

From Watergate to Russiagate: The Hidden Scandal of American Power

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*Political corruption often leads to a constitutional crisis. The Watergate scandal that took down **Richard Nixon** shook up American politics. Over four decades later, we are now seeing another scandal associated with campaign officials. Dubbed "[Russiagate](#)", a liberal media frenzy began over the claim of possible Trump campaign collusion with Russia before and during the 2016 election. Now, new intelligence intercepts [reveal](#) that **Attorney General Jeff Sessions** discussed aspects of the Trump campaign with a Russian ambassador. With [the initiative to impeach](#) Trump put out there, are we approaching another Watergate moment?*

Impeachment process against Nixon [was triggered](#) after a break-in at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at the Watergate office complex in D.C. and the administration's attempted cover-up. The story of Russiagate that is now quickly unfolding also involves the DNC, but this time the scandal centers on a foreign actor with the allegation that "Russia meddled in the US election".

To be clear, many can agree that **Donald Trump** is unfit to be president and could possibly be one of the worst presidents in US history. He [has already betrayed](#) many of his campaign promises and [his six-month approval rating](#) is now the lowest of any president in 70 years. His [financial ties with Russia](#) for some are deeply worrying. From his son-in-law **Jared Kushner's** [suspected improper conduct](#) in meetings with Russians to Trump's recent [private meeting with Putin](#) after the G-20 dinner all may need thorough investigation.

At the same time, the media's obsession is creating anti-Russia sentiment that resembles a McCarthy-era hysteria. This is all happening while lawmakers [reached a deal](#) to put tougher sanctions on Russia, along with Iran and North Korea, while Trump [terminated](#) the CIA covert program that aids Syrian rebels. Before we blindly wrap ourselves with this charged narrative that surrounds leaders of two nuclear nations, we need to examine the discourse in its larger context.

WikiLeaks as a Spoiler

The other figure that has been thrown into an eye of this storm is WikiLeaks. Back in April, the new CIA director **Mike Pompeo** [claimed](#) that the intelligence community determined that Russia interfered with the 2016 US election. He denounced WikiLeaks, calling the organization a "non-state hostile intelligence service" that works with Russian intelligence.



The idea that **Vladimir Putin** intervened in the US election by working with **Julian Assange** was perhaps a strategically convenient plot for the Democrats to deflect the real issues and distract others from their own failures. This might have been a soothing and convincing narrative for many Democrats, who are suffering the hang-up of their blatant loss and trying to cope with what is perceived as a horrifying post-election reality.

It is interesting to see [the shift of attitude](#) toward WikiLeaks in the American political landscape leading up to election 2016. News media outlets like Fox News, who were previously extremely negative and condemning the whistleblowing site, praised the organization for their publishing of the DNC database and emails that belong to Clinton's campaign manager **John Podesta**. Trump joined this cheer during his campaign, [declaring](#) "I love WikiLeaks!", which he now flipped on, with his administration vowing to crack down on whistleblowers and make [Assange's arrest a priority](#).

In contrast with this right wing appraisal, leaked documents were met with scrutiny from liberals. The image of WikiLeaks as a champion of free speech, who used to represent to them a positive force began to erode. In the eyes of the left, WikiLeaks has become "a spoiler", ruining the Democrats lovefest by publishing damaging information from Clinton campaign chairman Podesta, during the final weeks leading up to the election.

This all sounds very familiar. Recall **Ralph Nader's** Green Party candidacy in 2010. Back then, the corporate media adamantly attacked Nader, as if recognizing that the man who took on the auto industry in the 1960s for lax safety regulation might then be taking on the unregulated defective engine of a concocted political system that is itself unsafe at any speed with either party. They saw Nader's presidential run as a threat to the very system that allows them to maintain power.

Ironically, Nader's effort as a presidential candidate was met with vociferous opposition from Democrats. Here, the party who is said to represent democratic values engaged in dirty tricks, [obstructing](#) ballot access in various states. Nader, who has become a national icon as a crusader for justice was quickly painted as unreasonable, with character flaws of egomania and being irrational. Then came the infamous label 'spoiler', with the ever perpetuated [myth](#) of "Nader cost Gore the election". He was blamed for Al Gore's own incompetence and overall election fraud that led to the Bush presidency.

