



Durham Revelation Called a 'Bombshell': Is It a Smoking Gun on the Origins of Trump-Russia Hoax?

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02-23-2022

A tech executive is accused of exploiting access to White House data looking for incriminating information about Donald Trump. That's among what some describe as "bombshell" revelations recently filed by Special Counsel John Durham.

Durham was hired three years ago to investigate the origins of the 2016 FBI probe into whether President Trump's campaign colluded with Russia.

Some legal observers insist the filing proves what President Trump and many of his supporters maintained all along – specifically, that opponents were spying on him and that Hillary Clinton's campaign lied about its involvement.

At issue is Durham's memo which points out Clinton's campaign paid for computer "research" that might link Donald Trump to Russia by mining data from Trump Tower and later the White House. It's a claim Trump has been repeating for years.

The 13-page document sparked opposite reactions from the 2016 presidential rivals. Trump called it "the crime of the century." Clinton called it a "fake scandal."

"This kind of unauthorized access of a computer system beyond access you've been given, is a federal crime," said Hans von Spakovsky of The Heritage Foundation.

Durham's latest filing stems from the case against former Hillary Clinton campaign attorney Michael Sussman. He's accused of lying to the FBI.

According to Durham, Sussman claimed he didn't work for her campaign when he went to the Justice Department pushing a Russia collusion narrative between Trump Tower and a Kremlin-linked bank.

Sussman's legal team followed this latest filing with a motion to dismiss Durham's case calling it prosecutorial overreach.

In the filing, Durham suggests Sussman's allies "exploited" government databases to snoop on the Trump White House, saying cyber researchers had access to this trove of data through a federal government contract.

"It's possible a political presidential campaign was using cyber tools to spy on a candidate's campaign and continued do that spying once that candidate became President," said von Spakovsky.

In the rebuttal filing, lawyers insist Durham is wrong, arguing that the data was properly obtained and gathered while Barack Obama was in the White House.

Sussman's lawyers also claim they found potentially alarming links from Trump to Russia and say it was within the purview of their government contract to look for security threats.

Some legal analysts say the document isn't the smoking gun evidence conservatives are touting it to be.

"I don't think you can call this illicit spying. This was kind of cyber security analysts doing what they were supposed to do which was looking for a suspicious pattern," said Julian Sanchez of the Cato Institute.

So far, Durham has not charged anyone with spying on Trump. The filing also did not state that any content from White House communications was compromised.

"It's striking that whether you think what they did was questionable, Durham doesn't regard it as criminal," said Sanchez.

As the facts play out, the treatment from the mainstream media ranges from excitement to oblivious depending on their audience.

Republicans are criticizing certain media outlets for not pursuing this story with the same vigor as they did Russia allegations.

"If this was the other way, about how the Trump campaign hired data experts and others to go out and do this to a President Clinton. We wouldn't be able to talk about anything else around here," said Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL).

Critics say compare that to coverage of Russian collusion allegations against President Trump. It dominated more than 2,600 minutes of airtime on the major networks' evening newscasts through the first half of 2019.