

Edward Snowden: I dare not contact my family

Pressure on loved ones from the FBI prevents whistle-blower from getting in touch

CIA whistle-blower Edward Snowden says he has not dared contact his family or his girlfriend since he revealed himself as the source behind the leak of US national secrets.

“I have not spoken to any of my family,” he said.

But, he added: “I am worried about the pressure they are feeling from the FBI.”

According to US media reports, two FBI agents were seen at the home of Snowden’s father in Lehigh County, New Jersey, on Monday, the day after Snowden revealed that he leaked secrets about National Security Agency surveillance to the media. The FBI has refused to comment on its investigations.

The family has not spoken to the media.

The father of Snowden’s girlfriend described Snowden as a shy man with convictions, but said he was “still shocked” by the news about him. Jonathan Mills described 29-year-old Snowden as “very nice. Shy, and reserved”.

“He’s always had strong convictions of right and wrong, and it kind of makes sense. But still shocked,” Mills said.

His daughter, Lindsay, who has been dating Snowden for four or five years, was holding on amid the controversy, he said. He had texted his daughter, but did not know where she was.

Mills was speaking after it emerged that his 28-year-old daughter had blogged about the couple’s life in Hawaii and her uncertainty about the future without her “man of mystery”.

[IMAGE]

Lindsay Mills, a performance artist, wrote a day after Snowden revealed he was the source of the leaks: “I don’t know what will happen from here. I don’t know how to feel normal. My world has opened and closed all at once. Leaving me lost at sea without a compass ... At the moment all I can feel is alone.”

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Snowden left Hawaii for Hong Kong three weeks ago, telling his girlfriend he had to be away for a while, but being deliberately vague about the reason for his disappearance.

In her blog on Monday, hours after Snowden made his explosive revelation that he was the source of the leaks, she wrote: “Sometimes life doesn’t afford proper goodbyes.”

Her blog, subtitled “Adventures of a world-travelling, pole-dancing superhero”, offers intriguing insights into the couple’s life in Hawaii. It was taken down on Tuesday.

Mills’ blog and social media accounts reveal the couple visited Hong Kong once before, on holiday, and also lived in Japan.

She describes games of chess with Snowden, and discussions about brain functions, philosophy and current affairs. “Whenever E and I take time to attack our unruly yard, we end up having deep conversations,” she remarked. ◡

There are some hints in the blog that Mills shared Snowden's passion for civil liberties issues. In one of the most intriguing updates, in October last year, she posted a picture of a woman – presumably herself – wearing the V for Vendetta mask, symbolic of the Anonymous movement. It contains the caption: “All they want is our souls.”

It seems Mills had no idea of the real reason for her boyfriend's trip, but she seemed disturbed or at least aware something was up.

“Sick, exhausted, and carrying the weight of the world,” she posted on June 7, shortly after Snowden's leaks about the NSA's telecommunications and internet surveillance programmes were made public.

She added: “Speaking of time, I feel mine is less and less of mine own recently. Therefore, I may be invoking radio silence yet again. I'll keep you posted, or I won't. Superheroes need an air of mystery!” ☹

In her last message – posted three days later, on Monday – she said: “As I type this on my tear-streaked keyboard I'm reflecting on all the faces that have graced my path. The ones I laughed with. The ones I've held. The one I've grown to love the most. And the ones I never got to bid adieu.”

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