

THE DNC-CENTRIC FOCUS OF THE HPSCI INVESTIGATION

Through the duration of the various Russia investigations, skeptics always harp on two questions pertaining to the Russian election year hacks – why the Democrats never turned over the DNC “server,” singular, to the FBI, allegedly leaving the FBI to rely on CrowdStrike’s work, and whether several sets of files released via Guccifer 2.0 showed signs of non-Russian origin. That is, skeptics look exclusively at the DNC, not the totality of the known Russian targeting.

Looking at the list of witnesses the House Intelligence Committee called (which the committee will release in the coming weeks) shows one reason why: that the most public and propagandist of all the Russia investigations focused on the DNC to the detriment of other known Democratic targets.

Here’s what the list of the HPSCI interviews looks like arranged by date (HPSCI will not be releasing the bolded interviews).

1. **[Comey, Jim (May 2 and 4, 2017): Intel]**
2. **[Rogers, Mike (May 4, 2017): Intel]**
3. **[Brennan, John (May 23, 2017): Intel]**
4. Coats, Dan (June 22, 2017): Intel
5. Farkas, Evelyn (June 26, 2017): Ukraine/RU DOD
6. Podesta, John (June 27, 2017): Clinton Chair
7. Caputo, Michael (July 14,

- 2017): RU tied Trump
8. Clapper, James (July 17, 2017): Intel
9. Kushner, Jared (July 25, 2017): June 9 etc
10. Carlin, John (July 27, 2017): Early investigation
11. Gordon, JD (July 26, 2017): Trump NatSec
12. Brown, Andrew (August 30, 2017): DNC CTO
13. Tamene, Yared (August 30, 2017): DNC tech contractor
14. Rice, Susan (September 6, 2017): Obama response to hack/unmasking
15. Stone, Roger (September 26, 2017): Trump associate
16. Epshteyn, Boris (September 28, 2017): RU-tied Trump
17. Tait, Matthew (October 6, 2017): Solicit hack
18. Safron, Jonathan (October 12, 2017): Peter Smith
19. Power, Samantha (October 13, 2017): Obama response to hack/unmasking
20. Catan, Thomas (October 18, 2017): Fusion
21. Fritsch, Peter (October 18, 2017): Fusion
22. Lynch, Loretta (October 20, 2017): Investigation
23. Parscale, Brad (October 24, 2017): Trump's data
24. Cohen, Michael (October 24, 2017): Trump lawyer

25. Rhodes, Benjamin (October 25, 2017): Obama response to hack/unmasking
26. McCord, Mary (November 1, 2017): Early investigation
27. Kaveladze, Ike (November 2, 2017): June 9 meeting
28. Yates, Sally (November 3, 2017): Early investigation
29. Schiller, Keith (November 7, 2017): Trump bodyguard
30. Akhmetshin, Rinat (November 13, 2017): June 9
31. Samachornov, Anatoli (November 28, 2017): June 9
32. Sessions, Jeff (November 30, 2017): Trump transition
33. Podesta, John (December 4, 2017): Dossier
34. Denman, Diana (December 5, 2017): RNC platform
35. Henry, Shawn (December 5, 2017): Crowdstrike
36. Trump, Jr. Donald (December 6, 2017): June 9
37. Phares, Walid (December 8, 2017): Trump NatSec
38. Clovis, Sam (December 12, 2017): Trump NatSec
39. Goldfarb, Michael (December 12, 2017): Dossier
40. Elias, Marc (December 13, 2017): Dossier
41. Nix, Alexander (December 14, 2017): Cambridge Analytica
42. Goldstone, Rob (December 18, 2017): June 9

43. Sussmann, Michael (December 18, 2017): Hack and dossier
44. McCabe, Andrew (December 19, 2017): Early investigation
45. Kramer, David (December 19, 2017): Dossier
46. Sater, Felix (December 20, 2017): RU connected Trump
47. Gaeta, Mike (December 20, 2017): Dossier go-between
48. Sullivan, Jake (December 21, 2017): Dossier
49. **[Rohrabacher, Dana (December 21, 2017): Russian compromise]**
50. **[Wasserman Schultz, Debbie (December 21, 2017): dossier]**
51. Graff, Rhona (December 22, 2017): June 9
52. Kramer, David (January 10, 2018): Dossier
53. Bannon, Stephen (January 16, 2018): Trump official
54. Lewandowski, Corey (January 17, 2018): Trump official
55. Dearborn, Rick (January 17, 2018): Trump official
56. Bannon, Stephen (February 15, 2018): Trump official
57. Hicks, Hope (February 27, 2018): Trump official
58. Lewandowski, Corey (March 8, 2018): Trump official

While John Podesta, one of the earliest spearphishing victims, was one of the earliest witnesses (and, as HPSCI shifted focus to the

dossier, one of the last as well), the other hack witnesses, DNC CTO Andrew Brown and DNC IT contractor Yared Tamene, represent the DNC. Perhaps that's because of the NYT's big story on the hack, which was obviously misleading in real time and eight months old by the time of those interviews. While Perkins Coie lawyer and former DOJ cyber prosecutor Michael Sussmann would surely have real insight into the scope of all the Democratic targets, he was interviewed during HPSCI's dossier obsession, not alongside Brown and Tamene.

