



# Daniel Everette Hale

- 33 years old at the time of sentencing
- Sentenced to 45 months in federal prison
- Defense Contractor who held TS/SCI clearance and access to national defense information
- Disclosed classified information to journalists
- Possessed malicious software applications to transfer data anonymously



## CDSE

Center for Development  
of Security Excellence

## CASE STUDY

### Unauthorized Disclosure

#### WHAT HAPPENED

Daniel Everette Hale, 31, of Nashville, Tennessee, served as an enlisted airman in the U.S. Air Force from July 2009 to July 2013. After receiving language and intelligence training, Hale was assigned to work at the National Security Agency (NSA) and deployed to Afghanistan as an intelligence analyst.

After leaving the Air Force in July 2013, Hale was employed by a defense contractor and assigned to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), where he worked as a political geography analyst between December 2013 and August 2014. In connection with his active-duty service and work for the NSA, and during his time at National Geospatial Agency (NGA), Hale held a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) security clearance and was entrusted with access to classified national defense information.

Hale admitted that he took classified documents he had no right to retain from his work at the NGA and sent them to a reporter while purposefully disregarding the law. Hale's cell phone contact list included contact information for the reporter, and he possessed two thumb drives. One contained a page marked "SECRET" from a classified document he printed and attempted to delete from the thumb drive. The other contained Tor software and the Tails operating system, to anonymously "leak" documents.

Hale became an anti-war activist and released documents because of his opposition to war and the use of drone warfare. After the release of the Drone Wars Papers, he spoke at events and gave multiple interviews.

After providing the documents to journalists, they were published, which led investigators to investigate the source of the documents, ultimately leading them to Hale as the source.

#### INDICATORS

- Access Attributes: Hale had access to TS/SCI national defense information.
- Security and Compliance Issues: Hale's released TS/SCI documents in violation of classified non-disclosure agreements. His actions were security violations and were not in compliance with training requirements; Hale misused his access privileges.
- Technical Activity: Had Tor Software and the Tails operating system to be used to provide anonymity during transfer of documents.

## IMPACT

- On March 31, 2021, Hale pleaded guilty to retention and transmission of national defense information and was sentenced to 45 months in prison.
- Hale's disclosure of classified documents resulted in the documents being published and available for public view, to include by adversaries, and their disclosure could cause exceptionally grave damage to the United States of America.
- "Those who are entrusted with classified information have a duty to safeguard that information in order to protect our Nation's security," said Raj Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. "As an analyst for the Intelligence Community, Daniel Hale knowingly took highly classified documents and disclosed them without authorization, thereby violating his solemn obligations to our country. We are firmly committed to seeking equal justice under the law and holding accountable those who betray their oath to safeguard national security information."

## ADDITIONAL INFO

- Unauthorized disclosure, often referred to as a "leak," is the communication or physical transfer of classified or controlled unclassified information to an unauthorized recipient.
- Whistleblowing is the reporting of waste, fraud, abuse, corruption, or dangers to public health and safety to someone who is in the position to rectify the wrongdoing. Organizations have whistleblowing policies which provide information on how one can report the correct way as opposed to releasing the information to the media or an unauthorized source. Whistleblowing reports are reviewed, investigated, and if applicable, punishable.
- National defense information is information about programs for military and energy production or construction, military or critical infrastructure assistance to any foreign nation, homeland security, stockpiling, space, and any directly related activity.
- Tor Software and Tails operating system software are used to provide anonymity to a user, to include avoiding detection while conducting malicious activities.

Resources for further exploration:

- **Potential Risk Indicators: Insider Threat Job Aid**  
<https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/INTJ0181-insider-threat-indicators-job-aid.pdf?ver= HedcDtQk9sSEZItNMLQzA%3d%3d>
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- **Whistleblower Protection and Policies FAQ Job Aid**  
<https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/whistleblower-protections.pdf?ver=Rx1hjuwKubBwypU4CL9R5A%3d%3d>
- **Unauthorized Disclosure of Classified Information and Controlled Unclassified Information ELearning Course IF 130.16**  
<https://www.cdse.edu/Training/eLearning/IF130/>

## IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

Contact the appropriate POC to report any observed potential risk indicators:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Supervisor/Security Officer/ITP

Agency/Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Official/ITP Manager