

FBI Chief Jim Comey's Russia Hacking Brief Turns Into 'Sh*t Show': Debbie Wasserman Shultz Yells At Comey For Exposing Her Scheme!

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Photo Illustration by Elizabeth Brockway/The Daily Beast

Shit Hits the Fan

FBI Chief Jim Comey's Russia Hacking Brief Turns Into 'Sh*t Show'

Perhaps the head of the FBI was expecting a sedate review of the intelligence that tied the Kremlin to the DNC hacks. But that's not what he got.

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On Friday morning in the bowels of the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, DC, U.S. intelligence chiefs finally [briefed](#) members of the House of Representatives on Russia's alleged hacking during the 2016 election. What started as a standard classified, closed-door briefing degenerated into a gigantic "shit show" of angry, bitter Democratic lawmakers screaming in FBI director [James Comey](#)'s face.

"It got incredibly uncomfortable," one congressional aide briefed on the meeting told The Daily Beast. "People were mad, people were loud. It was like...they wanted Comey's head on a plate," the source said, describing the elected Democrats in the room.

When Comey started addressing the group, he told them he was "tone deaf to politics," something he'd said in an open hearing this past week, according to a different congressional staffer briefed on the meeting. He then added that he "doesn't pay attention to timing, but does what he thinks is right," to the scoffs of Democrats in the room. Comey after all, rocked the election with his 11th hour announcement that the bureau was investigating a new trove of Hillary Clinton's emails—and his 11th hour and 59th minute proclamation that there was nothing new or incriminating in those messages.

Friday's raucous back-and-forth lasted for an anxious, sneering 10-15 minutes. And it demonstrates that Democrats still blame the FBI director for their stinging loss at the polls, only a day after word emerged that the Justice Department Inspector General is looking into whether Comey followed FBI policy by those pronouncements about the Clinton probe. (The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.)

"There was a big shit show toward the end of the briefing where [Democratic congresswoman and former Democratic National Committee chair] [Debbie Wasserman Schultz](#), in an attempt at a public CYA [cover-your-ass], badgered Comey in front of everyone basically blaming him for her losing her job, saying the FBI hadn't properly warned the DNC they were being hacked, and hadn't been more aggressive in their attempt to alert the DNC," the Hill staffer recounted. "It lasted an uncomfortable amount of time, like 5 minutes. Republicans were booing and calling for her to sit down."

Comey in testimony this week said that the FBI had asked for access to the DNC servers and John Podesta's server multiple times but had been denied, and ultimately the DNC contracted a private company, which then shared what they found about the intrusions with the bureau.

"As a Member of Congress, I will not compromise information learned and discussed in any classified briefing," Wasserman Schultz told The Daily Beast in a statement. "However, the FBI Director must clarify for the American people, the agency's policies for investigating and alerting those who are hacked by foreign governments. There are further questions that must be answered by Director Comey, who must provide more clarity on this and other questions that have arisen surrounding the FBI's handling of Russian hacking during the 2016 election cycle."

According to multiple sources, the confrontation with Comey started when Democratic congressman Jerrold Nadler first began pushing hard on Comey to explain his letters to Congress regarding Hillary Clinton right before the election (which many Democrats and [Clinton herself blame](#) for Trump's surprise election-night victory), and whether or not he would have made the controversial move had Trump been in the crosshairs.

"Do you believe that standard has been met with reference to the possible investigation of the Trump campaign's possible connections to the Russian government? And if not, why not?" Nadler asked Comey on Friday morning, according to [The Guardian](#).

After all, Comey the other day had huffed that he "would never comment on investigations—whether we have one or not—in an open forum," when asked by Sen. Angus King, an Independent from Maine, whether there was an active probe into ties between the Russian government and Team Trump.

"The irony of your making that statement here, I cannot avoid," King replied.

Four sources told The Daily Beast that Nadler's confrontation on Friday set off a chain-reaction. "A bunch of" Democratic lawmakers began jeering at and scolding the FBI director about an apparent Clinton/Trump "double standard." This dominated the final 15 minutes of the classified intel briefing, during which Comey remained evasive, dodged questions, offered up half-baked answers, and stayed "defiant," according to lawmakers in the room.

Among the Democrats charging Comey with historic malpractice were the former DNC chairwoman and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who capped off the hate-fest portion of the briefing by revisiting Nadler's line of questioning and further "grilling" Comey, according to two aides.

Towards the merciful conclusion of the meeting, Pelosi chastised the FBI chief for his behavior and for apparently not treating the House members with an adequate level of respect, according to the sources.

"At approximately 11 a.m., following the classified briefing, House Democrats held a Caucus meeting," a Pelosi spokesman told The Daily Beast. "At the end of that Caucus meeting, Leader Pelosi expressed the frustration House Democrats have as to why Director Comey continues to refuse to say whether he has opened an investigation into the alleged contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia. Leader Pelosi has always held Director Comey in high esteem, which is why she is concerned that he continues to evade answering this question."

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"You let us down!" one Democrat shouted at Comey during the briefing, according to one attendee speaking to [The Hill](#).

Several Democratic lawmakers emerged from the meeting on Capitol Hill looking visibly perturbed and dissatisfied with what happened. Most, at the time, would not elaborate on details of the meeting. When reporters asked Rep. Steve Cohen for specifics, he jokingly replied, "Can't tell you, then I'd have to kill you."

When asked by The Daily Beast if the classified briefing included any new details such as names of members of the Trump campaign [suspected of](#) irregular contact with Russian officials or players, Congressman Charlie Crist said no names were revealed and indicated that the briefing was underwhelming—"and that's the problem," he added.

Indignation towards Comey's actions just before the presidential election has not been relegated to the Democratic side of the aisle. Just after he sent that first and infamous letter to Congress, some prominent Republicans publicly stated their [outrage](#).

For the Democrats, however, the anger still lingers, given how many continue to blame him for giving the world a [President Trump](#).

The anti-Comey sentiments within the Democratic Party's leaders are unlikely to evaporate any time soon, as liberal lawmakers and politicians grapple with the realities of their brutal electoral defeats and the dawn of the Trump era. Meanwhile, Team Trump is busy preparing for The Donald's [inauguration-weekend](#) festivities, with the big day just one week out.

This article has been updated to include comment from Wasserman Schultz.