

Hillary's Email Trickery

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Upon learning that Hillary Clinton used a private email account to conduct all official business during her tenure as secretary of state, CNN's Dan Merica remarked, "GOP aides on the Benghazi committee have long said they were going to find something others hadn't. And they did."

The *New York Times* broke the news, though its own report reveals the story was essentially gift-wrapped: "The existence of Mrs. Clinton's personal email account was discovered by a House committee investigating the attack on the American Consulate in Benghazi."



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Clinton's suspicious email habits are in direct violation of Obama administration directives and perhaps a number of federal laws. News organizations and watchdog groups are contemplating suing the State Department for dodging their Freedom of Information Act requests. Naturally, there's plenty of chatter about how this affects Clinton's presidential ambitions. But the email scandal also can and should breathe new life into the Benghazi investigation.

The media have tried to say from the start that Republican partisanship has driven questions about the Obama administration's conduct surrounding the September 11, 2012, attack in Libya that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. Their attempts to dismiss Benghazi as a scandal didn't stop even when the House Intelligence Committee released its report last November confirming that the murders were part of a planned terror attack, exploding the myth perpetuated by the administration and an influential *New York Times* report that found "no evidence that al Qaeda or other international terrorist groups had any role in the assault."

The media downplayed the key revelation—which suggests there was a political coverup—and spun the report as "debunking a series of persistent allegations hinting at dark conspiracies," in the words of the Associated Press. (The AP, ironically, is now complaining "the State Department has

failed to turn over government documents covering Hillary Rodham Clinton's tenure as secretary of state" for years.)

There are certainly questions to be raised about the competence and tenor of the GOP-led investigations, but the claim that it's clear there was nothing for Republicans to investigate is now impossible to make. With investigators unable to examine Clinton's emails, any Benghazi inquiry to date is obviously incomplete.

In this regard, there's another shocking disclosure in the *New York Times* report: "It was only two months ago, in response to a new State Department effort to comply with federal record-keeping practices, that Mrs. Clinton's advisers reviewed tens of thousands of pages of her personal emails and decided which ones to turn over to the State Department."

In other words, Clinton was allowed to decide which emails she would turn over. Congressional investigators were given, last month, copies of just 300 of the 50,000 emails she provided to State. It seems very unlikely any of those emails happens to provide evidence of incriminating behavior—assuming any incriminating emails still exist.

Given Hillary Clinton's legal troubles in the 1990s Whitewater investigation over record-keeping for her work at the Rose Law Firm, it's utterly implausible she was unaware she might be doing something wrong. ABC News footage from 2000 has her on camera saying, "As much as I've been investigated and all of that . . . why would I ever want to do email?" We've subsequently learned that Clinton's email account was hosted on a server in her house, set up a few weeks before she was sworn in as secretary of state.

That the State Department was only recently given any of her emails casts even more doubt on the department's internal investigation into Benghazi. In her recent book *Hard Choices*, Clinton makes the conclusions of the State Department's Accountability Review Board (ARB) central to her defense of how she handled events. However, it's not clear the ARB had access to her emails.

As *The Weekly Standard's* Stephen Hayes has reported in detail, the ARB was laughable in terms of transparency and accountability. Clinton associates were given advance copies of the findings. Interviews conducted were not recorded in any fashion. In at least one case, the language of the report was softened at the behest of Clinton advisers. *Hillary and her key aides were never interviewed.*

The need for a thorough accounting of the events of September 11, 2012, is greater than ever. Four Americans are dead. Two and a half years and several stonewalled investigations later, we still don't know basic facts that would help explain how it happened. We can, however, say for certain that Hillary Clinton has deliberately and brazenly erected roadblocks that have so far prevented us from learning the truth.