



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on March 8, 2018

## Sharyl Attkisson: IG's Office Swapped Out My Hard Drive After Fed Agents Hacked My Computer

Former CBS correspondent Sharyl Attkisson is no stranger to having government agencies mess around inside her computers. In 2012, her computers were hacked — apparently by a government agency — and three classified government documents were placed in a hidden folder on her hard drive. Now, she is accusing the office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice of swapping out the hard drive of one of her computers while it was in DOJ custody.



In 2012 — while working on an exposé of the Obama administration regarding the Benghazi scandal — Attkisson experienced strange issues with not one, but two computers she was using. One was her personal laptop. The other was a laptop belonging to CBS. Both were running slowly and the fans were constantly running at full speed, indicating heavy CPU usage. Then, on one of those laptops, her cursor moved on its own (or at least without any direction from her) and a document she was working on began to be deleted, line by line, as she watched.

When Attkisson had her computer examined by an independent computer forensics expert, evidence was found showing that it had been “accessed by an unauthorized, external, unknown party on multiple occasions” and that “this party performed all access remotely using Attkisson’s accounts,” according to a [report](#) from CBS in 2013. Furthermore, “forensic analysis revealed an intruder had executed commands that appeared to involve search and exfiltration of data.” The traces of software left behind after the attack were shown by the expert who examined the computer to be “proprietary to a federal intel agency,” according to Attkisson.

Not only that, but buried in the system files of her operating system (where she would be almost certain never to look) were three classified government documents. Attkisson could have been charged under the Espionage Act for possessing those documents. And unlike Hillary Clinton — whom Attkisson was exposing along with Obama in her reporting on Benghazi — Attkisson would not likely have gotten a pass from the FBI.

So, in 2013, Attkisson says she “turned to the IG’s office.” That office was occupied then (as now) by Obama appointee Michael Horowitz. As Attkisson explains in a [recent article](#) she wrote for *The Hill*, “By way of background, in 2013, I filed a complaint with the IG’s office asking it to investigate the government-based computer surveillance. CBS News — where I worked at the time — would not allow the IG to examine my CBS laptop, which had been infiltrated (as CBS publicly announced on Aug. 7, 2013). But I asked the IG to examine one of my personal home computers that was also compromised.”

Attkisson admits that she was advised by some of her intel sources not to trust the inspector general. She writes: “But I figured there was little downside. We already had our irrefutable forensics findings from our examinations. If the IG probe was competent and honest, as I expected it might be, then it



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could turn up names of the government actors responsible. If not, no harm done.”

It appears Attkisson was mistaken. Before that “investigation” was over, IG computer investigators were claiming that the hacker had not gotten into her computer remotely, but had accessed it locally — sitting there for hours at a time, in her home. She knew that couldn’t be true: Her husband was there during many of those times, working from home.

Then, when the “investigation” was complete, the IG’s office stonewalled Attkisson, refusing to release to her the final report. She was advised to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. She writes, “I did so; under the law, a response was due within about 30 days. It’s been years.”

But, the IG’s office did return the Apple laptop. Sort of. As Attkisson explains:

Not long ago, my forensics team asked if I used that Apple computer after the IG returned it. My team was conducting a new exam. “No,” I replied, “it hasn’t functioned since before I gave it to the IG. I just stored it when they returned it. Why?”

“Because — that’s not your hard drive inside the computer they gave back to you,” they told me. “... We know the serial number on the hard drive when you bought it. We recorded the same serial number on our earlier forensics exams. This is a different hard drive. Completely different serial number. Not even close.”

I would never have known if we hadn’t gone back in that computer for additional forensics.

While the revelation that Horowitz’s office buried evidence of a crime by a federal agency, pulled a snow job on an investigation, and tampered with evidence would be bad enough all by itself, it also means that [the man who is now responsible for investigating the FISA abuse scandal](#) involving the FBI and DOJ cannot be trusted not to protect the people involved. A man who will burn a case once to protect his people will certainly do it again.

Given this glaring spot on Horowitz’s record, President Trump’s tweeted remark at hearing of Attorney General Sessions’ decision to have Horowitz take the lead in this case makes perfect sense. Trump tweeted:

Why is A.G. Jeff Sessions asking the Inspector General to investigate potentially massive FISA abuse. Will take forever, has no prosecutorial power and already late with reports on Comey etc. Isn’t the I.G. an Obama guy? Why not use Justice Department lawyers? DISGRACEFUL!

In her telling of this ordeal, Attkisson asked two questions: “When the DOJ’s inspector general won’t follow the law, to where can a citizen turn?” and “What does all this mean to the integrity of the DOJ’s inspector general?” What and where, indeed.

What is becoming increasingly clear, though, is that unless President Trump intervenes, there will not likely be anything resembling a real investigation into the FISA abuse scandal. The swamp rats look after one another.

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