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U.S.

Evangelist's Account Spurred Stone to Seek Clinton Emails From WikiLeaks

Trump campaign adviser sought corroboration for Indian's allegations against Hillary Clinton



In this image provided by Anand Kilari, right, who goes by the name K.A. Paul, he is seen with political operative Roger Stone.
PHOTO: ANAND KILARI

By Rob Barry and Shelby Holliday

Feb. 1, 2019 7:07 p.m. ET

Less than two months before the 2016 election, longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone sent an email request to a radio show host who had recently interviewed WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange: Get information from Mr. Assange about Hillary Clinton's alleged role in the Libyan civil war in August 2011.

Mr. Stone later misled a congressional panel about the existence of that email, according to an indictment by special counsel Robert Mueller's office, which is investigating Russia's attempts to influence the presidential election.

Mr. Stone's Sept. 18, 2016, request for WikiLeaks documents from that specific period, according to text messages and emails reviewed by The Wall Street Journal as well as interviews with several of the individuals involved, was an attempt to follow up on anti-Clinton allegations by a Christian religious figure from India who has met with a number of world leaders. The man, Anand Kilari, who goes by the name K.A. Paul, says he travels to conflict zones to negotiate for peace.



Anand Kilari, center, with Melania Trump, left, and Ivanka Trump, right, in an image he provided. PHOTO: ANAND KILARI

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indictment with obstructing a House inquiry, lying to lawmakers about his efforts to obtain emails from WikiLeaks, in part regarding Mr. Kilari's account, and tampering with a witness—the radio host, Randy Credico, according to the indictment. Mr. Stone has pleaded not guilty to the charges, which upon conviction could carry as much as 20 years in prison.

In testimony before the House intelligence committee in September 2017, Mr. Stone said he hadn't asked his associate, whom he later identified as Mr. Credico, to pass any requests to Mr. Assange, according to Mr. Mueller's indictment. In May, the Journal reviewed the emails about Libya and reported that they appeared to raise questions about Mr. Stone's testimony.

Mr. Stone previously told the Journal he was never in direct communication with WikiLeaks or Mr. Assange and received "no information of any kind from them."

"Seeking facts is not digging dirt," Mr. Stone said in a text message to the Journal this week.

The story behind the emails sheds light on the longtime political operative's opposition-research efforts on behalf of candidate Donald Trump and Mr. Stone's apparent belief that Mr. Assange could aid him in those efforts. WikiLeaks by that time had begun releasing piecemeal a trove of Democratic campaign emails that intelligence officials have said were hacked by Russian operatives. Russia denies stealing the emails or meddling in the election, and Mr. Trump has said there was no collusion between his campaign and Russia.

During the 2016 campaign, Mr. Kilari sought to bring what he considered damaging information about Mrs. Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, to various members of Mr. Trump's inner circle, he said in an interview with the Journal in May 2018. He didn't address questions this week seeking further comment.

Eventually, a former senior Trump campaign adviser put him in touch with Mr. Stone, Mr. Kilari said.



Anand Kilari, who goes by the name K.A. Paul, at a news conference he attended with Pastor Terry Jones in Gainesville, Fla., in 2010. PHOTO: JOHN RAOUX/AP

The men met at Mr. Stone's New York City apartment in late August, Mr. Kilari said. There, according to a person who attended the meeting, Mr. Kilari told Mr. Stone that Mrs. Clinton played a role in disrupting a purported 2011 Libyan peace deal when she was secretary of state—events he said he learned of in August of that year as part of a peace delegation trying to negotiate an end to the violence in the North African country. A spokesman for Mrs. Clinton declined to comment.

Mr. Stone, in turn, told Mr. Kilari he thought WikiLeaks would be releasing more material on Mrs. Clinton, the person said. Mr. Kilari told the Journal he and Mr. Stone speculated that some of those emails could corroborate his account.

In text messages over the following days reviewed by the Journal, Mr. Stone told Mr. Kilari he would work to spread the potentially damaging story about Mrs. Clinton and Libya.

On Sept. 3, the messages show Mr. Kilari flew from the Midwest to meet Mr. Stone in a New York restaurant. At the meal, Mr. Kilari told the Journal, Mr. Stone told him he was in touch with Mr. Assange.

Over the next several weeks, Mr. Stone texted that he was working to get Mr. Kilari's Libya account placed with several mainstream news outlets, while Mr. Kilari dangled various dollar

figures, including at one point an offer of as much as \$5 million “if you could stop [Mrs. Clinton].” He also suggested he could arrange a \$25,000 wire to Mr. Stone.

“Good news!” Mr. Stone wrote on Sept. 9. For \$5 million, he could do more than just place news stories—he could air TV ads.

“Wow,” Mr. Kilari wrote back. But he didn’t follow up, and things soon began going awry, the messages show: Mr. Kilari didn’t have voice mail set up and missed a reporter’s call. Mr. Stone couldn’t reach other members of the peace delegation to try to confirm Mr. Kilari’s account.

To get the story in print, Mr. Stone needed corroboration, he wrote to Mr. Kilari. “Need cell phone bill!” he texted.

On Sept. 18, Mr. Stone emailed Mr. Credico, who had interviewed Mr. Assange several weeks earlier by phone. He briefly laid out Mr. Kilari’s account and then made the request described in the special counsel’s indictment against Mr. Stone: “Please ask Assange for any State or HRC e-mail from August 10 to August 30—particularly on August 20, 2011.”

When Mr. Credico asked Mr. Stone whether he thought Mr. Kilari’s story was true, Mr. Stone wrote back: “100%,” a copy of the exchange reviewed by the Journal shows.

On Sept. 19, Mr. Stone followed up. “Pass my message re Libya to Assange,” he texted Mr. Credico. Mr. Credico told the Journal he forwarded Mr. Stone’s request to a friend who serves as a WikiLeaks adviser, but said the message wasn’t passed along to Mr. Assange. WikiLeaks didn’t immediately respond to a request to comment.

After earlier telling the Journal he couldn’t confirm Mr. Kilari’s “convoluted tale,” Mr. Stone said this week another member of the peace delegation verified the account.

Finally, on Oct. 4, a story landed. Instead of appearing in a mainstream outlet as Mr. Stone and Mr. Kilari discussed, however, it was published by the right-wing site InfoWars, which suggested Mrs. Clinton torpedoed a peace deal out of personal pique.

Mr. Stone sent Mr. Kilari a link to the story. “Stone delivers / your turn!” he wrote Mr. Kilari in a text seen by the Journal. Mr. Kilari said he never paid Mr. Stone, and there is no evidence any money changed hands.

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