



## Bush email breach stirs wide probe

Secret Service investigates hacking that included personal data

By Stewart M. Powell, and Alison Sullivan | February 8, 2013

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Secret Service has launched a wide-ranging investigation into a security breach that enabled an elusive hacker to read emails exchanged by members of the Bush family over a three-year period, revealing confidential home addresses, cellphone numbers and preliminary preparations for the funeral of former President George H.W. Bush.

The stolen emails included one providing CBS sportscaster Jim Nantz the home address and gate security code for the Dallas home of former President George W. Bush. Another email alerted the five children of the elder former President Bush that "your Dad's funeral team is having an emergency meeting at 10 a.m. just to go through all the details" in the event that the then-hospitalized former commander in chief died.

U.S. Secret Service spokesman George Ogilvie told the Houston Chronicle that an investigation is under way by the federal agency responsible for protecting the president and former presidents.

"We are investigating the incident," Ogilvie said. "Beyond that, I can't get into anything else."

A spokesman for the FBI, which routinely investigates breaches of Internet security, said all inquiries regarding the case are being handled by the Secret Service. The official declined to discuss any role by the FBI.

Invasion of privacy

The hacker apparently broke into at least six email accounts, including the AOL account of Dorothy "Doro" Bush Koch, the daughter of George H.W. Bush and sister of George W. Bush.

"Unfortunately, there are those who mean ill will to decent, honest, hardworking Americans," said Rep. Randy Weber, R-Alvin. "My heart goes out to the Bush family over this invasion of their privacy."

Rep. Jim Langevin, R-Rhode Island, who co-founded the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus with Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Austin, said the incident showed that advances using the Internet "make it all the more challenging to secure our private information."

Langevin said he was "troubled, but not surprised, to learn of this incident involving the Bush family, and I hope it serves as a reminder to everyone to take every precaution they can to protect their sensitive information online."

The Bush family emails were first disclosed by the website The Smoking Gun in an extended account titled "Audacious Hack Exposes Bush Family Pix, E-Mail." The report said private Bush family photos and emails had been uploaded to an online account "that appears to have been hacked for the purpose of posting the material."

The posted photographs and emails included the hacker's online moniker, "Guccifer."

#### Elder Bush's health

The email traffic provided intimate, behind-the-scenes detail on the health of George H.W. Bush during seven weeks of hospitalization at Houston's Methodist Hospital for treatment of bronchitis, a bacterial infection and a persistent cough.

Neil Bush circulated a "Report on Dad" on Nov. 28 that described the illness and prospects for recovery.

Another son, Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida and potential GOP presidential candidate in 2016, praised his father's "kindness and good nature" for helping former President Bill Clinton "restore his sordid reputation," according to The Smoking Gun account.

Jean Becker, chief of staff to the elder former president, advised his children in late December that a funeral team was convening an emergency meeting to review details for prospective arrangements for the

88-year-old. Becker said the alert "fell under the broadening category of things NOT TO TELL YOUR MOTHER."

George W. Bush, 66, wrote his two brothers and sister on Dec. 26 to say that he was "thinking about (the) eulogy" for their father.

"Hopefully I'm jumping the gun," the former two-term president told his siblings. "But since the feeling is that you all would rather me speak than bubba, please help."

"Bubba" appeared to be Bush's reference to Clinton, a Democrat who joined forces with the senior Bush on multiple occasions in recent years for humanitarian causes such as international aid to Haiti after an earthquake and to Indonesia after a tsunami.

'Societal problem'

The episode was expected to provoke congressional hearings and potentially proposals for additional legislation. Jim Harper, director of information policy studies at the Cato Institute, however, cautioned lawmakers against additional laws.

"We already have the law in place," Harper said. "It's more of a technical problem and a societal problem."

Doug Jacobson, an Iowa State University professor of computer engineering, said the break-in showed that people should focus more attention to their own online security.

"If your password is the name of your dog or cat, you should probably look to change it," he said.