

Politics

Email pointed Trump campaign to WikiLeaks documents that were already public

By **Rosalind S. Helderman** and **Tom Hamburger** December 8

A 2016 email sent to candidate Donald Trump and top aides pointed the campaign to hacked documents from the Democratic National Committee that had already been made public by the group WikiLeaks a day earlier.

The email — sent the afternoon of Sept. 14, 2016 — noted that “Wikileaks has uploaded another (huge 678 mb) archive of files from the DNC” and included a link and a “decryption key,” according to a copy obtained by The Washington Post.

The writer, who said his name was Michael J. Erickson and described himself as the president of an aviation management company, sent the message to the then-Republican nominee as well as his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., and other top advisers.

The day before, WikiLeaks had tweeted links to what the group said was 678.4 megabytes of DNC documents.

The full email — which was first described to CNN as being sent on Sept. 4, 10 days earlier — indicates that the writer may have simply been flagging information that was already widely available. CNN later corrected its story to note the email had been sent Sept. 14.

The message also noted that information from former secretary of state Colin Powell’s inbox was available “on DCLeaks.com.” That development, too, had been publicly reported earlier that day.

Alan S. Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., described it as one of “a ton of unsolicited emails like this on a variety of topics.”

Futerfas said Erickson was unknown to Trump Jr. or the campaign. The message was one of thousands turned over to the House Intelligence Committee and others investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election, emails that included spam and junk emails. Trump Jr. was asked about the email Wednesday, when he spent about seven hours behind closed doors answering questions from members of the committee.

“The email was never read or responded to — and the House Intelligence Committee knows this,” Futerfas said. “It is profoundly disappointing that members of the House Intelligence Committee would deliberately leak a document, with the misleading suggestion that the information was not public, when they know that there is not a scintilla of evidence that Mr. Trump Jr. read or responded to the email.”

Futerfas said that he and Trump Jr. had been required to surrender their electronic devices during the interview for security reasons. He expressed anger that details of the session leaked out before it had even concluded. “We are concerned that these actions, combined with the deliberate and misleading leak of a meaningless email, undermines the credibility of the serious work the House Intelligence Committee is supposedly undertaking,” he said.

House Intelligence Committee officials did not respond to requests for comment.

The email came from a Yahoo email address. It is unclear whether the sender’s name is actually Michael Erickson. The author could not immediately be reached for comment.

In addition to Trump Jr., it was sent to a rarely used address for Donald Trump, as well as Trump Organization attorney Michael Cohen and a Gmail account that had sometimes been used by Hope Hicks, who is now the White House communications director. It also went to several other Trump Organization employees, with the subject line “Trump: Another Wikileaks DNC Upload.”

Karoun Demirjian, Ellen Nakashima and Alice Crites contributed to this report.

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Rosalind Helderman is a political enterprise and investigations reporter for the Washington Post.  Follow @PostRoz

Tom Hamburger covers the intersection of money and politics for The Washington Post.  Follow @thamburger

