

## Tribune Editorial: Lawsuit should get to the truth about NSA spying in Utah

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This Monday, June 10, 2013 photo shows a ground level view of Utah's NSA Data Center in Bluffdale, Utah. The nation's new billion

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"Every breath you take / And every move you make / Every bond you break, every step you take / I'll be watching you."

— The Police, "Every Breath You Take"

The government was illegally watching, listening to and monitoring residents of Salt Lake during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. At least that's what a lawsuit filed against the National Security Agency (NSA) is alleging.

Last week a federal district court [allowed the case to go forward](#) after a declaration by former NSA official Thomas A. Drake refuted agency assurances that it was never involved in broad surveillance. Of this assertion, Drake stated, "As a result of personal knowledge I gained as a long-time contractor and then senior executive (1989-2008) of the NSA, I know the statements made by [the NSA] are false or, if not literally false, substantially misleading."

Drake continued, "The new mantra to intercepting intelligence was 'just get it' regardless of the law."

Shameful.

It is becoming clear that such a [lack of candor from our government officials](#) has become a feature of our post-9/11 surveillance state, and not a bug. Perhaps the infringements of our freedoms necessitate an end to the entire post-9/11 project. But with the billion dollar [Utah Data Center](#) sitting right-smack in Salt Lake County, it's doubtful we could successfully kill the beast that is the surveillance industry.

Perhaps we, too, like Jonathan Swift, need "[A Modest Proposal](#)." It would be a shame to let the texts, emails, phone records and Google searches of Utah's most popular citizens go to waste. We paid for these records, let's make them public.

Just think, no one would need private investigators to catch husbands texting old girlfriends. You could easily recover your mom's old meatloaf recipe she emailed years ago.

Think of the money newspapers and community watchdogs would save in GRAMA / FOIA requests. And how would life be different if police, prosecutors, legislators and other government officials knew their communications would be discoverable?

Deception begets deception, poison begets poison. The Fourth Amendment means what it says, and the government should not have power to spy on Americans without a warrant. In this current case, U.S. Department of Justice officials have until March to disclose relevant documents. Let's hope they can do so honestly.