

related material in the United States for Orbis.¹⁰⁶³ As part of that undertaking, Danchenko informed Steele that he met in person with Millian on two or three occasions – in New York and “perhaps” in Charleston, South Carolina.¹⁰⁶⁴ However, as noted, Danchenko informed the FBI that he had not in fact met with Millian on any occasion and did not correct Steele in that misimpression.¹⁰⁶⁵

iii. The evidence obtained by the Office

The evidence obtained by the Office shows that Danchenko, in fact, never received a phone call or any information from Millian, and Danchenko never made arrangements to meet with Millian in New York. Rather, the evidence demonstrates that Danchenko fabricated these facts regarding Millian. Indeed, a review of the emails sent by Danchenko to Millian in the summer of 2016 support this conclusion – the same emails Danchenko failed to provide the FBI when interviewed regarding Millian. Those emails are described below.

Danchenko first came to the attention of Millian on May 26, 2016 when Russian journalist Dimitry Zlodorev emailed Millian the following:

Sergey, hello.

I hope all is well with you and your [sic] are once again in America. It is my recollection you told me that you either have or will have news. Will it be convenient if I call sometime next week?

In addition, my colleagues have an acquaintance, Igor Danchenko, who works here in consulting. Through them, he requested I find out if it is okay to get in touch with you? If I understood correctly, it is about Trump and Russia.

Can I give him your contact information—e-mail, phone, or just e-mail?¹⁰⁶⁶

Later that day, Millian replied to Zlodorev that he was leaving for Asia on June 10, 2016 and would call him soon.¹⁰⁶⁷ Millian’s reply does not mention Danchenko.

On July 21, 2016, Danchenko, who appears to have acquired Millian’s email address from Zlodorev, sent Millian the following message:

Colleagues from RIA Novosti gave me your contact information. You spoke to Dimitry Zlodorev about Donald Trump and his trips to Russia. I wanted to ask you: what projects was he looking into or were these just image-building trips for beauty contests? There has been a lot of speculation for months now on this topic. It would be interesting to chat about this topic. It’s confidential of course – I don’t have any relationship to media, though of course I do have acquaintances here. In any case, it would be interesting if and when possible to chat with you by phone or meet for coffee/beer in Washington or in New York where I will be next

¹⁰⁶³ SCO-006313 (Interview of Christopher Steele on Sept. 18, 2017) at 7.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁶⁵ SCO_105287 (CHS Reporting Document dated 11/14/2017).

¹⁰⁶⁶ SC_IDC_0042618 (Email from Zlodorev to Millian dated 05/26/2016).

¹⁰⁶⁷ SC_IDC_0044205 (Email from Millian to Zlodorev dated 05/26/2016).

week. I myself am in Washington. It is also possible by e-mail in Russian or in English. I sent to you a request to LinkedIn – there my work is clearer.¹⁰⁶⁸

Millian did not respond to Danchenko's July 21, 2016 email. In fact, Millian was traveling in Asia at the time Danchenko sent this email and did not return to New York until the night of July 27, 2016.¹⁰⁶⁹ Notably, Millian had suspended his cellular phone service effective July 14, 2016 (prior to his travel) and his service was only reconnected effective August 8, 2016.¹⁰⁷⁰

On July 26, 2016, Millian emailed Zlodorev the following:

Dimitry, on Friday I'm returning from Asia. An email came from Igor. Who is that? What sort of person?¹⁰⁷¹

That same day, Zlodorev responded:

Sergey, hello! Do you remember I said that a friend of my colleague wanted to get acquainted with you? You gave permission to give your email. The way I understand it, this is who this is. He and I are not personally acquainted, though he is, it seems, in my LinkedIn. And I didn't know what he wanted to talk about. If I remember correctly, he works at some think tank in Washington.¹⁰⁷²

Millian did not respond to Danchenko's July 21, 2016 email.

