In the case of Edward Snowden, where many classified documents from the US government were released regarding surveillance practices, there are many ethical boundaries which were crossed. The first thing that was obviously unethical to do was break the non-disclosure agreement that he signed with the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. These agreements ensure the United States ability to protect sensitive national security information and are quite typical for contractors dealing with sensitive information within the United States government. Three NDA’s were signed by Edward Snowden and violated in the whistleblowing process.

One of the main ethical questions that come to mind in the Snowden case is were the unethical means in which the data was revealed to the public justified? Something to definitely consider is that information that is classified away from the public is definitely done for a reason: The United States government does not believe the public is supposed to know about it. That being said, it may have been both ethical and unethical for Snowden to release these files because while the process may have not been ethical, the information regarding the illegal data gathering the government was also unethical. However, one may argue that while it may have been ethical for Snowden to release these files, the ramifications could be that it could damage ongoing investigations or foreign operations.