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## ABC reporter, 45, who broke story of secret Arizona tarmac meeting between Bill Clinton and Loretta Lynch in 2016 before Hillary email probe was dropped dies in 'apparent suicide'

- Christopher Sign, 45, was found dead in his home in suburb of Birmingham
- Police said they received 911 phone call just before 8:15am on Saturday
- Investigators found Sign's body when they arrived at his home in Hoover
- Initial reports indicate that his death is being investigated as a suicide
- In 2016, Sign broke story of tarmac meeting between Bill Clinton, Loretta Lynch
- Ex-President Clinton met then-attorney general on tarmac of Phoenix airport
- Lynch's Justice Department was investigating Clinton's wife, Hillary Clinton
- Meeting forced Lynch to recuse herself from overseeing the investigation
- Hillary Clinton was being investigated for use of a private email server for official communications during her tenure as secretary of state
- If you or someone you know is suffering from suicidal thoughts, call the national suicide hotline at 1-800-273-8255

By [ARIEL ZILBER FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](#) and [ROSS IBBETSON FOR MAILONLINE](#)

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The 45-year-old television news man who was the first to report of a secret meeting between former President **Bill Clinton** and then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch that was held on her private jet in 2016 has died of an apparent suicide.

Police in Hoover, **Alabama**, said they received a 911 call at 8:13am on Saturday of a person down at a home on Scout Trace.

First responders arrived at the home and found the body of Christopher Sign, a former University of Alabama football player and veteran broadcast journalist with Birmingham's ABC TV affiliate WBMA-LD.

News of Sign's death, which is being investigated by police as a suicide, was reported by **AL.com**.

In 2016, Sign reported that former President Clinton had met with Lynch on her private jet at Phoenix Airport.

It was alleged that their conversation centered around an ongoing investigation into whether Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while Secretary of State was illegal.

Bill Clinton and Lynch would go on to portray it as an impromptu friendly chat.

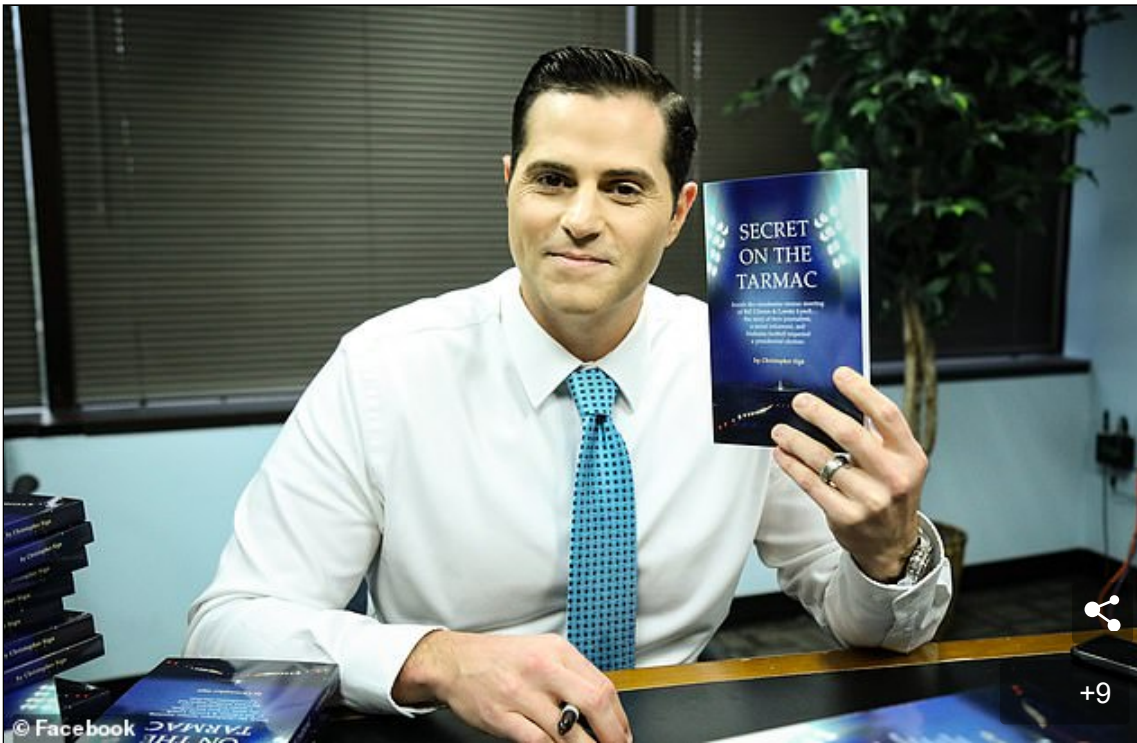
Days later, the FBI chose not to bring criminal charges against Hillary, who was in the midst of her presidential campaign.

