

'BleachBit' IT Specialist Was Also Granted Immunity by FBI

According to an investigative report published by *The New York Times*, a computer specialist who deleted Hillary Clinton's emails despite orders from Congress to preserve them was given immunity by the Justice Department during the FBI's investigation into her personal email account.

Paul Combetta, an employee of Platte River Networks, realized in March 2015 he had not followed a December 2014 order from the former secretary of state's lawyers to delete archived emails. He then used BleachBit, an open-source file-wiping software, to delete the messages.

According to the *New York Times*:

According to the . documents, Mr. Combetta told the bureau in February that he did not recall deleting the emails. But in May, he told a different story.

In the days after Mrs. Clinton's staffers called Platte River Networks in March 2015, Mr. Combetta said realized that he had not followed a December 2014 order from Mrs. Clinton's lawyers to have the emails deleted. Mr. Combetta then used a program called BleachBit to delete the messages, the bureau said.

The Justice Department also provided limited immunity to Clinton IT staffer Bryan Pagliano during the FBI's yearlong investigation. It is unclear, however, if that immunity may apply to any wrongdoing related to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's separate investigation into the matter.

The committee made a preservation order prior to Combetta's action. The *Times* report states:

In Mr. Combetta's first interview with the . in February, he said he did not recall seeing the preservation order from the Benghazi committee, which Mrs. Clinton's lawyer, Cheryl D. Mills, had sent to Platte River. But in his May interview, he said that at the time he made the deletions "he was aware of the existence of the preservation request and the fact that it meant he should not disturb Clinton's email data" on the Platte River server.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign said the new revelations underscores the need for a special prosecutor and an independent investigation of the matter. Spokesman Jason Miller said it connects back to alleged corruption in the Clinton Foundation.

"Not only did the Clinton IT staffer who set up her illicit server take action to avoid prosecution, so did the IT worker who deleted her emails while they were under a preservation order from Congress," he said. "It's hard not to look at this and see a concerted effort to keep Hillary Clinton's State Department emails from seeing the light of day, and the mounting evidence of corruption involving the Clinton Foundation shows there was plenty to hide."