

Just Six Days After Trump Jr.'s Meeting, Guccifer 2.0 Emailed Me — But There Was One Key Difference

This is how the hacked material began making its way into the public domain.




After 39 years of operating without an apparent conceptual understanding of “consequences,” this week Donald Trump Jr. tweeted out an email thread admitting to soliciting the help of the Russian government in order to damage Hillary Clinton and aid the family campaign. The emails are astounding for more than a few reasons, particularly because of what came next.

On June 3, British music publicist Rob Goldstone contacted Donald Jr. with an explicit offer: “Official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia.” In case Donald Jr. was slow on the uptake, Goldstone made sure to spell out exactly what was happening. “This is obviously very high level and sensitive information but is part of Russia and its government’s support for Mr. Trump,” he offered, as if he were writing his email to make the work of future investigators simpler. Thus begun an extremely busy couple of weeks. On June 7, [as Philip Bump at the Washington Post points out](#), the elder Trump “pledged that he’d give a major speech the following Monday, June 13, ‘discussing all of the things that have taken place with the Clintons.’” On June 9, a meeting between Donald Jr., two other members of the Trump campaign, and Russian attorney Natalia Veselnitskaya took place in New York, on the basis of the aforementioned “official documents.” [The AP also reports](#) that Russian-American lobbyist Rinat Akhmetshin was present at the meeting, and claims “Veselnitskaya brought with her a plastic folder with printed-out documents that detailed what she believed was the flow of illicit funds to the Democratic National Committee.”

Donald Jr. now says the meeting was a dud, and Veselnitskaya didn’t have the goods, but it was interesting enough that all of the participants conveniently forget to mention it at any point since then.

Just six days after the Trump/Veselnitskaya meeting, and 12 days after the initial contact by Goldstone, [while working as a reporter for Gawker](#), I received an email tip, including official strategy and financial documents from the Democratic Party:

Stephan Orphan 

June 15, 2016 at 12:46 PM

SO

Trump report from Democratic National Committee. Leaked docs

To: tips@gawker.com

Hi. This is Guccifer 2.0 and this is me who hacked Democratic National Committee.

Worldwide known cyber security company CrowdStrike announced that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) servers had been hacked by "sophisticated" hacker groups. I'm very pleased the company appreciated my skills so highly))) But in fact, it was easy, very easy. Guccifer may have been the first one who penetrated Hillary Clinton's and other Democrats' mail servers. But he certainly wasn't the last. No wonder any other hacker could easily get access to the DNC's servers.

Shame on CrowdStrike: Do you think I've been in the DNC's networks for almost a year and saved only 2 documents? Do you really believe it?

Here are just a few docs from many thousands I extracted when hacking into DNC's network. They mentioned a leaked database on Donald Trump. I have it attached.

Some hundred sheets! This's a serious case, isn't it?

And it's just a tiny part of all docs I downloaded from the Democrats networks.

DNC chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz said no financial documents were compromised.

Nonsense! Just look through the Democratic Party lists of donors!

They say there were no secret docs! Lies again! Also I have some secret documents from Hillary's PC she worked with as the Secretary of State.

The main part of the papers, thousands of files and mails, I gave to Wikileaks. They will publish them soon.

I guess CrowdStrike customers should think twice about company's competence.

See all docs attached

<https://guccifer2.wordpress.com/2016/06/15/dnc/>



1.doc



2.19.16 Friends
of HRC...ry.xlsx



2.doc



3.doc



4.16
Commi...te.xlsx



4.doc



5.doc



7.1.15
Commi...et.xlsx



Big Donors
List.xls



Donors.xlsx



Prospect
List_032916.xlsx

The U.S. intelligence community claims that "Guccifer 2.0" was an entity operated by the Russian government. A second email that afternoon expanded on the document claims:

Stephan Orphan

June 15, 2016 at 2:08 PM

SO

Re : Urgent question from reporter

To: Sam Biddle

I have about 100 Gb of data including financial reports, donors' lists, election programs, action plans against Republicans, personal mails, etc.

I gave a big part of them to Wikileaks, but still have more sensitive docs.

Are you interested in special topics?

(At no point did Guccifer 2.0 and I have anything even resembling a confidential source agreement, and he very quickly, of course, went public with all of his claims.)

This timing is interesting for two reasons. The extreme proximity of promised Hillary-related documents and the arrival of Hillary-related documents just days later suggests Guccifer 2.0 could have been part of the plan Goldstone alluded to over email. But secondly, although the documents were surely “official” in that they originated from within the Democratic Party, no one ever found anything in them that could be considered “information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia.” It doesn’t appear that any of the documents released by Guccifer, whether in private to reporters like myself or on the web, pertained to or referenced whatsoever any “dealings” between Clinton and Russia. Guccifer was very eager to “pitch” documents to me that he believed would be particularly damaging or newsworthy (virtually none of them were), so it stands to reason that he would have pushed the Russia/DNC angle were he in possession of documents along those lines. Guccifer mentioned Russia only a couple of times, first to deny to me that he was Russian, and secondly that “maybe russians were among” those who had hacked the DNC. So there’s nothing directly tying the contents of the Guccifer emails I (and reporters at other outlets) received to the contents Trump Jr. et al. were promised in this week’s explosive email thread.

This leaves a lot of possibilities, unfortunately, and chalking the whole thing up to nothing more than giant coincidence feels strange and unwise. Of course, a campaign takes place in a compressed time frame — though, mercilessly, not compressed enough — so the likelihood of events coinciding in time is heightened. It’s possible that a British music publicist wasn’t exactly plugged in to the alleged activities of Russian military intelligence and got the nitty gritty wrong in his email to Trump Jr. It’s possible the offer emailed to Trump Jr. was just a [means of testing how receptive he was to the idea of state-sponsored opposition research](#) (very). It’s possible these people are all smarter than they look, and deliberately did not refer to the actual nature of the hacked documents in writing. It’s possible Goldstone and company were entirely separate from Guccifer, a second, discrete branch of campaign dirt-digging. It’s possible these are coincidences — if so, it would behoove Trumps old and young to explain why the most notorious hacker persona of the modern age started shopping around Hillary-related documents less than a week after similar documents were promised to the campaign.