Less than two weeks before the 2016 election, however, the probe was re-opened after emails were found on a laptop belonging to Anthony Weiner, the former congressman and husband of top Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

The FBI began investigating Weiner in 2015 after DailyMail.com revealed that he was in a 'sexting' relationship with a 15-year-old girl.

Then-FBI Director James Comey sent a letter to Congress in late October announcing the re-opened investigation. Two days before the election, the investigation was closed.

Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election to Donald Trump. Some observers believe that the timing of Comey's letter to Congress may have cost her the presidency.



**Christopher Sign, who broke the 2016 story about Bill Clinton's tarmac meeting with then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch, has died of an apparent suicide, according to authorities in Alabama. Sign is seen above last year holding a copy of his book Secret On The Tarmac**



**In June 2016, Bill Clinton (left) met with Attorney General Loretta Lynch (right) on the tarmac at Phoenix Airport in what was brushed aside as an impromptu friendly chat**



**Bill Clinton approaching AG Lynch's jet on the tarmac at Phoenix airport in June 2016**



**At the time of the meeting between Bill Clinton and Lynch, the Department of Justice was investigating Hillary Clinton for her use of a private email server during her tenure as secretary of state**

Since 2017, Sign has been an anchor on the local news station ABC 33/40 in Birmingham.

'Our deepest sympathy is shared with Chris's loving family and close friends,' said Sinclair Broadcast Group Vice President and General Manager Eric S. Land.

'We have lost a revered colleague whose indelible imprint will serve forever as a hallmark of decency, honesty and journalist integrity.'

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'We can only hope to carry on Chris's legacy. May his memory be for blessing.'

James Spann, a meteorologist and colleague of Sign, tweeted: 'We are still in shock over this news. Chris was a very good friend, and an incredible journalist. The grief today has been overwhelming.'

Wendell D. Edwards tweeted: 'I'm in disbelief. Praying for his family and the 3340 family too.'

Jamie Hale, a sports anchor for the same station where Sign worked, tweeted in response to a news story about his death from her organization's web site: 'I can't believe we have an article with this title. It doesn't feel real.'

'We were in the office together last night cutting up like we always do.'



First responders arrived at a home in Hoover, Alabama and found the body of Christopher Sign



Sign is seen above during his February 2020 appearance on Fox News promoting his book



Sign was a former football player for the University of Alabama college football team in Tuscaloosa





Prior to becoming a journalist, Sign attended the University of Alabama in the 1990s, where he played on the school's football team as an offensive lineman. While in Tuscaloosa, he met his wife, Laura, who was an All-SEC volleyball player for the Crimson Tide. Sign is survived by Laura and their three children

'I don't understand why. I can't talk about you in the past tense.

'The grief today is unbearable.'

Christina Boomer Vazquez tweeted: 'Words cannot quite capture the heartbreak of learning that Chris Sign, a dear former colleague, has passed away.

'My heart aches for his boys, his wife, and his family. He was so loved and will be so very missed.'

Prior to becoming a journalist, Sign attended the University of Alabama in the 1990s, where he played on the school's football team as an offensive lineman.

While in Tuscaloosa, he met his wife, Laura, who was an All-SEC volleyball player for the

## TIMELINE OF HILLARY CLINTON EMAIL SAGA

**June 2008:** An Apple Power Mac server, purchased by Bill Clinton's aide Justin Cooper in 2007, is installed in the basement of the Clintons' home in Chappaqua, New York. It initially handles traffic for Bill Clinton but soon is used by Clinton and her staff as well

**Fall 2008:** Computer equipment from Clinton's presidential campaign is tapped as a replacement - a Dell PowerEdge 2900 Windows Server and Microsoft Exchange and a 1950 running a

Crimson Tide. Sign is survived by Laura and their three children.

A native of the Dallas area, Sign spent time working as a reporter for ABC 33/40 between 2000 and 2005.

Before returning to Alabama to become an anchor, he was a local ABC 15 TV Arizona reporter when he broke the stunning story of the tarmac meeting in June 2016.

'We knew something had occurred that was a bit unusual. It was a planned meeting. It was not a coincidence.' Sign told **Fox and Friends** in February 2020 ahead of the release of his book **Secret on the Tarmac**.

Donald Trump had tweeted at the time: 'Does anybody really believe that Bill Clinton and the U.S.A.G. talked only about 'grandkids' and golf for 37 minutes in plane on tarmac?'

Sign said his source witnessed the rendezvous unfold from the moment Clinton arrived at the airport.

'He then sat and waited in his car with the motorcade, her airstairs come down, most of her staff gets off, he then gets on as the Secret Service and FBI are figuring out "How in the world are we supposed to handle this? What are we supposed to do?"' Sign told Fox.