On August 18, 2016 – more than two weeks *after* Danchenko purportedly received the aforementioned anonymous call and allegedly agreed to meet with Millian in New York – Danchenko again emailed Millian, stating in part: "Hello, Sergey! I wrote you several weeks ago. We are contacts on LinkedIn."¹⁰⁷³ Danchenko then described a real estate deal in Russia and inquired about Millian's interest in the transaction. Danchenko closed the email by stating, "Write, call. My contact information is below."¹⁰⁷⁴ This email – which post-dated the alleged "late July" call from Millian, clearly reflected that Danchenko had not, in fact, spoken with Millian and did not believe he had done so. Specifically, Danchenko's email did not mention a possible call from Millian and did not discuss plans to meet in New York with Millian.

On August 24, 2016, Danchenko emailed Zlodorev, stating in part:

Aleksey Bogdanovsky recommended that I get in touch with Sergey Millian. I've read your interviews with him. *But for some reason Sergey doesn't respond.* I already both asked him about TRUMP and also proposed a project in Russia.

¹⁰⁶⁸ SC_IDC_0042660 (Email from Danchenko to Millian dated 07/21/2016).

¹⁰⁶⁹ SCO-101428 (U.S. Customs and Border Protection Person Encounter List for Sergei Millian at 1).

¹⁰⁷⁰ SCO-101860 (Verizon Notes on Account 404-667-9319); Verizon Subscriber Records for 404-667-9319.

¹⁰⁷¹ SC_IDC_0042661 (Email from Millian to Zlodorev dated 07/26/2016).

¹⁰⁷² SC_IDC_0042663 (Email from Zlodorev to Millian dated 07/26/2016).

¹⁰⁷³ SC_IDC_0042676 (Email from Danchenko to Millian dated 08/18/2016).

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Id.*

What is your relationship with him like? *Would you be able to ask him to reply to me? I could call or write on LinkedIn, but until he responds I would not like to pester him.* By the way, you and I are also contacts there.¹⁰⁷⁵

This August 24, 2016 email to Zlodorev again made it clear that Danchenko had not, in fact, spoken with Millian in “late July.” Again, Danchenko’s email did not mention a possible call from Millian, did not discuss plans to meet in New York with Millian, and did not inform Zlodorev that Millian did not show up to the alleged meeting in New York.

Later that day, Zlodorev responded in part:

Igor, hello, Sergey Millian asked me a couple of weeks ago who Igor Danchenko is. I had told him earlier, but he apparently forgot. At that time, he wrote to me from South Korea. The thing is that he, based on his own words, now spends more time in Asia than in America. Try to write to him once again. I simply know that he is constantly travelling and could actually have forgotten.¹⁰⁷⁶

The emails quoted above are further evidence that between July 21, 2016 and August 24, 2016, Millian did not call, email or meet with Danchenko, and Danchenko knew he had not received a call from someone who he believed to be Millian.

In addition, in July 2020, the Senate Judiciary Committee released a heavily redacted report of Danchenko’s January 2017 interview with the FBI.¹⁰⁷⁷ In the report, Danchenko is only identified as Steele’s “primary subsourc.” When the redacted interview was released, Millian had been publicly reported to be a source for certain information in the Steele Reports, including the information purportedly collected in “late July” 2016 alleging that Trump and his campaign were engaged in a “well-developed conspiracy of co-operation” with Russian officials. The redacted and anonymized interview also indicated that the “primary subsourc” (Danchenko) had received contact information for “Source 6,” *i.e.*, Millian, from a journalist who had previously interviewed Millian, *i.e.*, Zlodorev.¹⁰⁷⁸ Following the release of the interview, Millian began to email Zlodorev attempting to uncover the identity of Steele’s primary subsourc.¹⁰⁷⁹ In late July 2020, Danchenko was identified by name in press reporting as Steele’s primary subsourc. On July 19, 2020, Millian emailed Zlodorev, stating in part:

“I believe they’ve already found Steele’s source: [internet address]. Do you remember such a person? Igor Danchenko?”¹⁰⁸⁰

On July 20, 2020, Millian again emailed Zlodorev the following:

¹⁰⁷⁵ SCO-005860 (Interview of Igor Danchenko Electronic Communication dated 02/09/2017 1A) at 2 (emphasis added; capitalization in original).

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Id.*

¹⁰⁷⁷ U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Judiciary Committee Releases Declassified Documents that Substantially Undercut Steele Dossier, Page FISA Warrants (July 17, 2020).

