

**Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)**

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Monday, July 04, 2016 1:32 PM  
**To:** Page, Lisa C. (OGC) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Is Hillary Clinton Telling the Truth About Emails? - The Daily Beast

Thanks; see below, incorporating your feedback

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Date:** 07/04/2016 1:31 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Cc:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)"  
[redacted]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Is Hillary Clinton Telling the Truth About Emails? - The Daily Beast

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -6

[redacted]

b5 -1

[redacted]

There are three chains totalling 8 or 9 emails which have (C) portion marks in front of paragraphs. Some have both (C) and (SBU) in front of different paragraphs in the same email. During a brief a few weeks ago, Jon provided a copy of the emails in question.

All were released in the 30,000 FOIA production. One of the chains contains multiple B1 redactions, indicating it is currently classified Confidential; the other two chains were released in full. We do not yet have determinations from State about their classification at the time of writing. I would argue for

b5 -1

[redacted]

[redacted]

Thanks,  
Pete

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/07/08/is-hillary-clinton-telling-the-truth-about-emails.html>

## Is Hillary Clinton Telling the Truth About Emails?

By Lauren Carroll and Jon Greenberg

Saturday's news that Hillary Clinton spent more than three hours speaking with the FBI bled into the Sunday news shows, with Clinton again saying she did not send or receive material marked classified through the private email server she used while secretary of state.

"Let me just repeat what I have repeated for many months now," Clinton told NBC's Chuck Todd in a phone interview following her interview with investigators: "I never received nor sent any material that was marked classified."

The line has been part of Clinton's defense since at least last August. Back then, PolitiFact hesitated to rate Clinton's claim because of the fluidity of events and the ongoing investigation.

Eleven months later, we wanted to take a fresh look.

### Classified after the fact

The public became aware that Clinton used a private email server in March 2015. Eventually, Clinton turned over about 30,000 work-related emails to the State Department for public release.

The State Department redacted about 2,000 of those emails before releasing them, saying they contain classified information — including some that have been withheld entirely because they contain "top secret" information.

Clinton's statement focuses on a much narrower and potentially misleading point — that Clinton sent or received material she knew was classified because it was marked.

None of the emails the State Department redacted, or any other emails made public, contained classification markings at the time they were sent, government officials said.

The possibility remains, however, that she sent or received classified information that was inappropriately left unlabeled — or that Clinton, as head of the department, failed to recognize and deal with information that should have been classified.

Further, because Clinton used a private server, we only have Clinton's word that she turned over all relevant email. It's possible there are emails with classified information on them that she deleted or did not turn over.

Danielle Brian, executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, said Clinton is carefully picking her words.

"On the one hand, I believe that sentence is likely accurate," said Danielle Brian, executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, told PolitiFact. "But I also believe that it is so carefully crafted as to avoid a more important question, which is whether there was information in her email that should

to avoid a more important question, which is whether there was information in her email that should have been marked classified.”

The plot only gets more complicated.

While we know officials retroactively classified portions of emails on Clinton’s private server, we do not yet know if any of those emails contained classified information when they first landed in Clinton’s server. It’s possible that emails that were not marked classified contained classified information.

There’s also some disagreement between the State Department and the intelligence community over what was or should have been treated as classified. Government agencies regularly disagree over what should be classified or not, and transparency advocates say the government regularly over-classifies.

Clinton’s specific phrasing — that she never sent or received material “marked classified” — is likely a critical point for investigators, as it’s relevant to the question of Clinton’s intent and whether she knowingly mishandled material.

In that sense, Steven Aftergood, director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, said Clinton’s claim might not be misleading.

But it’s also true, Aftergood said, “that statement alone does not answer all possible questions about the matter.”

Overall, Clinton is focusing on a technical aspect of the government chain of classification, that information contained within her private email server wasn’t “marked” classified. There is no evidence Clinton knowingly sent or received classified information.

But the government classification system is complicated, and Clinton fails to acknowledge that classified information could have moved through her email server without a proper label. Part of the problem is Clinton’s private server itself, because only she and her team know what was in the emails she deleted.

We rate the claim **Half True**.

### **Clinton, the Russian ‘reset’**

On *Meet the Press*, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., was asked to explain foreign policy positions that appear more in line with Clinton than Republican presumptive nominee Donald Trump.

“I can assure you that I’m not very close to Hillary Clinton. I think she’s disqualified herself from commander in chief by her cavalier attitude towards our nation’s secrecy laws,” Cotton said. “And she has been responsible for many of the worst decisions of the Obama administration.

“She was literally present when we pressed the reset button with Russia just a few months after Russia had invaded Georgia.”

Cotton’s talk about Russia is an imperfect but not inaccurate retelling of history. That claim rates **Mostly True**.

Russia long has had a military presence in the semi-autonomous Georgian regions of South Ossetia

and Abkhazia, two areas that enjoyed substantial autonomy from Georgia.

In 1991, Georgian forces occupied the South Ossetian capital, but resistance by Russian-backed fighters led to a stalemate. In 1992, all parties agreed to a ceasefire, which included a Russian-led peacekeeping force. There was a similar pattern of hostilities in Abkhazia that resulted in a similar solution. The presence of peacekeepers and international monitors worked for about a decade.

Calm unravelled in 2004 with the election of a more nationalist leader in Georgia. There was aggression on both sides. Violence grew and on Aug. 7, 2008, after Russian-backed rebels in South Ossetia shelled ethnically Georgian villages, the Georgian government sent in its army to take control of the region. Russia responded militarily, successfully pushing back Georgian troops from both South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Clashes continued for a week, drawing in portions of Georgia beyond the two breakaway regions, until France helped broker a peace deal. Open conflict ended Aug. 12, 2008. Russia then recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as sovereign nations, though most other countries have not taken that step.

Jump forward to March 2009 to pick up the other point in Cotton's statement.

Newly elected President Barack Obama had campaigned that he would put relations with Russia on a less confrontational footing. Most of his focus was on scaling back the nuclear arsenals of both nations.

As part of that initiative, on March 5, 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland, then-Secretary of State Clinton gave her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov a red button. The button was supposed to have word "reset" written on it in Russian. But the Americans got it wrong -- the word translated to "overcharged."

So Cotton has the basics of the story largely correct though he's cutting off the edges of the story. Russian troops did participate in military activities on Georgian soil, but troops were already in place as part of a brokered settlement. The Russians didn't necessarily initiate hostilities.

And while Cotton said the Americans hit the "reset" button "a few months" after the Russian invasion, the reality is it took place almost six months after the week-long conflict had ended.

Susan Allen, director of the Center for Peacemaking Process at George Mason University, calls Russia's action an invasion because in early August 2008, no one considered South Ossetia to be an independent country.

But Allen told us that beyond that legal definition, the details muddy the picture. Georgia made the first large military move. On top of that, Russian soldiers were already on the ground in South Ossetia.

"Russia had had a longstanding role as part of a peacekeeping force separating the Georgians and South Ossetians," Allen said. "Yes, Russia invaded Georgia, and, yes, there is a lot more to the story."

*Read the full fact-checks at [PunditFact.com](http://PunditFact.com).*