

INSIDE THE SPY FACTORY

1 x 60 **HD**



International

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CONTACT

Tom Koch, Director
WGBH International
One Guest Street
Boston, Ma 02135 USA

TEL 617-300-3893
FAX 617-779-7900

tom_koch@wgbh.org
wgbhinternational.org

On the southbound lane of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, earthen berms and thick forest trees hide a labyrinth of barbed wire fences, motion detectors, hydraulic anti-truck devices and thick cement barriers belonging to a strange and invisible city unlike any other on earth. Made up of more than sixty office buildings, warehouses, factories, laboratories and living quarters, this is the headquarters of ultra-secret National Security Agency.

Today, the NSA is the largest intelligence agency in the world—three times the size of the CIA—and far more secret. Its mission is to eavesdrop on the world—from cell phones in Europe to pay phones in Afghanistan to faxes between Moscow and Cuba to e-mail messages from Pakistan to Baghdad. But since 9/11, it has also turned its giant ear inward, listening-in without warrant on thousands of American citizens – many of whom are on the government’s secret watch list, now more than half-a-million names long.

For the first time on television, NOVA explores the NSA’s hidden world of high-tech, 21st Century eavesdropping. Guided by James Bamford, the bestselling author of three books on the agency, including his most recent, *The Shadow Factory*, the program examines the NSA from its tragic failures during the lead up to the 9/11 attacks to its secret rooms installed in the nation’s telecom networks.

Following the attacks on 9/11, the NSA began turning its massive eavesdropping capability inward on American citizens without obtaining warrants, a project that required the NSA to establish secret agreements with the telecoms to install covert tapping rooms in key communications hubs.

To show how NSA conducts its eavesdropping inside the US, NOVA traces an email sent from Kuala Lumpur to Boston and shows how it traverses the ocean floor over a complex network of fiber optic cables, arrives on a beach in California and then travels to AT&T’s regional switching facility in San Francisco. There, the fiber optic cables are covertly duplicated, with one copy of everything—including the email from Malaysia—going to NSA’s secret room and the other transmitted to its proper destination. The film describes how the NSA’s secret rooms are now located in many AT&T facilities around the country.

Inside the Spy Factory shows that—despite the claims of the Bush administration that only Americans in contact with al-Qaeda members are monitored—there are few rules. NOVA interviews several former NSA “voice interceptors” who knew about the targeting of innocent Americans from a highly secret listening post in Georgia. The facility, the NSA’s principal listening post for the Middle East and North Africa, will soon become the largest eavesdropping station in the world.

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CREDITS

Senior Executive Producer: Paula S. Apsell
Producers: C. Scott Willis, James Bamford
Writer: James Bamford
Director: C. Scott Willis

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