Significance of the DNC Leaks

Now, let's closely look at the Democrats' favorite tactic of this "spoiler effect". There is a parallel between WikiLeaks and Nader. First of all, what did Nader's efforts in the electoral

arena reveal? It exposed the illusion of choice and real machination behind corporate politics of duopoly. Nader, in his recent interview on *The Intercept* [detailed](#) a history of decline and decadence of the Democratic Party. Here, consumer advocate and former presidential candidate deconstructed this closed system of control. He explained how the tactics of false opposition and “divide and conquer” schemes work, where Democrats run their campaign by focusing on how bad Republicans look, with fear and hatred pulling the strings of voters.

The WikiLeaks publication of [the DNC leaks](#) and [Podesta emails](#) gave evidence of the deep corruption of the Democratic Party. It confirmed the death of the liberal class that progressives like Nader, Chris Hedges and Jill Stein have been informing the public about for a long time. Here, this transnational organization disrupted the legacy system of national politics and gave an opportunity for American people to truly see what the Democratic Party had become.

From these documents, those who are willing to look beyond the rhetoric can learn how the Democratic Party that was supposed to represent the working class has long been operating as corporate shills, keeping its hollowness and deception hidden, through a myriad of perception management. Concrete acts of corruption were exposed, including the DNC’s rigging of the candidate selection process, along with their media collusion. The internal workings of the Clinton campaign [revealed](#) a “pied piper” strategy to actively elevate far right bigoted presidential candidates, in order to increase Clinton’s chance of winning. But perhaps what was the most disturbing for many of Clinton supporters was her own words given in [her speech](#) to Goldman Sachs, clearly showing where her loyalty really lies.

Shooting the Messenger

Information revealed in these documents was clearly vital for the public. Yet, instead of the corporate media fiercely going after this scandal, they fed the story of a Russia-Trump connection, with a twist of WikiLeaks as the culprit. By shooting the messenger, attention was diverted from the vital message itself. So what is the unreported side of the Russia hack story?

In regards to the source of their published documents, Assange [made it clear](#) that although he cannot talk about the identity of the source, due to the organization’s source protection policy, he made it clear that it was not a state actor. Aside from this unconfirmed Russia hack story, there was another perhaps more convincing source that has not been explored thoroughly.

In a piece titled, “Seth Rich, Craig Murray and the Sinister Stewards of the National Security State” **Mike Whitney** [asked](#);

“Why is it a ‘conspiracy theory’ to think that a disgruntled Democratic National Committee staffer gave WikiLeaks the DNC emails, but not a conspiracy theory to think the emails were provided by Russia?”

There was a mysterious murder of a 27-year-old DNC staff member named **Seth Rich**, which has not been fully investigated. **Craig Murray**, a former British ambassador to Uzbekistan [came out](#) to debunk [the White House’s continuous accusation](#) of Moscow’s effort to undermine the election on the behalf of Trump. Murray claimed that he received the

package in a wooded area near an American University and denied the allegation leaks were from the Russians, noting how “the source had legal access to the information” and that documents came not by hack but by leak.

Intel Vets’ report that just [came out](#) with their study of forensic evidence backs Murray’s statement and further sheds light on a gap between Murray and the government’s claims. In a memo to President Trump, a group of former US intelligence officers claimed that “the same inside-DNC, copy/leak *process* was used at two different times, by two different entities, for two distinctly different purposes”. The conclusion of independent cyber investigations indicated that “data was *leaked (not hacked)* by a person with physical access to DNC computers, and then doctored to incriminate Russia.”

Doctrine of the Lesser of Two Evils

From secret manipulation to spoiler smearing, leaked documents along with the left’s reaction has revealed hidden forces that drive the American political system. It is the doctrine of the lesser of two evils that grips the liberal class, making not only the electoral arena dysfunctional, but an efficient machine to seize the will of the populace.

This logic continues to have power over the people, even after the presidential race between two of the most hated candidates in US history ended. It is deeply internalized to the point that it has become the identity that shapes the American left and the lenses through which many interpret events. No matter how many times American voters are fooled with this so-called strategic voting, they cannot seem to challenge this defeated mentality and break this repeated cycle of abuse. The designers of this managed American democracy know this and always count on people to act against their interests as long as they can keep them in hatred and fear.

