

# Twelve Years Before Edward Snowden, High-Level NSA Whistleblower Warned Congress About Mass Surveillance Against Americans

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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CBS News Baltimore recently interviewed the original NSA whistleblower: William Binney. (See video below.)

Binney – the high-level NSA executive who *created* the agency’s mass surveillance program for digital information\* – says that he warned Congress more than 10 years ago that the program was being abused to spy on Americans.

CBS [notes](#):

Binney ... became concerned that the government was spying on average Americans [soon after 9/11].

“The data that was being taken in was all about United States citizens,” he said. “They’re destroying our democracy is what they’re doing.”

Controversy about the tracking program went public earlier this year when another Maryland man, Edward Snowden, leaked classified documents. However, WJZ has learned Congress may have had a warning about this years ago. That’s when Binney says he first raised concerns his program had been turned against Americans.

“The government can’t admit a mistake,” Binney said. “They have to cover up everything.”

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“I think they’re violating the foundation of this country. The thing that makes this country strong are the rights and freedoms that we have in the Constitution,” he said.

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Binney says he thinks Edward Snowden did a great public service by forcing NSA surveillance into the spotlight.

Washington’s Blog reached out to Binney to see if CBS accurately quoted him, asking:

Is CBS right that you tried to warn Congress 10 years ago?

Binney responded:

Yes, first to Diane Roark (House senior staff assigned to monitor NSA) in late 2001, then, to a House Intel Committee member. Diane also talked to Porter Goss [then-chair of the House Intelligence Committee] and Nancy Pelosi [ranking member on the Intelligence Committee at the time] about it in the same time frame. This to me was the obvious reason Nancy said (when she was speaker) that impeaching George W was off the table. Cause she was part of it from the beginning.

\*Binney's system protected Americans' privacy by [automatically encrypting information, and it could only be decrypted upon a court order](#). But the Agency turned this on its head, and left everything decrypted and available for NSA spies - and [private contractors](#) - to view.

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