

20 Undisputed Facts About the FBI's Investigations into Clinton and Trump

In May 2017, Robert Mueller, the former director of the FBI, was tapped as Special Counsel in the probe of Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections and alleged collusion between Russia and the Trump Campaign.

Several members of the Trump Campaign—including former NSA Director Michael Flynn and former Trump Campaign manager Paul Manafort—were later charged with crimes unrelated to collusion. The investigation continues.

Parallel to Mueller's investigation, however, a second alleged conspiracy emerged. The narrative runs this way: A corrupt FBI cleared Hillary Clinton of "gross negligence" in her handling of classified information and worked with a Democratically-funded opposition research group to plant "[salacious and unverified](#)" information about Donald Trump in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election.

Both of these alleged conspiracies sound bizarre and fanciful, yet partisans on both sides have strong motivations to convince the public their side is right.

Republicans have long claimed that Democrats alleging collusion between Trump and Russia are simply poor losers, and Russiagate is a tactic to embroil Trump in a scandal to boost the party's chances in the midterms and possibly impeach the president.

Democrats, on the other hand, have persistently contended that claims of FBI corruption are partisan distractions intended to discredit the probe into the Trump Campaign's nefarious conduct.

Reasonable, intelligent, and sensible people are finding it difficult to determine what's true and what's false, and to distinguish important facts from partisan spin.

At Axios, Mike Allen has [a tidy list](#) of 10 undisputed facts behind the Russia probe, which I found helpful. It inspired me to create my own list of undisputed facts about the FBI and its handling of the probes into Hillary Clinton's email practices while Secretary of State and possible collusion between Donald Trump and the Russian government.

Here are 20 undisputed facts about FBI officials and their investigations:

1. In August 2017, FBI agent Peter Strzok [was removed](#) from Mueller's collusion probe.
2. It was later revealed that Strzok had been removed because, as the *Washington Post* [reported](#), "he and another member of Mueller's team had exchanged politically charged texts disparaging President Trump and supporting Hillary Clinton."
3. Strzok served as Chief of [the Counterespionage Section](#) during the FBI's investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of an unlawful personal email server during her time as Secretary of State, from which she transmitted classified information.
4. Records show that in a May 2016 memo, then-FBI Director James Comey [concluded](#) Clinton's conduct was "grossly negligent," a potentially serious designation since "gross negligence" of national secrets is a crime punishable by prison time.
5. Strzok [changed](#) the wording in that memo to "extremely careless," a designation not found in the criminal code.
6. The FBI cleared Huma Abedin and Cheryl Mills, two aides to Hillary Clinton, of wrongdoing. Both [made false statements](#) to Strzok when they denied having knowledge of Clinton's private

email server during a formal investigation.

7. Comey, after being fired by the president, [leaked memos containing classified information](#) to a friend who shared that information with the *New York Times*.

8. In December 2017, the *New York Times* [reported](#) that Strzok and FBI lawyer Lisa Page were involved in a “romantic affair.” (Page was the person who had “exchanged politically charged texts disparaging President Trump and supporting Hillary Clinton.”)

9. Texts reveal that Strzok and Page discussed [how to evade](#) public records laws that require their electronic communications to be recorded.

10. In January 2018, the FBI announced it had [lost five months of texts](#) between Page and Strzok sent between Dec. 14, 2016, and May 17, 2017. The bureau blamed “software upgrades that conflicted with the FBI’s collection capabilities.”

11. Attorney General Jeff Sessions ordered a probe into the missing correspondence. Two days later, DOJ officials announced investigators had recovered the texts.

12. Text messages show Page and Strzok discussing the Hillary Clinton email investigation. In one text dated Feb. 25, 2016, Page [appears to discourage](#) prosecuting Clinton because she was likely to become president. “One more thing: she might be our next president. The last thing you need us going in there loaded for bear. You think she’s going to remember or care that it was more doj than fbi?”

13. Text messages between Page and Strzok imply that the probe into possible collusion between Trump and Russia was [likely a dead end](#). “You and I both know the odds are nothing. If I thought it was likely, I’d be there no question. I hesitate in part because of my gut sense and concern there’s no big there there,” Strzok wrote.

14. In a text from Aug. 15, 2016, Strzok, in a text to Page, [suggests that an “insurance policy”](#) should be made in case Trump got elected: “I want to believe the path you threw out for consideration in Andy’s office”—presumably a reference to Deputy FBI Director Andrew McCabe—“that there’s no way he gets elected – but I’m afraid we can’t take that risk. It’s like an insurance policy in the unlikely event you die before you’re 40.”

15. McCabe is married to Jill McCabe, who [received \\$675,288](#) from two entities linked to Clinton ally Terry McAuliffe.

16. McCabe, who [was removed as deputy director](#) on Monday, oversaw the Clinton investigation.

17. Page and Strzok are still employed by the bureau and have security clearance.

18. The FBI collaborated with and [agreed to fund the research](#) of former British spy Christopher Steele who had been retained by Fusion GPS in June 2016 to research possible connections between Trump and Russia.

19. In April 2016, Fusion GPS [had been retained](#) by the law firm Perkins Cole on behalf of the Clinton Campaign and DNC to conduct opposition research on Trump.

20. In January 2018, Steele [was referred](#) for criminal investigation.

What do all of these facts mean? It's impossible to say with any certainty.

Republicans would have you believe Democrats, the FBI, and DOJ worked together to obtain FISA warrants, using trumped up and partisan charges, that allowed them to surveil the Trump Campaign. Democrats are claiming Republicans are attacking the FBI to protect Trump and undermine the probe into Russian collusion.

The naked partisanship and high stakes, which feel more like a season of *House of Cards* than reality, have made it difficult to get at what's actually true.

However, regardless of the contents of [the newly released memo](#) and the outcome of the Mueller probe it's clear that a second probe is necessary to investigate what exactly was going on at the FBI.

As Plato once asked, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*