," and gives a spotless character along with lasting fame, reputation, and prosperity. This occurs from the Moon in the birth chart and from the Ascendant in the *Navamsha* chart.

One of the typical attacks on a whistleblower is that of mental or emotional instability, an old Soviet technique now replicated in the West, aiming to make a whistleblower appear less credible. Otherwise, he or she might embarrass or threaten the powers-that-be. But Snowden's steadiness and level-headedness is shown by a strong Ascendant lord and classic benefic planets in *kendras* (angles) of the chart: Mercury in the Ascendant and Jupiter in the 7th house. Ascendant lord Venus is placed in the 3rd house in Cancer, in a *Parivartana Yoga* (mutual exchange of signs) with Moon in Libra. His Saturn is well placed, and together with the Moon gives seriousness of purpose. The most difficult house here (2nd house) is modified by the *Shubha Kartari yoga*, protecting his physical health and personal finances.

Prediction

For the whistleblower to survive and prosper in the long term he or she needs mental and emotional stability, along with a good intellect, integrity, persistence, protection, and beneficial timing for when he or she takes action, and in the subsequent years. We have covered many of these points in Snowden's chart, which shows several noteworthy components for mental and emotional stability, high intellect,

and persistence. The Ascendant of his birth chart is in Taurus, a fixed earth sign, giving him consistency if the Ascendant lord and other key planets are in auspicious configurations. With Mercury strong in both these charts and even stronger in the *Navamsha* chart, this confirms that Snowden's intelligence will be extraordinary. Mercury is also lord of the 5th house of the intellect for Taurus Ascendant, and serves as *Raja* and *Dhana yoga-karaka* (significator for higher status and financial gains, respectively). For emotional stability we have discussed the qualities of Moon in Libra in *Swati nakshatra*, in exchange with Venus in Cancer. His chosen path requires independence and boldness, but ideally combined with circumspection and caution, which we do see here.

Lastly, the timing has to be beneficial for the personal safety of the whistleblower. Snowden is currently in Saturn-Rahu *Dasha*, and remains in this sub-period through March 18, 2016. Rahu is a more turbulent and unpredictable influence for anyone, and we have discussed how Rahu rules over *Swati nakshatra*, where his natal Moon resides. Rahu is also the foreigner. He has been granted temporary residence in Russia through Aug. 1, 2017. This coincides closely with the end of his *Sade Sati* (Sept. 10, 2009 to Oct. 27, 2017, marking the end of a period with greater pressures and responsibilities as well as conflicts (6th house Moon). Then T Saturn exits Scorpio.

Fortunately also, his 17-year Mercury *Dasha* starts Sept. 30, 2018. But he has to be especially cautious during Saturn-Rahu period (May 12, 2013 to March 18, 2016). At least foreign residence is well indicated now: Natal Rahu is in the 9th house (of foreign travel) from *Dasha* lord Saturn, and in the *Navamsha* chart Rahu is in the 12th house (of foreign residence) from Saturn. Further, the **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunction for the 20-year

period 2000-2020 occurred in the 12th house from his Taurus Ascendant and in the 7th house from his natal Moon. This gives some likelihood of his living in a 7th or 12th house setting (outside the US) up to 2020, or at least up through the end of his Saturn *Dasha* Sept. 30, 2018. Snowden has said he would like to return to the US if and when it is feasible.

If the next *Maha Dasha* (major planetary period in the *Vimshottari* system) were not favorable, we would predict a less favorable outcome for Snowden. But fortunately Mercury is a great good friend to Ascendant lord Venus and is well positioned in both birth chart and *Navamsha* chart, the latter amplifying Mercury's strength, as mentioned earlier. Thus we can project that once Snowden reaches his Mercury *Dasha* on Sept. 30, 2018 he should be safely into a 17-year time range when his work and his personal communications (spoken or written) can truly flourish. His projects leading up to Mercury *Dasha* should add to his authority and deepen his perspectives. He may well be involved in the development of some important technologies that address the issues of mass surveillance. This timing bodes well for the foundation Snowden is currently working to fund – a new press freedom initiative intending to create tools that would allow secure communications for journalists. With the groundwork laid now, chances for real success of such a venture could come in his Mercury *Dasha*, from fall 2018.

