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20 Facts About IRS Targeting, Those Emails And The White House

The IRS scandal started 587 days ago in May 2013, but it actually goes back years earlier. President Obama's testy "not even a smidgen of corruption" remark to [Fox News](#) in February 2014 showed fatigue. There was simply *no* evidence that the IRS was used for political targeting, he made clear. Maybe, but here are 20 things every American taxpayer should know about it:

1. It really started in January 2010. In [Citizens United](#), the Supreme Court found it unconstitutional to ban free speech by corporations, unions and other organizations.
2. In August 2010, the IRS [distributed a BOLO](#) (Be on the Lookout) list for Tea Party organizations applying for tax exempt status. Extra scrutiny, please.
3. In October 2010, IRS Exempt Organization chief Lois Lerner met with the DOJ about prosecuting conservative groups. Lerner or others at the IRS send voluminous taxpayer records to the FBI and DOJ, probably violating privacy laws. These documents may hold the key once we can see them.
4. By March 2012, amid reports of targeting, [former IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman testifies](#) there is "absolutely no targeting" by the IRS of conservative and/or Tea Party organizations.
5. On November 9, 2012, [Mr. Shulman steps down](#) as Commissioner, replaced by Steven Miller.
6. On May 10, 2013, during a bar meeting, Ms. Lerner admits targeting, calling it "absolutely incorrect, insensitive, and inappropriate." Four days later, on May 14, 2013, the Inspector General [issues a report](#) confirming targeting. Attorney General Eric Holder announces an [FBI investigation](#).
7. On May 15, 2013, Acting IRS Commissioner [Steven Miller resigns](#). President Obama names [Daniel Werfel](#) Acting Commissioner. Mr. Miller and Inspector General J. Russell George [testify to the House Ways and Means Committee](#).
8. On May 22, 2013, Ms. Lerner professes her innocence then [takes the Fifth](#). Next day, she is placed on [administrative leave](#).
9. On June 12, 2013, the IRS [finally suspends](#) BOLO lists for Tea Party names.
10. On June 20, 2013, the IRS pays \$70 million in bonuses. Ms. Lerner receives \$42,000; former Commissioner Miller receives \$100,000.
11. On June 24, 2013, the IRS admits that "inappropriate criteria" were used for tax-exempt status. Next day, Democrats claim progressives were targeted too.
12. On September 24, 2013, Ms. Lerner's retirement is announced, with full pension.

13. On February 3, 2014, President Obama tells Fox there's "[not a smidgen of corruption](#)" at the IRS.
14. On March 11, 2014, the Committee on House Oversight and Reform [issues a report](#) on Lois Lerner.
15. On April 7, 2014, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen confirms there are [six investigations](#): four by Congressional committees, one by the DOJ, one by the TIGTA. Over 250 IRS employees spend 100,000 hours, costing taxpayers at least \$14 million.
16. On April 8, 2014, the Committee on House Oversight and Government Reform says it will pursue contempt charges against Ms. Lerner.
17. On May 7, 2014, the House of Representatives holds Ms. Lerner in contempt of Congress.
18. On June 13, 2014 (Friday the 13th!), the IRS *first* says it lost Ms. Lerner's emails from 2009 to 2011. The IRS says hard drives and backups are destroyed, for 6 other IRS employees' too. The IRS spent \$10 million trying to recover them, but they are gone.
19. On September 22, 2014, Ms. Lerner breaks silence to [Politico](#), says *she* is the victim.
20. In November-December 2014, the Inspector General recovers 30,000 backed up Lerner emails. In FOIA litigation, court ordered documents show that the DOJ met with Ms. Lerner in 2010 about conservative groups. The IRS and Inspector General decline to provide documents revealing taxpayer private data, though White House may have received them.



Internal Revenue Service Director of Exempt Organizations Lois Lerner (L) makes a statement during a hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee with Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin on May 22, 2013 in Washington, DC. (Image credit: Getty Images via @daylife)

What will item 21 be? Or 22 or 23? You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist searching for a grassy knoll or second shooter to want to know. Whether the explanation is a spontaneous demonstration from a youtube video, conclusive evidence that some folks down at the IRS were confused, or something else, we should know. If those IRS employees were truly self-starters, free-thinkers

who were targeting without direction from their bosses, perhaps they shouldn't get bonuses, not big ones anyhow.

Besides, computer crashes don't mean anything, even if it was a full year into the federal investigation when the IRS revealed that all those emails from the key two year period had been long gone for some time. Now, they are back and we may soon be able to see them, as well as the even more important communications between the IRS and DOJ.

Everyone may have had the best of intentions here. No one may have intended any breach of law. And maybe the IRS should not have to administer our insanely complex tax law, but it does. And without regard to political party, every American should want to get to the bottom of this once and for all.

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