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# CIA leaker: Clinton 'given a pass' for emails

By [Julian Hattam](#) - 02/22/16 12:22 PM EST



Former CIA officer Jeffrey Sterling leaves the Alexandria federal courthouse with his wife, Holly, after being convicted of leaking classified details of an operation to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions to a New York Times reporter. (AP : Jeffrey Sterling)



A former **CIA officer serving jail time** for leaking documents to the New York Times accused federal officials of setting a double standard by apparently refusing to aggressively prosecute **Hillary Clinton**.

Clinton was "a high ranking official who should know better, but completely given a pass, and almost an apologetic pass," Jeffrey Sterling, who was found guilty of leaking classified

information to Times reporter James Risen last year, said in an **interview with the Washington Post** published on Monday.

“So how should us regular citizens feel, especially with heightened concerns about national security?”

The comments from Sterling, who is serving a **3.5-year prison term**, come as an indictment of the Democratic presidential frontrunner’s controversial use of a “homebrew” email setup throughout her tenure as secretary of State.

The rhetoric also echoes prominent conservative critics of Clinton, who have claimed that her email practices surely jeopardized national security. Critics have said that the Obama administration should **appoint a special prosecutor** so that Clinton's case is handled fairly.

**More than 1,700 emails** on Clinton’s private email system have been classified, 22 at the highest level of “top secret.” Both the State Department and Clinton’s presidential campaign have insisted that none of the documents were marked as classified at the time they were sent.

Sterling was found guilty of leaking classified details about Iran’s nuclear program. According to the Justice Department, the 19-year CIA veteran leaked the information to Risen after an unsuccessful lawsuit against the spy agency for racial discrimination. Sterling is African American.

The information was subsequently published in Risen’s 2006 book, “State of War.”

Sterling’s case captured national headlines because of the Justice Department’s efforts to force Risen to testify against Sterling, which Risen refused. The effort, which the Obama administration eventually abandoned, turned into a symbol of the government’s limits on press freedom.

In his interview with the Post, Sterling indicates that the affair with Risen overshadowed his own case.

“There was so much outcry about the potential of his being forced to testify and no real concern for whether I was innocent or not,” he told the newspaper via the electronic messaging system at his federal prison in Englewood, Colo. “There was no concern that a life, a real person was being persecuted.”

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