¹⁰⁷⁸ SENATE-FISA2020-001106 at 20, 35-36.

¹⁰⁷⁹ SC_IDC_0043005 (Email from Millian to Zlodorev dated 07/17/2020).

¹⁰⁸⁰ SC_IDC_0043065 (Email from Millian to Zlodorev dated 07/19/2020).

I've been informed that Bogdanovsky travelled to New York with Danchenko at the end of July 2016; Danchenko, supposedly to meet with me (but the meeting didn't take place). Can you inquire with Bogdanovsky whether he remembers something from that trip and whether they touched upon my name in conversation, as well as for what reason Danchenko was travelling to NY? Steele, it seems, made Danchenko the fall guy, but Danchenko himself made several statements that were difficult to understand, for example, about the call with me. Did he tell Bogdanovsky that he communicated with me by phone and on what topic? Thank you! This will clarify a lot for me personally. It's a convoluted story!¹⁰⁸¹

These 2020 emails between Millian and Zlodorev again point to the fact that Danchenko did not receive a call from Millian in late-July 2016.

The Office also reviewed phone records for both Danchenko and Millian from 2016 and 2017. Those records reveal no communication between Millian and Danchenko. In fact, the Office was able to identify nearly every call received by Danchenko during the relevant timeframe. Of the small number of calls that could not be identified, none had a duration approaching 10-15 minutes.¹⁰⁸² Moreover, as noted above, service to Millian's primary cellular telephone number was suspended at the time Danchenko allegedly received the anonymous call. Further, the contention that Danchenko may have received an "anonymous call" from someone he believed to be Millian on an internet-based application was not supported by the evidence obtained by the Office. Indeed, at no time did Danchenko inform Millian that he could be contacted on an internet-based application, to say nothing of the particular application Millian should use. Rather, the evidence did show that when Danchenko wanted to communicate on an internet-based application, he explicitly communicated that to his contacts and identified the application to use.¹⁰⁸³

With respect to the purported meeting with Millian in New York, the evidence obtained by the Office revealed that Danchenko had planned to travel to New York during the week of July 24, 2016, *prior* to even reaching out to Millian for the first time.¹⁰⁸⁴ Indeed, the evidence revealed that Danchenko's trip to New York was a sightseeing excursion with his young daughter. In order to credit Danchenko's version of events, one would have to accept that Danchenko, with his young daughter, planned to meet an *unidentified* individual at an *unidentified* bar – in a city of 8 million people – at night.

Finally, the Office interviewed Millian. Millian unequivocally stated that he never met with or spoke with Danchenko.¹⁰⁸⁵ When asked if he provided the information reflected in the Steele Reports to Danchenko, Millian stated "[t]hat did not happen. One-hundred percent did not

¹⁰⁸¹ SC_IDC_0043181 (Email from Millian to Zlodorev dated 07/20/2020).

¹⁰⁸² *Danchenko* Government Exhibit 1603.

¹⁰⁸³ See, e.g., *Danchenko* Government Exhibits 610, 610T, 611, 612, 612T.

¹⁰⁸⁴ SC_IDC_0003641 (Email from Danchenko dated 07/18/2016).

¹⁰⁸⁵ OSC Report of Interview of Sergei Millian on Feb. 5, 2022 at 1.

happen.”¹⁰⁸⁶ Millian stated he has received threats to his and his family’s safety because of his alleged role in the Steele Reports.¹⁰⁸⁷

iv. *Fusion GPS implicates Sergei Millian*

As discussed above, the Office found no evidence that Millian was a source for any of the allegations in the Steele Reports. Given this fact, the Office endeavored to determine the genesis of Millian’s implication in the Steele Reports. In particular, what caused Danchenko to first reach out to Millian in late July 2016. To that end, the Office reviewed, among other things, records obtained from Fusion GPS and the public statements of Fusion GPS principals Glenn Simpson and Peter Fritsch.¹⁰⁸⁸