'She mentioned that Bill Clinton flattered her, talked about Eric Holder, talked about how things were going at Justice, talked about her job performance, not this golf-grandkids, Brexit.'

Sign said his investigations into the tarmac meeting had led to numerous credible death threats.

BlackBerry Enterprise Server. Clinton aide Bryan Pagliano starts work on building the system, believing it will be used by Bill Clinton's staff

**January 2009:** It is decided that the Apple server must be replaced as it is having problems with the volume of traffic

**March 2009:** Pagliano installs the server he has built in a rack in the Chappaqua house basement, with the help of Cooper. Pagliano, who is administrator for the new device, transfers the Apple server emails onto the new device. The new server is backed up once a week onto a Seagate external hard drive. The FBI has never obtained the Apple server for examination

**January 2013:** Clinton's chief of staff, Cheryl Mills, recommends Denver, Colorado-based IT firm Platte River Networks (PRN) to manage the server to help with user limitations and reliability concerns

**June 23, 2013:** A Platte employee removes the server from the Chappaqua home to a data center in Secaucus, New Jersey, run by Equinix, to migrate it to a new server

**June 30, 2013:** The Clintons' email accounts are migrated to the Platte server

**July 18, 2013:** Platte signs an agreement to manage the new, third server, a Dell PowerEdge R620. Platte subsequently configure a backup device from Datto, Inc, a Connecticut-based company, to take multiple snapshots of the system daily and to store the information for 60 days. The device also takes copies of the Pagliano server between June 24-December 23

**December 2013:** The Pagliano server is fully decommissioned

**December 2014:** Clinton and Abedin begin using the domain hrcoffice and stop

'My family received significant death threats shortly after breaking this story,' he told Fox. 'Credit cards hacked. You know, my children, we have code words. We have secret code words that they know what to do.'

He added that his work had nothing to do with right or left-wing politics, but about what is right and wrong.

In May last year, Sign told a **Real Clear Investigations** team: 'To this day I have never found a single person who claims or corroborates any story that Bill Clinton played golf on this particular trip ... I feel strongly the former president did not play golf on this visit.'

Hillary's campaign was in full swing at this point and one might think Bill Clinton would be more involved in that than his golf swing on a 110-degree day in Phoenix.

Lynch was required to outline the meeting to then Justice Department Inspector Michael Horowitz and to lawmakers behind closed doors on Capitol Hill.

Despite the meeting being an apparent pleasant coincidence, Lynch's testimony revealed their conversation was stilted and unusual.

'As we walked to the door, the head of my security detail came to me and said: "Ma'am, I've been informed ... that former President Clinton is also at the airfield and would like to say hello.'" Lynch testified.

She said Clinton 'spoke with him for several minutes, asked about our trip, asked about our flight.'

Lynch described how she recalled recent press about the Clintons' new grandchild and

using clintonemail.com

**March 2015:** New York Times reports that in mid-February Clinton handed over more than 300 emails to the House committee investigating the attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya

**September 2015:** Clinton tells ABC News that the use of two separate email accounts was a 'mistake' though she denied passing on classified information through the private email server

**October 3, 2015:** The Pagliano server is voluntarily handed over to the FBI

**July 2016:** Clinton gives a 'voluntary' interview to the FBI 'about her email arrangements,' according to a statement from her spokesperson. Two days later, FBI Director James Comey says bureau could not 'find a case that would support bringing criminal charges' though he criticized Clinton as 'extremely careless' in the handling of sensitive material

**October 28, 2016:** Less than two weeks before the presidential election, FBI re-opens email probe after discovering laptop in a separate investigation involving former Congressman Anthony Weiner

**November 6, 2016:** Comey said that after a review of Weiner's emails, there was no change in his prior recommendation from July

**November 8, 2016:** Donald Trump defeats Clinton the presidential election. Some observers believe Comey's decision in late October to re-open the email investigation may have cost Clinton the election

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congratulated Bill.

She said the roughly twenty minute parley was 'the only real conversation I've ever had with him.'

Lynch said she made attempts to make a gracious exit more than once but that Clinton 'continued chatting. He continued talking.'

She added in her testimony: 'And at one point a staffer of mine came on the plane to get me. And at that point the president was - Mr. Clinton was then talking about Brexit.'

'He was saying that either he had been reading an article about Brexit, and he made a reference - he quoted something that had been in The Times - The New York Times, I should say - about Brexit when my staffer was stepping on to the plane.'

She was questioned about whether she felt that the conversation was going on too long and conceded, 'As we were leaving I felt that it was - it certainly was going to raise a potential issue in the appearance of how the case was being handled.'

James Comey, then FBI director, later usurped the decision on whether to prosecute Clinton after the controversial runway meeting.

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