



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 20, 2012

House Committee May Probe Media Matters-DOJ Connection

A U.S. House oversight committee may investigate the [Justice Department's](#) connection to the leftist [Media Matters for America](#), [a congressman says](#).

Rep. [Blake Farenthold](#) (R-Texas), a member of the [House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform](#), suggested the probe after [The Daily Caller](#) revealed e-mails showing that the DOJ used Media Matters to launch attacks on political enemies, including Rep. [Darrell Issa](#) (R-Calif.), who is investigating the department for its role [in covering up](#) the murder of a U.S. Border Patrol agent.



Media Matters was founded by homosexual [David Brock](#).

E-mails Show Conspiracy

The Justice Department-Media Matters conspiracy to attack and smear enemies of the regime is disclosed in a [batch of e-mails](#) *The Daily Caller* obtained from the Justice Department. The [website](#) reported,

Internal Department of Justice emails obtained by *The Daily Caller* show Attorney General Eric Holder's communications staff has collaborated with the left-wing advocacy group Media Matters for America in an attempt to quell news stories about scandals plaguing Holder and America's top law enforcement agency.

[Dozens of pages of emails](#) between DOJ Office of Public Affairs Director Tracy Schmalzer and Media Matters staffers show Schmalzer, Holder's top press defender, working with Media Matters to attack reporters covering DOJ scandals. *TheDC* obtained the emails through a Freedom of Information Act request.

E-mails show Schmalzer conspiring with Media Matters staff member Jeremy Holden to attack those trying to expose the [New Black Panther Party's voter intimidation](#) in Philadelphia. "Holden attacked former DOJ Civil Rights Division attorneys J. Christian Adams and Hans von Spakovsky on Sept. 20, 2010 for what he called an attempt 'to reignite the phony New Black Panther Party scandal,'" *The Daily Caller* said. Before Holden [posted his article](#) at 7:52 p.m., Schmalzer sent him several e-mails with information helping him attack both former DOJ officials.

The campaign to defend the department's [refusal to prosecute](#) the New Black Panthers continued for at least another two months, *The Daily Caller* reported. It continued,

On Nov. 18, 2010, Holden [wrote a new blog post](#) he described as an "EXCLUSIVE," titled "Right-wing commission to vote on flawed New Black Panthers report."

"The conservative-dominated U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will vote Friday on an interim report



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that omits critical evidence disproving allegations that the Obama administration refuses to enforce voting-rights laws against racial minorities, according to Media Matters' analysis of a copy of the report we obtained," Holden wrote in the Nov. 18 article.

Holden attacked Adams again, and Christopher Coates — another now-former DOJ attorney.

After Holden published that piece, Schmalzer sent him an email titled "Great piece ..." and continuing in the body of the message, "On USCCR investigation." One minute later, Holden responded, writing, "Thanks!"

The following July, Media Matters tried to put out another fire burning out of control: the department's notorious "gunwalking" scandal known as "Fast and Furious," [which resulted](#) in the death of Border Patrol officer Brian Terry. Mexican drug dealers [murdered him](#) using guns [channeled through Fast and Furious. The DC reported.](#)

At 9:50 a.m. on July 8, 2011, Media Matters' Matt Gertz wrote to Schmalzer asking for her help "debunking what I think is a conservative media myth about Operation Fast and Furious."

"Several media outlets, including Fox News this morning, are claiming that Fast and Furious was paid for with stimulus dollars," Gertz wrote to Schmalzer. "My research suggests that this is not true, and I was hoping you'd be able to confirm that."

Gertz added that he needed a response "by 1 p.m." because he thought the issue was "likely to snowball if it isn't stopped."

In less than two hours, Schmalzer responded with an answer from her "budget folks" in DOJ. "You're right," she told Gertz, before explaining why she thought so.