Specifically, Fusion GPS records demonstrate that Nellie Ohr first identified Millian as having connections to Trump. Ohr was a Russian-language contractor employed by Fusion GPS and the wife of Department official Bruce Ohr. On April 22, 2016, Nellie Ohr prepared a report for Fusion GPS that set forth, in part, Millian’s connections to Trump.¹⁰⁸⁹ This report was prepared just ten days after Fusion GPS was retained by Perkins Coie to conduct opposition research on Trump, and prior to Steele being retained by Fusion GPS.¹⁰⁹⁰ Notably, on April 13, 2016 – approximately one week prior to Ohr’s report – RIA Novosti published an interview with Millian that was conducted by Dmitry Zlodorev.¹⁰⁹¹ In that interview, Millian described his alleged real estate connections to Trump and spoke positively about Trump’s candidacy.¹⁰⁹² Millian was interviewed by RIA Novosti several more times over the course of the summer and

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Id.* at 4.

¹⁰⁸⁸ The Office collected various records and statements from Fusion GPS and Fusion GPS employees over the course of its investigation. No one at Fusion GPS, however, would agree to voluntarily speak with the Office. In addition, the DNC and the Clinton campaign asserted attorney-client privilege over a substantial number of Fusion GPS’s emails.

¹⁰⁸⁹ See Nellie Ohr, *Report 22 April 2016* at 29.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Consulting Agreement between Fusion GPS and Perkins Coie was signed on Apr. 11, 2016. SC-00004920 (Consulting Agreement dated Apr. 1, 2016). Steele was approached by Simpson to research Trump in May, 2016. OIG Interview of Christopher Steele on June 5 and 6, 2019 at 11; *Crime in Progress* at 69.

¹⁰⁹¹ RIA Novosti, *Sergei Millian: Donald Trump Will Improve Relations with Russia* (translated) (Apr. 13, 2016).

¹⁰⁹² *Id.*

all of 2016.¹⁰⁹³ On May 7, 2016, Nellie Ohr compiled another report discussing, among other things, Millian.¹⁰⁹⁴ All told, Ohr prepared at least 12 reports that discussed Sergei Millian.¹⁰⁹⁵

Nellie Ohr's reports included Millian's views on how a potential "Trump presidency might affect US-Russia relations."¹⁰⁹⁶ Notably, Ohr included internet links in the reports to several *YouTube* videos from 2012 featuring Millian.¹⁰⁹⁷ As discussed above, Danchenko told the FBI that the anonymous caller from late-July 2016 "sounded like Millian" based on a *YouTube* video that Danchenko had previously watched.¹⁰⁹⁸ The reports prepared by Ohr and others at Fusion GPS were ultimately provided to Crossfire Hurricane investigators by Ohr's husband, Bruce Ohr.¹⁰⁹⁹

As discussed above, Fusion GPS approached Steele in May 2016. Prior to his retention, Glenn Simpson met with Steele at Heathrow Airport in London and pitched Steele on the opposition research project.¹¹⁰⁰ Approximately one week later, Danchenko contacted RIA Novosti journalists seeking Millian's contact information.¹¹⁰¹ The timing of Danchenko's request to RIA Novosti on the heels of Steele's meeting with Simpson in London strongly supports the inference that Fusion GPS directed Steele to pursue Millian.¹¹⁰² Indeed, by the time of Steele's meeting with Simpson, Nellie Ohr had already identified Millian's alleged connections to Trump.

In addition to Ohr, other Fusion GPS employees also appear to have worked on research pertaining to Millian. While the vast majority of the internal Fusion GPS emails were withheld from the Office based on privilege claims by the Clinton campaign or the DNC, the privilege log provided revealed that Fusion GPS employees regularly emailed about Millian, often attaching what appear to be draft memoranda about Millian or forwarding news articles concerning Millian.¹¹⁰³ For example, on July 1, 2016, Fusion GPS employee Jake Berkowitz emailed a draft

¹⁰⁹³ E.g. Dmitry Zlodorev, *Political scientist: Trump's reform will be based on the principle of Americanism*, RIA Novosti (Aug. 09, 2016); Dmitry Zlodorev, *RATP President: Trump will choose a businessman or military man as vice president of the United States*, RIA Novosti (June 10, 2016).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Nellie Ohr, Weekly Writeup 7 May 2016.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See, e.g., Nellie Ohr, Sergei Millian Compendium Updated 24 September 2016.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Nellie Ohr, *Report 22 April 2016* at 29-34.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Id.* at 32.

