



Obama War on Journalism: Feds Raid Reporter, Seize Notes

What critics have described as the Obama administration's "war on journalism" appears to have been taken to another level in recent months with a federal SWAT raid on a reporter's home, which resulted in the seizure of her private notes and the likely unmasking of whistleblowers within government. Following revelations about [lawless spying on reporters](#) and even charges against a journalist of [being a "conspirator"](#) by the Justice Department, the explosive story about the raid unveiled last week is causing a fresh wave of outrage — and deep concern. A lawsuit is already in the pipeline to fight back against the latest attacks on rights guaranteed to everyone under the First and Fourth Amendments to the Constitution.



According to investigative reporter Audrey Hudson, an award-winning journalist who helped expose problems within the Department of Homeland Security in articles for the *Washington Times*, swarms of DHS agents and Maryland State Police officers descended on her home in a pre-dawn assault on August 6. Armed with full battle gear and a warrant authorizing a search for firearms (her husband was apparently convicted of "resisting arrest" almost three decades ago and so was supposedly not allowed to be near guns), the federal and state agents ended up seizing Hudson's private notes, too.

"They took my notes without my knowledge and without legal authority to do so," Hudson told the online Daily Caller, which first [reported on the raid](#). "The search warrant they presented said nothing about walking out of here with a single sheet of paper." The federal agents, however, walked out with stacks of papers, including records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and notes of her interviews with "a lot" of confidential sources trying to expose wrongdoing. "When they called and told me about it, I just about had a heart attack," she said. No charges have been filed so far.

The fact that the records were seized despite the search warrant not purporting to allow the seizure of the reporter's private files sent shockwaves through the media — especially the [alternative](#) and [conservative](#) press. The story made headlines in [Iranian](#) and [Russian](#) media, too, with reporters across the political spectrum and around the world expressing alarm about the raid. More than a few attorneys and analysts have interpreted the terrifying ordeal as an assault on the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of the press.

Among the most troubling aspects of the case, though, was the content of the seized documents: names of whistleblowers within the federal government who helped Hudson expose problems and lies at Homeland Security. "They tore my office apart more than any other room in my house," Hudson [told](#) the *Washington Times*, her former employer, adding that the papers contained names of DHS and



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Transportation Security Administration (TSA) whistleblowers who exposed serious issues with the Federal Air Marshal Service as well as official lies told to Congress.

“Essentially, the files that included the identities of numerous government whistleblowers were turned over to the same government agency and officials who they were exposing for wrongdoing,” Hudson continued. “Protecting confidential sources is a part of my honor and hits me at my ethical core.... To have someone steal my source information and know it could impact people’s careers, is disgusting, a massive overreach. This kind of conduct is intimidation clearly aimed at silencing a vigorous press.”

Spokesmen for the federal and state agencies involved in the controversial raid have refused to say much thus far. “Due to the ongoing criminal investigation and the potential for pending criminal charges at the state and/or federal level, the Maryland State Police will not discuss specific information about this investigation at this time,” state police spokesman Greg Shipley was quoted as saying. A spokesman for the Coast Guard, which was supposedly involved in the raid because Hudson’s husband works there, confirmed to the *Washington Times* that federal agents seized and reviewed properly acquired government documents to make sure Hudson was allowed to have them. How there could be any question about whether she could possess her own handwritten notes was not immediately clear.

Even more troubling, perhaps, is the fact that the Coast Guard investigator who seized Hudson’s documents, Miguel Bosch, used to work for the DHS air marshal service — the same bureaucracy Hudson publicly exposed in articles for the *Washington Times* for lying to Congress. “In particular, the files included notes that were used to expose how the Federal Air Marshal Service had lied to Congress about the number of airline flights they were actually protecting against another terrorist attack,” Hudson explained. Bosch has mostly refused to comment, other than saying “it’s still an open investigation” and that he needed to talk with government lawyers before saying more.

Lawyers for the *Washington Times*, meanwhile, are preparing a lawsuit, the paper [reported](#). “While we appreciate law enforcement’s right to investigate legitimate concerns, there is no reason for agents to use an unrelated gun case to seize the First Amendment protected materials of a reporter,” *Times* Editor John Solomon was quoted as saying. “This violates the very premise of a free press, and it raises additional concerns when one of the seizing agencies was a frequent target of the reporter’s work.... Homeland’s conduct in seizing privileged reporter’s notes and Freedom of Information Act documents raises serious Fourth Amendment issues, and our lawyers are preparing an appropriate legal response.”

A private attorney contacted by Hudson and her husband about the raid on their home also said it represented a potential violation of the journalist’s constitutionally protected rights. “Obviously, the warrant is about a gun, nothing about reporter’s notes,” he was quoted as saying. “It would be a blatant constitutional violation to take that stuff if the search warrant didn’t specifically say so.... This is a situation where they picked very specifically through her stuff and took documents that the Coast Guard, or the Department of Homeland Security, would be very interested in.”

The latest attack on a journalist comes amid a vicious crackdown on journalism and whistleblowers that even reliably pro-Obama media outlets — *Slate*, *Salon*, *The Daily Beast (Newsweek)*, the *Huffington Post*, and many more — have described as a “war” on journalism. One of the chief concerns expressed so far is the [fiendish effort to stop any and all whistleblowing](#), which has included ruthless and out-of-control prosecutions of whistleblowers for alleged crimes such as “espionage,” lawless threats against honest officials who speak out, and much more.

Another highly alarming attack on reporters that drew global condemnation was Attorney General Eric



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Holder [signing off on seizing records from reporters at the Associated Press](#). Almost half of those surveyed for a poll [said the seizure of journalists' phone records justified impeaching Obama](#). Separately, in an affidavit charging a State Department employee with releasing information, the Justice Department [even referred to a Fox News journalist as a "conspirator,"](#) setting him up for possible prosecution merely for doing his job. Whistleblower Edward Snowden, meanwhile, [said the NSA was spying on journalists who criticize authorities](#). Of course, all of it has had [a deep chilling effect on journalism](#), according to free-press advocates.

Among those who decided to fight back against the Obama administration's lawless attacks on journalism was investigative reporter Michael Hastings. "The Obama administration has clearly declared war on the press. It has declared war on investigative journalists — our sources," he said during a TV interview earlier this year. "I think the only recourse to this kind of behavior by the government is to say back to the government, 'we declare war on you.'" Shortly after those statements, [Hastings was killed in a highly suspicious car crash](#) that countless experts, including former officials, have suggested could have been an assassination. The government war on journalism, however, appears to be alive and well.

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