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How Hillary Clinton Poisoned American Politics

By Justin Raimondo
November 1, 2016

FBI Director James Comey's decision to reopen the investigation into Hillary Clinton's mishandling of classified information has the Clintonites falling back on their tried-and-true response to all the revelations coming from WikiLeaks and other sources – it's all a Russian plot. Except, this time, the hysteria has reached such a fever pitch, and the conspiracy theories are so unhinged, that the political discourse in this country will be poisoned for years to come.

It started with Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), who told CNN's Wolf Blitzer:

"So the question is: Where did these [emails] come from? How did they get to the FBI? Is Russia involved in this? We don't have a clue where this stuff is coming from."

We don't know if Ryan was drunk (again) when he said this, but his nickname of "Congressman Moonbeam" seems well-earned, and the implication of his remarks – that the FBI is in league with the Russians – underscores his marginality. However, it wasn't long before the marginal started merging with the mainstream. In tandem with Rya, Howard Dean, former presidential candidate and once head of the Democratic party, tweeted:

"Ironically, Comey put himself on the same side as Putin."

Now Dean may be a bit more credible than Ryan, but who can forget the “Dean scream” that dramatized his loonier side, and effectively knocked him out of contention for the Democratic presidential nomination? And then there were those payments from the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, a nutty Marxist-Islamist cult, in return for serving as their front man. And so while Dean may be better known, what he’s known *for* isn’t exactly adding to his credibility, and so we can safely relegate this kind of conspiracy theorizing to the fringes of the Democratic party spectrum. Right?

Wrong. Here is longtime Clintonite strategist James Carville opining that “It’s unprecedented ... the House Republicans and the KGB are trying to influence our democracy.” Well, okay, who listens to Carville, anyway? He’s so *yesterday*! Well, then, get a load of Harry Reid, who leads the Senate’s Democrats, repeating a different version of the same nonsense in a letter to Comey:

"In my communications with you and other top officials in the national security community, it has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government – a foreign interest hostile to the United States, which Trump praises at every opportunity. The public has a right to know this information. I wrote to you months ago calling for this information to be released to the public. There is no danger to American interests from releasing it. And yet, you continue to resist calls to inform the public of this critical information."

It’s so “explosive” that it exploded into utter nothingness, according to the *New York Times* this [Tuesday] morning:

"For much of the summer, the F.B.I. pursued a widening investigation into a Russian role in the American presidential campaign. Agents scrutinized advisers close to Donald J. Trump, looked for financial connections with Russian financial figures, searched for those involved in hacking the computers of Democrats, and even chased a lead – which they ultimately came to doubt – about a possible secret channel of email communication from the Trump Organization to a Russian bank."

"Law enforcement officials say that none of the investigations so far have found any conclusive or direct link between Mr. Trump and the Russian government. And even the hacking into Democratic emails, FBI and intelligence officials now believe, was aimed at disrupting the presidential election rather than electing Mr. Trump."

As Gertrude Stein once put it, “There’s no there there.” She was talking about Oakland, California, but might just as well have been describing the inside of Harry’s brain.

And, yes, you read the above cited *Times* story right: instead of going after terrorists, or ordinary criminals, for *months* the FBI has been chasing down rabbit holes looking for Trump’s alleged links to the nonexistent International Kremlin/Alt-Right/Putinist Conspiracy. We have returned to the halcyon days of J. Edgar Hoover, when people were investigated and harassed for their political views at the instigation of their ideological opponents.

Oh, but the FBI was too “overburdened and undermanned” to keep Omar Mateen on their radar.

In this election, the tragic and the comic mix and merge, but surely the former is dominant in the latest of Franklin Foer's Russophobic effusions. Formerly the editor of *The New Republic*, who was unceremoniously dumped by its new owner, Foer has teamed up with the Clinton campaign as its unofficial conspiracy theorist, spinning tales of Trump's "links" to the Russians. He's the Alex Jones of the Clinton crowd, except that not even Jones would be caught dead promoting the kind of incoherent nonsense in Foer's latest screed.

According to Foer, Trump has a "secret server" set up specifically to communicate with his Kremlin Masters. We know this because a "computer scientist" who wants to be known only as "Tea Leaves," and other "experts" – who also don't want to tell us their names – have supposedly "discovered" this Secret Link. The server connects to the Alfa Bank, which is located in – cue in scary music – Russia! And guess what!? This closed communication link was especially active during politically sensitive times! This, according to Foer and his anonymous band of "experts," is conclusive proof that The Donald is a secret agent of the KGB, intent on polluting our precious bodily fluids with icky Russian cooties.