¹⁰⁹⁸ SCO_105287 (CHS Reporting Document dated 11/14/2017)

¹⁰⁹⁹ U.S. House of Representatives Executive Session, Cmte. on the Judiciary Joint with the Cmte. on Government Reform and Oversight, Interview of Bruce Ohr on Aug. 28, 2018 at 7-9.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Crime in Progress* at 69.

¹¹⁰¹ SC_IDC_0042618 (Email from Zlodorev to Millian dated 05/26/2016).

¹¹⁰² In their book, Simpson and Fritsch state that Steele identified Millian as "one of the key intermediaries between Trump and the Russians." *Crime in Progress* at 97.

¹¹⁰³ Bean LLC/Fusion GPS Privilege Log dated Mar. 11, 2022.

memo entitled “Sergei Millian 6.30.16docx.”¹¹⁰⁴ Several weeks later, on July 13, 2016, Berkowitz forwarded the same document to Glenn Simpson.¹¹⁰⁵

At the same time the research on Millian was being conducted, Fusion GPS was promoting Millian to the press as a key intermediary between Trump and Russia. For example, on June 27, 2016, Fusion GPS principal Peter Fritsch sent an email to Franklin Foer, a reporter at *Slate* magazine, with subject line “we think.”¹¹⁰⁶ The email stated:

this dude is key:

<https://nestseekers.com/agent/sergei-millian>

he is clearly kgb. That minsk [*sic.*] state linguistic university is something of a giveaway.

If you are downtown, come by....¹¹⁰⁷

Fusion GPS’s research on Millian appeared to increase substantially in late-July 2016. In fact, between July 25, 2016, and July 28, 2016, Fusion GPS employees exchanged several dozen internal emails pertaining to Millian.¹¹⁰⁸ During this time, Glenn Simpson was in contact with ABC News producer Matthew Mosk about Millian.¹¹⁰⁹ Notably, emails showed that Mosk had been communicating with Millian since at least July 13, 2016.¹¹¹⁰ During the course of this correspondence, Mosk learned that Millian was abroad, but planned to return to the United States in late July.¹¹¹¹

On July 26, 2016, Mosk emailed Millian the following:

Hello Sergei-

I am writing to see if you might have any photographs of Donald Trump or Don Jr. visiting Russia from your firm’s work with the Trump Organization? We would very much like to be able to illustrate his past travels to, and business interests in Russia.¹¹¹²

Later that day, Millian replied that he only had a single photograph with Trump that had been taken in Miami. In reply, Mosk asked Millian if he would be willing to do an interview with ABC News about his experiences with Trump and proposed to conduct the interview in New

¹¹⁰⁴ *Id.* at 13.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Id.*

¹¹⁰⁶ SC-00100874 (Email from Fritsch to Foer dated 06/27/2016).

¹¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

¹¹⁰⁸ Bean LLC/Fusion GPS Privilege Log dated Mar. 11, 2022 at 17-23.

¹¹⁰⁹ *See, e.g.*, SC_00083448 (Email from Simpson to Mosk dated 07/27/2016); SC_00082580 (Email from Simpson to Mosk & Berkowitz dated 07/28/2016).

¹¹¹⁰ SC_IDC_0044254 (Emails between Millian, Mosk dated 07/13-27/2016) at 2-3.

¹¹¹¹ 0.7.8516.58233 (Email from Millian to Mosk dated 07/26/2016).

¹¹¹² SC_IDC_0044254 (Emails between Millian and Mosk dated 07/13-27/2016) at 1-2.

