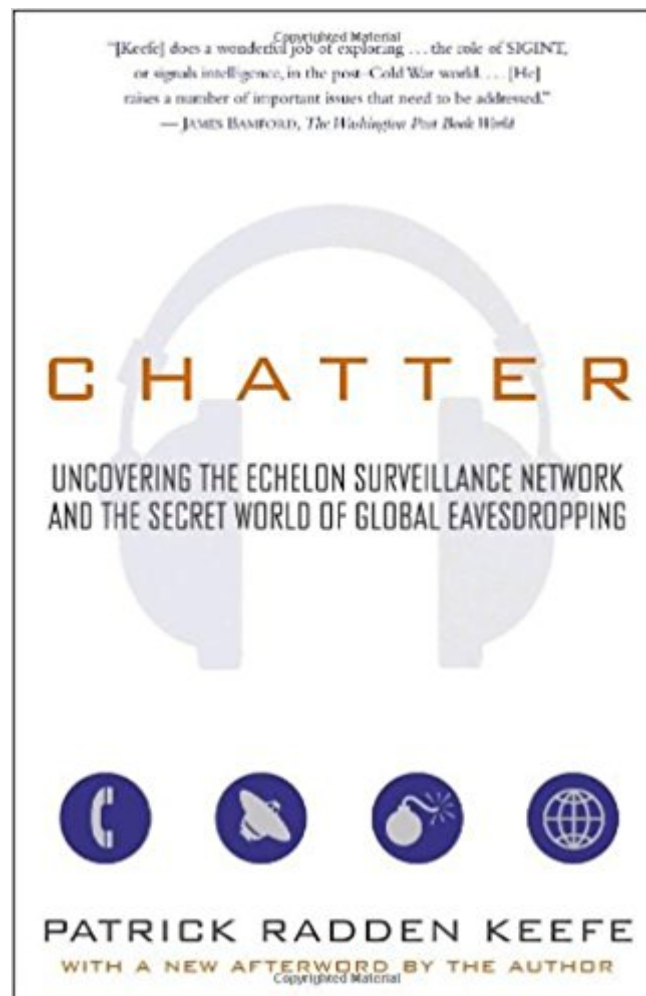




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# Chatter: Uncovering The Echelon Surveillance Network And The Secret World Of Global Eavesdropping



## Synopsis

How does our government eavesdrop? Whom do they eavesdrop on? And is the interception of communication an effective means of predicting and preventing future attacks? These are some of the questions at the heart of Patrick Radden Keefe's brilliant new book, *Chatter*. In the late 1990s, when Keefe was a graduate student in England, he heard stories about an eavesdropping network led by the United States that spanned the planet. The system, known as Echelon, allowed America and its allies to intercept the private phone calls and e-mails of civilians and governments around the world. Taking the mystery of Echelon as his point of departure, Keefe explores the nature and context of communications interception, drawing together fascinating strands of history, fresh investigative reporting, and riveting, eye-opening anecdotes. The result is a bold and distinctive book, part detective story, part travel-writing, part essay on paranoia and secrecy in a digital age. *Chatter* starts out at Menwith Hill, a secret eavesdropping station covered in mysterious, gargantuan golf balls, in England's Yorkshire moors. From there, the narrative moves quickly to another American spy station hidden in the Australian outback; from the intelligence bureaucracy in Washington to the European Parliament in Brussels; from an abandoned National Security Agency base in the mountains of North Carolina to the remote Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. As Keefe chases down the truth of contemporary surveillance by intelligence agencies, he unearths reams of little-known information and introduces us to a rogue's gallery of unforgettable characters. We meet a former British eavesdropper who now listens in on the United States Air Force for sport; an intelligence translator who risked prison to reveal an American operation to spy on the United Nations Security Council; a former member of the Senate committee on intelligence who says that oversight is so bad, a lot of senators only sit on the committee for the travel. Provocative, often funny, and alarming without being alarmist, *Chatter* is a journey through a bizarre and shadowy world with vast implications for our security as well as our privacy. It is also the debut of a major new voice in nonfiction. From the Hardcover edition.

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## Customer Reviews

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PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE was a Marshall Scholar and a 2003 fellow at the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. A third-year student at Yale Law School, he has written for The New York Review of Books, The Yale Journal of International Law, Legal Affairs, and Slate. This is his first book. From the Hardcover edition.

This is a book certainly worth reading for anybody interested in the subject of signals intelligence in general and the Echelon program and the National Security Agency (NSA) in particular. Writer Keefe does a brilliant job of describing Echelon -- a worldwide listening program jointly conducted by U.S., Canada, U.K., Australia and New Zealand. But beyond that -- possibly because what is publicly known about Echelon would not fill a very big book -- Keefe gets into the philosophical, moral and practical aspects of signals intelligence and its pursuit under NSA. Unlike some other authors who write about U.S. intelligence operations, Keefe does not seem to have an anti-intelligence agency agenda. He is objective to a fault, but presents all sides of the issue. Which is not to say that he doesn't have opinions -- he does, but he seems to base those opinions on evaluating all perspectives first. And in addition, he does a very thorough job, relying not only on secondary sources, but spending a heroic amount of time speaking to diplomats, intelligence professionals, scholars and anybody else who has something to say about the issue. He quotes a former head of the NSA who said that America will have to decide where to draw the line between liberty and intelligence. It's the key question of the book and it doesn't get definitively answered. This is a very well-done book about an extremely important subject which affects the lives of all people -- even if you don't know what "sigint" means.

Excellent expose of the conspiratorial history of global espionage being carried out by the US and UK on their very own citizens. Anyone having doubt about the veracity and character of whistle blower Edward Snowden need only to look at the 2006 publication date of Chatter and reread with the knowledge that everything in this book is accurate. Whistle blower Edward Snowden revealed nothing that was not already known in wide circles. He simply had the guts to get the attention of the world to shake loose the shroud of conspiracy theory to reveal these as truths.

Keefe has done an admirable job and shows amazing insights, especially for a younger writer without the chance to gain extensive experience. His tone is evenhanded yet condemnatory when necessary. His warnings on our lack of interest in preserving what little privacy rights we still have should not go unheeded. And those who broke the law should be held accountable, all the way to

the top.

Great informative book. Definitely worth the read.

I would like to review this book but the print is so small I will not attempt to read it. I have good vision with my reading glasses but this is ridiculous. If you really want to read it, buy a magnifying glass first. Disappointed!!!!

A very interesting and well-researched book. I have to wonder -- How did he manage to find all this? Like most people, I had only a vague awareness of government eavesdropping activities, and thought it was probably just one of those things the CIA did. Turns out, there is much more to it than that. Just before reading Chatter, I had read Blind Man's Bluff about submarines during the cold war. The cable tapping operations described in Blind Man's Bluff were also mentioned in Chatter.

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