The Washington Post, What would Watergate look like today? (6.11.12)

Imagine this:

The Republican National Committee (RNC) had taken precautions against cyber attacks. But with so many servers containing sensitive information about the campaign, and so little money dedicated to digital security (as opposed to advertising), it was impossible to keep an eye on all of them. Some were controlled by third parties, others by the campaign directly.

Then, early one morning, a tech-savvy RNC staffer noticed server 3, nicknamed "Watergate," was abnormally sluggish. It was a chance find but an important one. During peak working hours, the lag wouldn't be out of the ordinary. But at 2:30 a.m., there was no reason for such slow performance.

Before the RNC staffer could sound the alarm, however, an encrypted message was sent from within the FBI — from a low-level agent ordered to hack the RNC servers.

The missive in question was delivered to The Leaking Web. If you asked some, they were vigilantes — asked others, and they were the one entity that stood between the public good and private evil. But, regardless, they were the first port of call for those tired of the clandestine and seemingly criminal activity of the powerful.

In a matter of hours, everything went public in an explosion of raw data — the e-mail exchanges between the White House and the FBI, the wiretaps, security passwords — everything. And that was all it took to reveal one of the most corrupt actions undertaken by the executive branch of the federal government.

The preceding fiction was inspired by my colleague, Dan Zak, who wrote in April that, "If Watergate happened today, it would probably involve a hacking, not a burglary." Rather than reporters chasing down a story armed with notepads, typewriters and phone calls, the story could very well be a leak bypassing the media establishment entirely.

But, how do you think Watergate would have happened today? In recognition of Watergate's 40th anniversary, I thought it best to pose the question. Tweet us, reach out on Facebook or post in the comments. You can even e-mail us your take at innovations@washpost.com. I'll be collecting and posting some of the best feedback here.

Write a script, tell the story in a series of tweets — however you would like to best express a present-day Watergate — we're listening.