York. Millian indicated that he would be available to conduct an interview in New York on the “Week-end or next week I can.”¹¹¹³ While making arrangements with Millian, Mosk emailed Simpson and informed Simpson that he (Mosk) was “making arrangements to interview Millian on camera” and that he and Simpson “should chat.”¹¹¹⁴ Millian ultimately was interviewed by Brian Ross of ABC News on July 29, 2016.¹¹¹⁵

For reasons unknown to the Office, ABC News did not air the Millian interview in its entirety until January 2017, after the Steele Reports became public.¹¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Fusion GPS continued to send Mosk information about Millian,¹¹¹⁷ including Fusion GPS’s comprehensive report on Millian dated June 30, 2016.¹¹¹⁸ On September 13, 2016, Mosk emailed Simpson and Berkowitz and asked “What’s the most official thing we have showing Millian tied to Trump? That would make it hard for the Trump org to disavow Millian?”¹¹¹⁹ Berkowitz responded with a screenshot of Millian’s Trump Gold Donor card that Millian had posted on his Instagram page.¹¹²⁰ Throughout the fall of 2016, Fusion GPS continued to communicate with the media about Millian and Trump.¹¹²¹

v. *Fusion GPS attempts to tie Millian to Alfa Bank*

As discussed in detail below, throughout the summer and fall of 2016, Fusion GPS was promoting to the media an allegation of secret computer server communications between the Trump campaign and Russian-based Alfa Bank. In an attempt to tie Millian to the Alfa Bank allegations, Fusion GPS sought the assistance of Perkins Coie attorney Michael Sussmann. In turn, Sussmann contacted technology executive Rodney Joffe to determine if Millian had any ties to Alfa Bank.

On August 20, 2016, Joffe emailed a fellow technology executive (“Tech Company-2 Executive-1”) and two academic researchers (“University-1 Researcher-1” and “University-1 Researcher-2”) a document titled “birdsnest-1.pdf” that contained “known associates” of

¹¹¹³ *Id.*

¹¹¹⁴ SC-00083448 (Email from Simpson to Mosk dated 07/27/2016).

¹¹¹⁵ SC_IDC_0044296 (Email from Mosk to Millian, others dated 07/28/2016).

¹¹¹⁶ *US-Russia Businessman Claimed Ties to Donald Trump (July 2016)*, ABC News (Jan. 24, 2017). <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/video/us-russia-businessman-claimed-ties-donald-trump-july-45022871>

¹¹¹⁷ SC-00082251 (Email from Berkowitz to Mosk, Simpson dated 09/19/2016).

¹¹¹⁸ SC-00082580 (Email from Simpson to Mosk, Berkowitz dated 07/28/2016).

¹¹¹⁹ SC-00082257 (Email from Mosk to Berkowitz, Simpson dated 09/13/2016).

¹¹²⁰ SC-00083205 (Email from Simpson to Mosk, Berkowitz dated 09/13/2016).

¹¹²¹ *See, e.g.*, SC-00083036 (Email from Simpson to Catherine Belton, Financial Times, dated 09/23/2016); SC-00099806 (Email from Simpson to Belton dated 09/22/2016); SC-00027869 (Email from Mark Hosenball, Reuters to Fritsch, Berkowitz & Simpson dated 11/23/2016); SC-00100363 (Email from Eric Lichtblau, N.Y. Times, to Fritsch & Simpson dated 09/27/2016); SC-00088073 (Email from Simpson to David Corn, Mother Jones dated 11/01/2016); SC-00028499 (Email from Peter H. Stone to Berkowitz dated 11/16/2016).

Trump.¹¹²² Included in the attached “birdnest-1” document was a description of Millian along with (i) his past mailing addresses, (ii) various email addresses, (iii) websites, and (iv) IP addresses that were associated with Millian.¹¹²³ Joffe described the document as “the result of significant investigative effort of Eyore’s¹¹²⁴ professional team,” and informed Tech Company-2 Executive-1, University-1 Researcher-1 and University-1 Researcher-2 that other than Paul Manafort, Millian is “seen as the most likely intermediary” between Trump and Russia. Joffe also specifically called the group’s attention to the “Russianamericanchamber.com” website.

