

Did Clinton's Emails Expose CIA Agents?

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Even as Hillary Clinton closes in on the Democratic nomination, facts continue to emerge indicating that her sloppy email practices may have endangered secrets, including the identities of covert operatives, writes Peter Van Buren.

[These are facts.](#) You can look at the source documents yourself. This is not opinion, conjecture, or rumor. Hillary Clinton transmitted the names of American intelligence officials via her unclassified email.

From a series of Clinton emails, numerous names were redacted in the State Department releases with the classification code "B3 CIA PERS/ORG," a highly specialized classification that means the information, if released, would violate the Central Intelligence Act of 1949 by exposing the names of CIA officials.



Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The Freedom of information Act (FOIA) requires the government to release all, or all parts of a document, that do not fall under a specific set of allowed exemptions. If information cannot be excluded, it must be released. If some part of a document can be redacted to allow the rest of the document to be released, then that is what must be done. Each redaction must be justified by citing a specific reason for exclusion.

But don't believe me. Instead, look at page two of this [State Department document](#) which lists the exemptions.

Note specifically the different types of "(b)(3)" redactions, including "CIA PERS/ORG." As common sense would dictate, the government will not release the names of CIA employees via the FOIA process. It would — literally — be against the law. What law? Depending on the nature of the individual's job at CIA, National Security Act of 1947, the CIA Act of 1949, various laws that govern undercover/ clandestine CIA officers and, potentially, the Espionage Act of 1917.

Yet Hillary's emails contain at least three separate, specific instances where she mentioned in an unclassified email transmitted across the open Internet and wirelessly to her Blackberry the names of CIA personnel. Here they are. Look for the term "(b)(3) CIA PERS/ORG" Click on the links and see for yourself: [CIA One](#); [CIA Two](#); [CIA Three](#)

There are also numerous instances of exposure of the names and/or email addresses of NSA employees ("B3 NSA"); see page 23 inside this longer [PDF document](#).

Why It Matters

- These redactions point directly to violations of specific laws. It is not a “mistake” or minor rule-breaking.
- These redactions strongly suggest that the Espionage Act’s standard of mishandling national defense information through “gross negligence” may have been met by Clinton.
- There is no ambiguity in this information, no possible claims to faux-retroactive classification, not knowing, information not being labeled, etc. Clinton and her staff know that one cannot mention CIA names in open communications. It is one of the most basic tenets taught and exercised inside the government. One protects one’s colleagues.
- Exposing these names can directly endanger the lives of the officials. It can endanger the lives of the foreigners they interacted with after a foreign government learns one of their citizens was talking with the CIA. It can blow covers and ruin sensitive clandestine operations. It can reveal to anyone listening in on this unclassified communication sources and methods. Here is a [specific example](#) of how Clinton likely compromised security.
- These redactions show complete contempt on Clinton’s part for the security process.

BONUS: There is clear precedent for others going to jail for exposing CIA names. Read the [story of John Kiriakou](#). **A Personal Aside:** I just remain incredulous about these revelations seeming to mean nothing to the world. They’re treated in the media as almost gossip.

***Peter Van Buren** blew the whistle on State Department waste during Iraqi reconstruction in his first book, *We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People*. His second book is *Ghosts of Tom Joad: A Story of the #99Percent*. Next up is a novel about WWII Japan, *Hooper’s War*.*

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