

In the post script, the author touches briefly on the sweeping changes in the Middle East at the centre of these changes is his claim that is due to political Islam and the dogmatic ideology rather than a complex set of reasons and that the solution starts with the self as in a spiritual awakening. Six years after 2011 I am certain he would have written it differently but it is always interesting for to read what scholars wrote and thought of 2011.

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## **Mark Hertsgaard: Bravehearts: Whistle-blowing in the Age of Snowden**

**New York: Skyhorse, 2016**

Edward Snowden is the world's most famous whistleblower. Working for a contractor for the US National Security Agency, he became aware of a massive US spying operation, including collecting information on electronic communications by US citizens. Snowden collected a vast quantity of information about the illicit spying and in 2013 leaked it to journalists. It became headline news around the world.

Snowden's saga has inspired numerous accounts, among them Mark Hertsgaard's book *Bravehearts*. Hertsgaard, a journalist, undertook numerous interviews with key figures concerning Snowden's disclosures. One of Hertsgaard's important stories is about Thomas Drake, like Snowden an NSA whistleblower. Drake followed the official procedures for reporting his concerns about computer security within the NSA and as a result was arrested and threatened with a lengthy prison sentence. Snowden learned from Drake's experience: reporting problems internally was probably not going to be effective.

Hertsgaard also tells, for the first time, the story of John Crane, who worked for the NSA's inspectorate-general, set up to handle internal disclosures. Crane, whom Hertsgaard calls "the third man," did what he

could on behalf of Drake and, as a result, came under extreme pressure himself.

The Drake and Crane stories are important counterpoints to the account of Snowden as hero. They are also heroes in their own way, but not as well known.

Another part of the story is the role of whistleblower supporters. In Drake's case, the key organisation was the Government Accountability Project or GAP, the most prominent whistleblower advocacy group in the US. Bravehearts provides an insightful account of GAP's operations, drawing especially on the experience of Tom Devine, GAP's central figure for many years.

GAP receives information about numerous whistleblower cases and selects a small number of these to pursue. After carefully checking the facts, GAP mounts legal actions backed by a media campaign. Without support groups like GAP, most whistleblowers would lack the capacity to make any difference at all.

Whistleblowing can be considered a form of resistance to authority, though its relationship with resistance studies is complicated. Most employees who report corruption, abuses or hazards to the public are loyal and conscientious. They do not set out to challenge authority, and many say they are just doing their job. They assume managers will investigate and, if anything is wrong, will address the problem. Many of them are shocked to discover, when they experience reprisals ranging from petty harassment to dismissal, that they are seen as the problem. Thus many employees who are called whistleblowers do not set out to resist authority. Instead, they have an unwarranted trust in the benevolence of bosses, senior management and outside appeal bodies. Their resistance is less often by intention than by speaking truths that turn out, often to their surprise, to be unwelcome.

Snowden is a prominent example of a more conscious and well-informed form of resistance. Snowden, unlike most whistleblowers, realised that using internal reporting channels was a recipe for failure. Instead, he aimed at getting his information and his message to wider audiences. Furthermore, Snowden took careful note of how the mass media dealt with disclosures and decided not to approach the mainstream

US media such as The New York Times. Instead, he approached Glenn Greenwald, who wrote for The Guardian.

Whistleblowers have much to learn from Snowden and much to learn from resistance studies. A key message is to check out what happened to others who spoke out and to check out avenues for getting the message to wider audiences.

Bravehearts is valuable for showing that, in relation to whistleblowing, resistance can occur in different ways. For every Snowden, there are many Thomas Drakes who suffer after following the rules for disclosures. There are probably many John Cranes too, inside supporters of whistleblowers. But few of the John Cranes of the world ever receive recognition. Hertsgaard has done a service in telling one of the stories of courage behind the scenes.

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