

NSA'S SPYING: MEDICAL RECORDS, RESUMÉS ... AND [ABOUT] OBAMA

The WaPo has been working for months to understand a chunk of incidentally collected data Edward Snowden took from the NSA. They discovered the bulk of people being spied on – who were for the most part incidentally collected – were innocent people living their everyday lives.

No government oversight body, including the Justice Department, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, intelligence committees in Congress or the president's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, has delved into a comparably large sample of what the NSA actually collects – not only from its targets but from people who may cross a target's path.

Among the latter are medical records sent from one family member to another, résumés from job hunters and academic transcripts of schoolchildren. In one photo, a young girl in religious dress beams at a camera outside a mosque.

Scores of pictures show infants and toddlers in bathtubs, on swings, sprawled on their backs and kissed by their mothers. In some photos, men show off their physiques. In others, women model lingerie, leaning suggestively into a webcam or striking risque poses in shorts and bikini tops.

~~Most alarming (but something they bury in the story) is that President Obama was spied on both before and after he was inaugurated.~~

[Correction: That's not right. What they spied on were conversations about Obama, and they kept them but masked them in foolish fashion.]

Some of them border on the absurd, using titles that could apply to only one man. A “minimized U.S. president-elect” begins to appear in the files in early 2009, and references to the current “minimized U.S. president” appear 1,227 times in the following four years.

WaPo then tries to apply the ratio of target to incidental they discovered to the number of targets to which the government admitted.

In a June 26 “transparency report,” the Office of the Director of National Intelligence disclosed that [89,138 people were targets](#) of last year’s collection under FISA Section 702. At the 9-to-1 ratio of incidental collection in Snowden’s sample, the office’s figure would correspond to nearly 900,000 accounts, targeted or not, under surveillance.

And all of this is available for back door search, for both “intelligence” and criminal purposes.