

Journalist: Paul Ryan Adviser Likely Leaked 'Hot Mic' Audio to 'Destroy' Donald Trump

Dr. Jerry Falwell Jr., a campaign surrogate to Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, raised eyebrows last weekend when he suggested the GOP establishment leaked the 2005 "hot mic" audio to the media in an effort to "destroy" the candidate.

Now, it seems that might have actually been the case.

Journalist Jim Hoft of the *Gateway Pundit* is pointing the finger at longtime adviser to Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and avowed #NeverTrumper Dan Senor. And he's not alone.

Documentary filmmaker Mike Cernovich specifically asked Senor if he was directly involved in the release of the recording. He said he was told by an insider that Senor's wife, television host Campbell Brown—who has worked for both CNN and NBC—obtained the tapes and Senor himself handed them off to *The Washington Post*, which eventually released them.

If they were trying to deny their involvement, Senor and Brown did a really bad job of it.

"Note to media: if interviewing Trump surrogates today, focus q's on tape. Besides Rudy, these surrogates were all hiding over the weekend," Senor posted. "Now Trump surrogates magically appear b/c debate wasn't a disaster. You shld intv them abt the tape, as though the debate never occurred."

His wife then playfully posted, in response to another user's tweet that they were behind the audio leak: "Yep. Still having fun after all these years. Key to a happy marriage." She later

said she was only joking.

WikiLeaks released an email Tuesday that shows *The Washington Post* tipped off the Clinton Campaign about the audio, not the other way around.

The connections to Ryan would explain the timing of the release. The audio came out Friday, just hours before the speaker was scheduled to make his first campaign appearance alongside Trump. And, since the release, Ryan has used it as an excuse to all but completely disavow his party's presidential nominee.

Even before these new rumblings, there was a call to have Ryan step down as speaker over his refusal to support Trump. An online petition was launched Tuesday and in its first 15 hours, it generated nearly 6,000 signatures.