In Oct. 2014 journalist and author James Risen said: “[Snowden] revealed... the dramatic expansion, in just a few short years, of the NSA's ability to shadow the online presence of Americans. And that was a real contribution.” (Ref.: *DemocracyNow!* Interview Oct. 14, 2014) Snowden has predicted that problems of mass surveillance will not be solved by politicians but more likely through

technology, and that high level cryptology can and will be developed to protect private citizens from being spied on by governments and/or corporations. Likewise, cryptology can protect nations and corporations from spying on each other, all of which happens now. So far he is proving correct regarding the non-action of politicians in curbing mass surveillance.

President Obama promised in Jan. 2014 to reform the NSA's mass domestic spying but said he was waiting for Congress to enact reform legislation. This was proposed but died in the Senate in Nov. 2014. Then in early Dec. 2014 US Congress passed the Intelligence Authorization Act, which funds intelligence agencies for the next fiscal year. Obama is expected to sign it. But unfortunately Section 309 of the bill allows for “the acquisition, retention, and dissemination” of US phone and Internet data. This continues to give unprecedented statutory authority allowing for the surveillance of private communications. Regardless, Snowden moves ahead with the aims of some of his initial stated goals in an encrypted message to Glenn Greenwald in late May 2013:

“I want to spark a worldwide debate about privacy, Internet freedom, and the dangers of state surveillance.... I'm not afraid of what will happen to me. I've accepted that my life will likely be over from doing this. I'm at peace with that. I know it's the right thing to do.”

Quoted in Glenn Greenwald's book
No Place to Hide, 2014, p. 4.

Editor's note: Edith Hathaway's two-part article on Snowden was written in fall 2014 and first appeared in *Astrologic magazine*, Nov. and Dec. 2014 issues. Some additional charts and text also appeared in the French translation by Patricia Depasse (Belgium) posted March 25, 2015.

Author's update March 2016 for the Spring 2016 NCGR Geocosmic Journal:

For his role as NSA whistleblower, Edward Snowden narrowly missed being voted *TIME* magazine's "PERSON OF THE YEAR for 2013." Many still argue that his actions had much more sway than the less controversial person who WAS voted in that year: Pope Francis. Snowden has remained in the news, both praised and vilified for the past several years since his identity (at age 29) and his revelations were first made public in early June 2013.

Then on June 3, 2015 the US Senate voted to curtail the NSA's surveillance capacities, in terms of mass collection and storage of US citizens' private phone calls. None of it would have happened without Snowden's proof that it WAS indeed happening, despite statements to the contrary by President Obama and NSA leaders up through spring 2013, including statements before Congress. Even if it was a minimal change in the scope of NSA surveillance, it was an historic first step to rein in some aspects of the NSA's mass surveillance. This does not change their ongoing dragnet of metadata from citizens around the world, i.e. 95% of the rest of the world. But Snowden remains cautiously optimistic. His Op-ed piece in the June 4, 2015 issue of *The New York Times* was titled: "Edward Snowden: The World Says No to Surveillance."³

Most of those in favor of the Senate vote thanked Snowden for his pivotal role in the process. Those opposed to changing or curtailing the NSA surveillance think that Snowden should be brought to trial in the US under the 1917 Espionage Act, though his legal advisors feel he could not get a fair trial in the US.