The Justice Department-Media Matters smear campaign also targeted Congressman Darrell Issa, who is leading the charge to expose the truth about Fast and Furious. [TheDC reported,](#)

At 12:18 p.m. on Jan. 31, Schmalzer sent Gertz two paragraphs of text from Issa's comments during a House Judiciary Committee hearing on Dec. 8, 2011. Schmalzer underlined a portion of the text in those paragraphs in which Issa discussed the differences between Fast and Furious and similar — but different in crucial respects — programs from the George W. Bush administration.

"The difference in the previous administration is there was coordination with the Mexican government," Schmalzer quoted Issa as saying in her email to Gertz. "They made a real effort under [Operation] Wide Receiver [in the George W. Bush administration] to pass off a small amount of weapons and track them. This program [Fast and Furious], just the opposite. Even knowing the drug cartels that were going to receive them, they simply allowed them to go to the stash house."

Just hours after Schmalzer sent Gertz that highlighted Issa quote, [it appeared in a Media Matters article](#) titled "Rep. Issa Ties Himself In Fast And Furious Knots." Gertz wrote the piece for Media Matters Action Network's "Political Correction" blog. *The Daily Caller* continued,

In his article, Gertz referenced a just-released Democratic House oversight committee staff report that he said concluded "there is no evidence that senior officials in the Obama Department of Justice authorized gunwalking in that case."

Gertz chastised Issa, who had pointed out that morning on Fox News how DOJ and congressional Democrats were inconsistent about how Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer "was still a believer in Fast and Furious and programs like it" on Feb. 4, 2011.



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On March 12, 2012, Schmalzer appeared to suggest that Gertz craft a hit piece “attacking Tea Party Nation founder Judson Phillips for his public comments about Operation Fast and Furious,” [TheDC reported](#). “At the time, Phillips was pressing GOP leadership to take action on the gunwalking scandal. During a Fox News interview, Phillips said Fast and Furious ‘should be investigated, but we also have to remember the program itself was a partisan program.’”

Not surprisingly, the Justice Department dragged its feet in fulfilling the *TheDC*’s Freedom of Information request, taking nearly nine full months to provide the data, with no explanation for the delay. That violates the federal FOIA law.

Tax Status in Jeopardy?

The revelations prompted Rep. Farenthold to say that the House Oversight Committee will likely investigate the collusion.

Farenthold wants the committee to investigate Media Matters’ tax-exemption. “That status allows the group’s donors to claim an income tax deduction for their contributions,” [TheDC noted](#), “and also permits Media Matters to pay no federal tax on its income.” It added, “Tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which Media Matters enjoys, is typically reserved for organizations that don’t engage in excessive partisan politicking.”

But critics say that leftist politicking is Media Matters’ main job.

[Farenthold told NRA News](#) during a radio interview,

I think we need to look at the 501(c)3 status of Media Matters, and I think this is just more evidence that the Justice Department under Eric Holder is out of control. And it’s more evidence that Mr. Holder is not fit to run a lemonade stand.

Farenthold said congressional investigators are looking into the matter, and that DOJ’s Inspector General may get questions about it when he appears before Issa’s committee today [to discuss](#) Fast and Furious.

The Justice Department has not answered requests for comment about this latest scandal, [TheDC reported](#).

Media Matters Tax Exemption Threatened Before

Farenthold’s threat to probe Media Matters’ tax-exemption isn’t the first time it has been threatened. Its [“Drop Fox” campaign](#) to deprive the network of advertisers also raised the question of whether its activities trespassed the rules governing tax-exempt organizations.

Aside from attacking Fox and [encouraging former employees](#) to sue the network, Media Matters [hired a political torpedo](#) to persuade a Saudi investor — the second-largest investor at the time in Fox’s parent, [News Corporation](#) — to sell his holdings.

[According to](#) Elizabeth MacDonald, writing at *Fox Business*,

The nonprofit failed to report all of these activities to the IRS on its tax returns. While nonprofits often declare free speech rights when they push the code, as Media Matters likely will here, former IRS officials and tax lawyers say speech is one thing — urging action is another. Such activities are nowhere to be found within the scope of U.S. tax law covering nonprofits.

MacDonald published a three-part series about Media Matters’ legally dubious activities.



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