These emotional reactions harnessed through this mentality will shut down critical thinking and distort perceptions of people. This distortion is manifested in their lack of introspection and the failure to truly account for events. In the case of Nader’s presidential run in 2000, Al Gore could have won the election in a landslide, if his campaign incorporated many of Nader’s demands and really stood up for the people. Also, why were [the recounts in Florida](#) stopped and Gore so easily conceded?



In the recent aftermath of the DNC revelations, there seemed to be no accountability for the Clinton campaign. During the Democratic primary in 2016, after this DNC scandal came to light, why didn’t **Bernie Sanders** with his claimed revolution challenge the DNC about its corruption? Why did he ask his supporters to side with the most hawkish and corporate candidate, **Hillary Clinton**? And now, a new question confronts us; are we willing to go with this Russia hacking story, even when the government lacks any conclusive evidence?

Hacking Our Humanity

Russiagate might be one of the great scandals of our decade. Yet, before we jump onto the bandwagon with this political hype, we might need to question the unexamined assumptions in the whole story that concerns Russia and this quick reversion to the old cold war era. These include examining the reasons why Americans should be afraid of Russia and a real assessment of whether that country actually ever posed any threat in the last few decades.

Russia has its own corruption and is notorious for oppressing political dissidents and journalists, but so does our own government. In fact, the US government has been acting as one of the greatest violators of human rights by supporting and creating terrorism out in the world. While it is pointing fingers at Russia, it has [its own track record](#) of meddling in other country's elections, even overthrowing democratically elected leaders that are not favorable to US interests.

Is our mind hacked to forget our common humanity, making us always see other countries as potential enemies, and blinding ourselves to our own government's crimes? Our understanding of the world is being filtered by elite interests and corporate media. In his book "Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism", **Michael Ignatieff** (1995) [described](#) how this political doctrine of nationalism is a belief that "the world's people are divided into nations, and that each of these nations has the right to self-determination, either as self-governing units within existing nation-states or as nation-states of their own" (p. 5).

Nationalism, as the underwriting of our social and political narratives, condition us to see one another as separate and make us pit interests against others that don't fall within our borders. When identification with this separated identity and a sense of belonging is tightened, it turns patriotism into hyper-vigilance about the security of territory. It is not real diplomacy with sincere efforts to cooperate and solve conflicts, but an adversarial mentality inherent in chauvinistic nationalism that is shaping US foreign policy. From environmental destruction, climate change, economic exploitation to resource wars, many of the problems in the world are rooted in this illusion of separation and denial of our kinship as species on the Earth.

Opening the Gate of Democracy

WikiLeaks' publishing of authentic documents began to open governments. Transparency exercised through the First Amendment sparked a light in the dungeon of this corporate duopoly, calling for our courage to cut the shackles that have for so long tied us to this two-horned beast. WikiLeaks did it [for Kenyans in 2007](#) and for the people of [Iceland in 2009](#). In 2016, it could have been America's turn.

In the perceived act of crashing the party, they exposed the real ruling power of a society that runs deep inside the interlocking control of the CIA, NSA, FBI and the military industrial complex. The presence of the world's first global Fourth Estate that acts on behalf of interests of all people, threatens the intelligence community for the sole reason that their existence and unaccounted power depends on this adversary paradigm of the nation-state and its premise to "keep America safe".

At a recent Aspen Security Forum, in an annual gathering of intelligence and national security officials and experts, Pompeo [clarified](#) his declaration of the whistleblowing site as an enemy, saying that WikiLeaks will take down America any way they can and that they won't do anything good for Americans.

This hostility directed toward anyone that challenges US hegemony should alert us, when considering [CIA's funding of anti-Assad forces](#) in Syria, newly declassified docs confirming [their backing of a coup in Iran](#), coupled with its insidious hacking operations revealed by WikiLeaks' publication of [Vault 7](#).

With Russiagate, we might be entering our new Watergate moment. But this is much bigger than Trump. The scandal is not about a particular president or administration. It is an indictment of the entire American political system. Both Republicans and Democrats betrayed the American people and the press have failed to perform their duty with our First Amendment rights guaranteed under the Constitution. **Thomas Paine** [reminds](#) us that,

“We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” In this time of turmoil and chaos of unprecedented corruption, we need to stay awake and vigilant, for the gate of democracy can only be opened with our own power.

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