**TIMELINE: Edward Snowden's Life As We Know It from ABCNEWS**

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Edward Snowden, a former contractor for the National Security Agency, slipped out of the U.S. in late May, traveling to Hong Kong with computers full of secret documents in order to expose what he called "horrifying" U.S. government surveillance capabilities. He began in the shadows, leaking top secret files to [**The Guardian**](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/nsa-phone-records-verizon-court-order) and [**The Washington Post**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/prism-collection-documents/), but just a few days after the first stories broke, Snowden stepped into the media spotlight himself,[**confessing to being the papers' source**](http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/edward-snowden-source-stunning-nsa-leaks-reveals/story?id=19359212#.UbodEOftWSo) and telling viewers a little bit about himself. Since then, little by little, the details of Snowden's life – the parts he left out -- have emerged, providing a picture of a smart kid who dropped out of high school only to embark on his own patchwork college education on his way to working for one of the most shadowy espionage agencies in the world. Here's what we know so far:

**June 21, 1983:**Edward Snowden is born. He would spend some of his childhood in Elisabeth City, N.C. and then move with his family to Maryland. (Source: Army records, [**The Guardian**](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/09/edward-snowden-nsa-whistleblower-surveillance?guni=Network%20front:network-front%20aux-1%20mini-bento:Bento%20box%208%20col:Position1:sublinks))

**1991-1998:** Snowden attends schools in the Anne Arundel County Public School System in Maryland from the elementary level to high school, where he dropped out his sophomore year. He'll later say he earned his GED. (Source: Anne Arundel County Public Schools, The Guardian)

**1999-2005:** Snowden takes a variety of classes from Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland. He does not take any cyber security or computer science classes, however, and he never earns a certificate or degree. (Source: Anne Arundel Community College)

**2002:** Snowden attends Catonsville Community College, according to his Army records, but a spokesperson for the school told ABC News that the name for that school had been changed in 1998 and there was "no record" of any student by that name. (Source: Army records, Community College of Baltimore County Catonsville)

**February-May 2002:** A student with the name Ed Snowden takes a Windows systems engineering course at a for-profit entity called Advanced Career Technologies. The school offered career training in Columbia, Maryland, under the name "Computer Career Institute at Johns Hopkins University." Hopkins ended its relationship with the company in 2009 and it shut down in 2012. A source told ABC News Snowden had said he attended classes at Johns Hopkins on the campus in Columbia, Maryland. A spokeswoman for Johns Hopkins University said they have "no record" of Edward Snowden taking classes there. (Source: ABC News sources, Maryland Higher Education Commission)

**May 7, 2004:** Snowden enlists in the U.S. Army Reserve's 18-X program, designed to fast track recruits who want to join the U.S. Special Forces, popularly known as the Green Berets. Later Snowden will say he broke both his legs in training and was discharged. Army records show his discharge in September of that year. (Source: Army records, The Guardian)

**Post-Military:** Without providing dates, Snowden told The Guardian that following his brief flirtation with the military, he got a job working as a security guard for a covert NSA facility at the University of Maryland. From there, he joined the CIA and worked in IT security. (Source: The Guardian)

**2006:**Writing online under the username TheTrueHOOHA, Snowden allegedly posts on a forum that despite not having a high school diploma, "employers fight" over him because of his computer talent and networking skills. In another post, he lists the countries in which he would like to live in order: Japan, Thailand, Korea, China and Australia. (Source: Arstechnica.com)

**March 2007- February 2009:** Snowden serves undercover with the CIA in Geneva, Switzerland "maintaining computer network security." He claims it was here, after allegedly learning of a[**dangerous CIA recruitment gambit**](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/06/switzerland-questions-u-s-over-cia-drunk-driving-gambit/), that he first becomes disillusioned with U.S. intelligence. (Source: The Guardian, Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs)

**2009:**Snowden says he left the CIA for the private sector, getting a job working as a contractor for the NSA in Japan. (Source: The Guardian)

**Summer 2009:** A man named Edward Snowden attends one term in the Asia Program at the University of Maryland University College. A source who shared information with ABC News on the condition of anonymity said the program was in Tokyo and the man who attended is the same one sought by U.S. officials. (Source: ABC News sources, University of Maryland University College)

**February 4, 2010:** TheTrueHOOHA writes online that society "really seems to have developed an unquestioning obedience towards spooky types… Did we get to where we are today via slippery slope that was entirely within our control to stop, or was it [a] relatively instantaneous sea change that sneaked in undetected because of pervasive government surveillance?" (Source: Arstechnica.com)

**2011:**Snowden works towards, but never receives, a Master's Degree at the University of Liverpool by taking online classes, including taking a class in computer security. (Source: University of Liverpool)

**January 2013:** Snowden contacts documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras anonymously offering to share information on the intelligence community. The next month, he contacts The Guardian columnist Glenn Greenwald and around the same time, Washington Post reporter Barton Gellman. Greenwald and Gellman have given conflicting reports on the order and content of the communications. (Source: [**Salon.com**](http://www.salon.com/2013/06/10/qa_with_laura_poitras_the_woman_behind_the_nsa_scoops/), The Guardian, The Washington Post, [**POLITICO.com**](http://www.politico.com/story/2013/06/edward-snowden-nsa-leaker-glenn-greenwald-barton-gellman-92505.html))

**March 2013:** Living in Hawaii, Snowden gets a new job with the technology consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton working at a secure NSA facility. (Source: Booz Allen Hamilton, The Guardian)

**May 20, 2013:**Telling his employers he needs some time off and giving a vague excuse to his girlfriend, Snowden skips town and flies to Hong Kong. (Source: The Guardian)

**June 6, 2013:** The Guardian publishes its first story based on information allegedly obtained from Snowden. The story reveals a top secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court document compelling Verizon to hand over phone records for millions of its customers in the U.S. A flurry of news reports from The Guardian and The Washington Post on other secret programs follow.

**June 9, 2013:** Snowden steps from the shadows in Hong Kong in a taped interview with The Guardian, saying he leaked information on the NSA's "horrifying" surveillance programs because he doesn't "want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded." Snowden then disappears again in Hong Kong. (Source: The Guardian)

**June 12, 2013:** Snowden reappears, but only in print, giving an interview to the South China Morning Post in which he claims he has evidence that the U.S. has been hacking Chinese networks for years. Snowden also says he has no plans to leave Hong Kong and, as to extradition, he is placing his fate in the hands of the Hong Kong government and people. (Source:[South China Morning Post](http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1260306/edward-snowden-classified-us-data-shows-hk-hacking-targets))

ABC News' Randy Kreider contributed to this report.