The only problem with this wacky conspiracy theory is that there's a prosaic explanation for the existence of this "suspicious" online traffic: the Trump Organization had hired a company to send out ads for their hotels. The online traffic to Alfa Bank meant only that several employees of that bank had stayed in Trump's hotels and were being solicited to do so again. And in spite of the "scientific"-looking chart displayed in the Foer piece, in fact the online traffic to and from Alfa didn't "peak" when the US political scene got hot: "That's wrong," writes Timothy B. Lee in the anti-Trump pro-Hillary Vox.com. "If anything, the chart shows the opposite of that."

As Lee puts it:

"Foer claims that the pattern of traffic between the Trump Organization and Alfa Bank servers is highly unusual – so unusual that it can best be explained as a secretive communication link between Donald Trump and the Kremlin.

"But in this case, there seems to be a plausible and perfectly innocent explanation for the traffic pattern suggested by an IT consultant named Naadir Jeewa and endorsed by security expert Robert Graham: The Trump organization is sending out promotional emails about Trump hotels, and one or more Alfa Bank employees is on the recipient list.

"This is actually the explanation that's suggested by Occam's razor because – as Foer himself acknowledges in his story – the server was originally registered by an email marketing firm called Cendyn. The Trump organization seems to have hired Cendyn to send out emails promoting Trump's hotels, a service Cendyn has been providing since the Trump server was registered in 2009. So the most obvious explanation for the traffic is that Cendyn is using its server for its intended purpose."

When Hillary Clinton's Twitter account tweeted Foer's farrago and declared "It's time for Trump to answer serious questions about his ties to Russia," cyber-security expert Robert Graham replied on his blog:

“This is nonsense. The evidence available on the Internet is that Trump neither (directly) controls the domain “trump-email.com,” nor has access to the server. Instead, the domain was setup and controlled by Cendyn, a company that does marketing/promotions for hotels, including many of Trump’s hotels. Cendyn outsources the email portions of its campaigns to a company called Listrak, which actually owns/operates the physical server in a data center in Philadelphia.”

So the server *wasn’t even owned by the Trump Organization*. And yet it took the FBI months, and “journalists,” including even *The Intercept*, “weeks” to conclude that this story is completely bogus. The US taxpayers should demand their money back – not to mention Pierre Omidyar.

Even after this sloppy McCarthyite smear was debunked, the Clinton campaign breathlessly repeated the charges: “This secret hotline may be the key to unlocking the mystery of Trump’s ties to Russia”! What this perfervid fantasy is the actually key to is the hysterical desperation of the Clinton campaign as it is engulfed in daily scandals that threaten to sink it beneath the electoral waves.

Are you laughing – or crying – yet? Oh, but I’m not done! If you think this grade-B conspiracy theory is the lowest form of electoral entertainment, then you obviously haven’t read David Corn’s latest entry into the Smear Trump Sweepstakes. Glenn Greenwald – no friend of Trump’s – describes it as “an unnamed person, from an unknown country, who used to work in an unnamed agency, claims Trump is a Russian agent.” How did the real estate mogul become a tool of the Kremlin? Well, you see, Trump once traveled to Russia, where he was suborned by one of those slinky-looking Russian ladies and “Russian intelligence had ‘compromised’ Trump during his visits to Moscow and could ‘blackmail him.’”

Yes, they’re blackmailing Trump over a sexual indiscretion – because that would destroy him *for sure*! And it’s all in a “secret memo” that only Corn, the editors of *Mother Jones*, and their Mysterious Veteran Spook have seen.

On one level, this is hysterically funny; it’s grade-C thriller material that is likely to be found at the bottom of some publisher’s slush pile. On another level – the political level – it is immensely depressingly significant – because these people are “liberals,” even “leftists.” They aren’t stupid: they know the ignominious history of witch-hunting in this country. I’d call this McCarthyism – but even Joe McCarthy had some actual evidence to back up his claims of “foreign agents” lurking in the corridors of power. Corn, Foer, and the Clinton campaign are simply retailing lies.

What’s depressing about this is the fact that, if Hillary wins, it isn’t going to stop. Far from it: the new “red scare” will accelerate, as her political enemies are tarred with the “KGB agent” brush. And when the notoriously vindictive Democratic candidate takes revenge not only on her domestic political enemies, but on the Russians, an ugly – and dangerous – confrontation is in the cards. She’ll sic the FBI on Trump’s supporters, and Trump himself, and she’ll unleash the US military and our allies on Putin – and then, watch out.

That American liberalism has degenerated into a Russophobic, warmongering, witch-hunting ideology so quickly is one of the most astonishing ideological transformations in our political

history. And all in the name of garnering partisan political advantage. As Donald Trump would put it: Sad!