



RUSSIAGATE'S MISSING PIECES

Description

The first thing to understand about John Durham is that he was a fearless prosecutor who went after organized crime and put in prison retired and active FBI agents who protected the mob for money or other enticements. One of the agents he stopped had enabled James “Whitey” Bulger Jr., once one of America’s most wanted men, the Winter Hill Gang boss who evaded arrest for sixteen years.

In his forty-five years as a state and federal prosecutor in Connecticut and Virginia, Durham worked often and closely with FBI agents, especially on cases that involved violations of federal racketeering statutes.

Durham also handled two inquiries into the CIA’s conduct in the War on Terror, and he did so without angering his superiors in the executive branch. In one case he was asked to investigate the alleged destruction of CIA videotapes of detainee interrogations, the so-called torture tapes. His final report on the matter remains secret, and he recommended that no charges be filed. He was later asked to lead a Justice Department inquiry into the legality of the CIA’s “enhanced interrogation techniques” that resulted in the death of two detainees. In that case, he was told that officers who were given and obeyed what were determined to be illegal orders—there were many of those after 9/11—could not be prosecuted. No charges were filed.

Durham’s 306-page report was made public on May 15, and it pleased no one with its focus on the obvious. The journalist Susan Schmidt, whose byline was a must-read when she was a reporter for the *Washington Post*, pointed out on *Racket News* that Durham said the FBI would have done less damage to its reputation if it had scrutinized the questionable actions of the Clinton campaign in 2016: the Feds “might at least have cast a critical eye on the phony evidence they were gathering.”

Schmidt was highlighting a moment in Durham’s report where he hints at the real story: Russiagate was a fraud initiated by the Clinton campaign and abetted by political reporters in Washington and senior FBI officials who chose to look the other way. Durham writes: “In late July 2016, US intelligence agencies obtained insight into Russian intelligence analysis alleging that US Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton had approved a campaign plan to stir up a scandal against US Presidential candidate

Donald Trump by tying him to Putin and the Russians' hacking of the Democratic National Committee."

He continues: "this intelligence—taken at face value—was arguably highly relevant and exculpatory because it could be read in fuller context, and in combination with other facts, to suggest that materials such as the Steele Dossier reports and the Alfa Bank allegations . . . were part of a political effort to smear a political opponent and to use the resources of the federal government's law enforcement and intelligence agencies in support of a political objective."

Durham goes on to cite many instances of public statements and private communications of Clinton campaign staffers that were "consistent with the substance of the purported plan." He finds evidence to suggest that "at least some officials within the campaign were seeking information about the FBI's response to the DNC hack, which would be consistent with, and a means of furthering, the purported plan." He adds that "the campaign's funding of the Steele Reports and Alfa Bank allegations . . . provide some additional support for the credibility to the information set forth in the Clinton Plan intelligence."

However, his report focuses on who knew about the Clinton Plan intelligence and when they knew of it, while "the details of the Clinton Plan intelligence," "facts that heightened the potential relevance of this intelligence to" Durham's inquiry, and his team's "efforts to verify or refute the key claims found in this intelligence" are confined to a Classified Appendix.

It became evident to some members of Durham's staff that the real story was not about whether or not Trump had pee parties in a Moscow hotel room—one of the headline-producing allegations in the Steele Dossier that consumed the Washington press corps in the aftermath of Trump's victory in the 2016 election. The issue was whether the Clinton campaign, in its constant leaking of false accusations and false data, had crossed a line.

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