All of which is to say that the HPSCI investigation of the hack was an investigation of the hack of the DNC, not of the full election year attack.

To get a sense of some of what that missed, consider the victims described in the GRU indictment (which leaves out some of the earlier Republican targets, such as Colin Powell). I've included relevant paragraph numbers to ID these victims.

1. Spearphish victim 3, March 21, 2016 (Podesta)
2. Spearphish victim 1 Clinton aide, March 25, 2016 (released via dcleaks)
3. Spearphish victim 4 (DCCC Employee 1), April 12, 2016 ¶24
4. Spearphish victim 5 (DCCC Employee), April 15, 2016
5. Spearphish victim 6 (possibly DCCC Employee 2), April 18, 2016 ¶26
6. Spearphish victim 7 (DNC target), May 10, 2016
7. Spearphish victim 2 Clinton aide, June 2, 2016 (released via dcleaks)

8. Spearphish victim 8 (not described), July 6, 2016
9. Ten DCCC computers ¶24
10. 33 DNC computers ¶26
11. **DNC Microsoft Exchange Server ¶29**
12. Act Blue ¶33
13. Third party email provider used by Clinton's office ¶22 (in response to July 27 Trump request)
14. 76 email addresses at Clinton campaign ¶22 (in response to July 27 Trump request)
15. DNC's Amazon server ¶34
16. Republican party websites ¶71
17. Illinois State Board of Elections ¶72
18. VR Systems ¶73
19. County websites in GA, IA, and FL ¶75
20. VR Systems clients in FL ¶76

Effectively, HPSCI (and most hack skeptics) focused exclusively on item 11, the DNC Microsoft Exchange server from which the emails sent to WikiLeaks were stolen.

Yet, at least as laid out by Mueller's team, the election year hack started elsewhere – with Podesta, then the DCCC, and only after that the DNC. It continued to target Hillary through the year (though with less success than they had with the DNC). And some key things happened after that – such as the seeming response to Trump's call for Russia to find more Hillary emails, the Info-Ops led targeting of election infrastructure in the summer and fall, and voter registration software. Not to mention some

really intriguing research on Republican party websites. And this barely scratches on the social media campaign, largely though not entirely carried out by a Putin-linked corporation.

HPSCI would get no insight on the overwhelming majority of the election year operation, then, by interviewing the witnesses they did. Of particular note, HPSCI would not review how the targeting and release of DCCC opposition research gave Republican congressmen a leg up over their Democratic opponents.

And while HPSCI did interview the available June 9 meeting witnesses, they refused to subpoena the information needed to really understand it. Nor did they interview all the witnesses or subpoena available information to understand the Stone operation and the Peter Smith outreach.

Without examining the other multiple threads via which Russia recruited Republicans, most notably via the NRA, HPSCI wouldn't even get a sense of all the ways Russia was trying to make Republicans and their party infrastructure into the tools of a hostile foreign country. And there are other parts of the 2016 attack that not only don't appear in these interviews, but which at least one key member on the committee was utterly clueless about well past the time the investigation finished.

The exception to the rule that HPSCI didn't seek out information that might damn Republicans, of course, is the interview of Dana Rohrabacher, who (along with President Trump) proved reliably willing to entertain Russian outreach via all known channels. But that's one of the interviews Republicans intend to keep buried because – according to an anonymous Daily Beast source – they don't want Rohrabacher's constituents to know how badly Russia has pwned him before November 6.

“The Republicans are trying to conceal from the voters their colleague Dana Rohrabacher's Russia investigation

testimony," said a committee source familiar with the issue. "There were highly concerning contacts between Rohrabacher and Russians during the campaign that the public should hear about."

By burying the Comey, Rogers, and Brennan transcripts, Republicans suppress further evidence of the degree to which Russia specifically targeted Hillary, and did so to help not just Trump, but the Republican party.

I'm sure there will be some fascinating material in these transcripts when they're released. But even before the selective release, designed to hide any evidence gathered of how lopsided the targeting was, the scope of these interviews makes clear that the HPSCI investigation was designed to minimize, as much as possible, evidence showing how aggressively Russia worked to help Republicans.

As I laid out in July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.