Meanwhile, from his exile in Russia Snowden continues to be a leading consultant and commentator

on matters of computer security and national and global surveillance. In 2015 and 2016 Apple Inc. refused to cooperate with 11 successive federal court orders they said unduly threatened computer and cell phone security. Then on Feb. 16, 2016 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) opened yet another case against Apple in a Federal District court. Known as *FBI v. Apple*, FBI demands that Apple Inc. unlock the encrypted iPhone of one of the perpetrators of the San Bernardino shootings (Dec. 2, 2015). As of mid-March 2016 Apple's CEO Tim Cook continues to fight back, with concerns this would dangerously impair iPhone security for all users. Cook was quoted Feb. 17, 2016 in *The Washington Post*: "We feel we must speak up in the face of what we see as an overreach by the U.S. government."

Calling *FBI v. Apple* "the most important tech case in a decade," Edward Snowden is also convinced the FBI already has the forensic capability to unlock the chip in the phone without Apple's software, though it would take them a lot longer to do so. Snowden speaks often via cyberspace on the urgency of dramatic global political and legal reform, citing abuses of power by small groups in power who want to use technology to control what technology now brings: access to information in society. Addressing journalists, hackers and whistleblowers at The Logan Symposium in Berlin, Germany March 12-13, 2016, Snowden spoke of the pressing need for citizens to "seize the means of communication" in order to protect basic freedoms, and

how it was more and more important for citizens to take control of information technologies in an era when "a private corporate sector [is] increasingly enmeshed with the security-state, represent[ing] a fundamental threat to functioning democracies, particularly a free press." Snowden and others with even greater experience in the U.S. national security apparatus argued that "if mass surveillance was simply about thwarting terrorism, its targets would not consistently be political dissidents... [among them] Martin Luther King, Jr."⁴

In a U.S. Presidential election year *FBI v. Apple* has become an even more heated issue, with Republicans typically siding with the federal government to do anything necessary "to fight terrorism" and Democrats typically siding with Apple in protecting civil rights. They see these rights as adversely impacted by government excesses, specifically those guaranteed under the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. Even so, it is still considered daring for any presidential candidate to indicate leniency towards Snowden, at least not until after the Nov. 2016 election.

But in the larger picture, whistleblowers and investigative journalists have not fared well in recent decades, increasingly so since the first **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunction in sidereal earth



(Virgo) in 1921, and with greater acceleration since the **Jupiter-Saturn** conjunctions resumed in sidereal earth (Capricorn) in Feb. 1961. This has only increased under President Obama, a Democratic president who might be expected to uphold more progressive principles, especially regarding civil liberties. But increasingly, limitless surveillance is justified with the threat of terrorism. It also works as a tactic to increase national security and reduce civil liberties. This road is historically infamous, if we pay attention to historical precedence.

So perhaps our modern civilization chooses its icons according to its fears and prejudices as much as by its ideals. And any of this can be changed through “perception management,” a term coined by US President Reagan (1981-1989) to persuade American citizens that the Vietnam War was a good and noble war, with further reason to support other military interventions abroad. Likewise, US President Wilson (1913-1921) used the new Public Relations industry to “manufacture consent” and persuade Americans that the Great War was “necessary and noble.” His Committee on Public Information (CPI) was formed April 13, 1917, six days after the US entered World War I. One of CPI’s acolytes and later considered “the father of the PR industry,” Edward Bernays, wrote about it in his book *Propaganda*, 1928. If you know what Daniel Ellsberg did and what he risked when he published *The Pentagon Papers* in 1971, revealing government wrongdoing and its falsehoods perpetuated about the Vietnam War, you will have some understanding of why Ellsberg and the film about him inspired Edward Snowden. Or how, as George Orwell said: “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.”

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End Notes

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Edith Hathaway

is an international consultant in practice since 1980, author, teacher, and lecturer of Vedic astrology, and among the few contemporary astrologers trained and certified in systems of both East and West, including the NCGR-PAA Level IV Certification as Consulting Astrologer (1989). She was a Founding member of the American Council of Vedic Astrology, and since 1992 has served as a faculty and board member of both the American Council and American College of Vedic Astrology. Her articles and lectures are available at her website www.edithhathaway.com, along with testimonials and reviews of her most recent book, *In Search of Destiny: Biography, History & Culture As Told Through Vedic Astrology*, 2012.