On September 22, 2016, Sussman emailed Joffe and attached a document containing IP location information for “Russianamericanchamber.com.”¹¹²⁵ The body of the email was redacted by Perkins Coie based on privilege claims by the Clinton campaign.¹¹²⁶ On the evening of September 26, 2016, Joffe emailed Sussman a message containing the subject line “As requested.”¹¹²⁷ The body of the email was also redacted by Perkins Coie based on privilege claims by the Clinton campaign.¹¹²⁸ Sussmann and Joffe exchanged additional emails (withheld for privilege) later that night and into the early morning hours of September 27, 2016.¹¹²⁹

Further, on September 27, 2016,¹¹³⁰ Fritsch and Simpson emailed Millian’s website (the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce) IP look-up information to Eric Lichtblau at the New York Times.¹¹³¹ As discussed below, during the fall of 2016, Fusion GPS was pressuring Lichtblau to write a story about the Trump/Alfa Bank allegations. In the email, Fritsch pointed out that “Alfa” was the website service provider for Millian’s website. However, the Office determined that the relevant IP information does not indicate that “Alfa Bank” is the service provider, but rather Alfa Telecom, a Lebanese-based telecom company, which appears to have no affiliation with Alfa Bank whatsoever.¹¹³²

¹¹²² SC-00000578 (Email from Joffe to Tech Company-2 Executive-1, University-1 Researcher-1, University-1 Researcher-2 dated 08/20/2016).

¹¹²³ *Id.* at 5.

¹¹²⁴ The Office was not able to identify the individual referred to as “Eyore.”

¹¹²⁵ SC_00109377 (Email from Sussmann to Joffe dated 09/22/2016).

¹¹²⁶ Perkins Coie Privilege Log dated 09/07/2021 at Worksheet 2 row 41.

¹¹²⁷ SC_00109375 (Emails between Joffe and Sussmann dated 09/26-27/2016).

¹¹²⁸ Perkins Coie Privilege Log dated 09/07/2021 at Worksheet 2 rows 45-48.

¹¹²⁹ SC_00109375 (Emails between Joffe and Sussmann dated 09/26-27/2016).

¹¹³⁰ Coincidentally – or not – the day following Sussmann and Joffe’s exchange of emails concerning the same information.

¹¹³¹ SC-00100359 (Email from Fritsch to Lichtblau, Simpson dated 09/27/2016).

¹¹³² *Id.*

vi. *The FBI's conduct concerning Millian*

From September 2007 to March 2011, Sergei Millian served as an FBI CHS.¹¹³³ During that time, Millian reported on matters related to Belarus and Russia.¹¹³⁴ Following, among other things, Danchenko's revelations concerning Millian, in August 2017, FBI agents attached to the Mueller Special Counsel team began investigating Millian to determine what, if any, involvement Millian had in relation to the Russian Government's efforts to influence the 2016 Presidential Election. On January 17, 2019 the FBI closed its case on Millian noting that "the investigation found no confirmation that [Millian] was directed to engage in activities related to Russian Government efforts to interfere with the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election."¹¹³⁵

In their interviews with the Office, both Auten and Helson expressed skepticism about Danchenko's alleged interaction with Millian.¹¹³⁶ It does not appear, however, that the Crossfire Hurricane investigators made any effort to corroborate Danchenko's version of events. For example, it does not appear that the FBI examined either Danchenko or Millian's phone records. Nor does it appear that the FBI questioned Danchenko about the implausibility of the meeting he supposedly planned with Millian in New York. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, nobody from the FBI questioned Danchenko about the incongruity between Millian's vocal support for Trump and his alleged statements to Danchenko. Again, in order to credit Danchenko's narrative, one would have to accept that Millian called Danchenko, an individual he did not know, and provided him with damaging information on Trump during a 10-15-minute phone call. In sum, the evidence obtained by the Office simply does not support Danchenko's version of events. Nevertheless, despite the obvious infirmities in Danchenko's narrative, the information allegedly provided by Millian remained in the Page FISA applications through the final renewal in June 2017.

g. The FBI's failure to disclose to OI and include in the Page FISA applications Page's role as a source for another government agency

In addition to the inclusion of highly questionable information in the Page FISA applications, the FBI also failed to include highly relevant information in those applications. As disclosed in the *OIG Review*, one of the serious errors in the four Page FISA applications was the failure to report that Page had been approved as an "operational contact" for at least one other government agency ("OGA") during the period from 2008 to 2013.¹¹³⁷ The record reflects that the Crossfire Hurricane investigators had been made aware of this relationship months prior to the submission of the initial Page FISA application in October 2016.

In the course of its investigation, the OIG also discovered evidence that, prior to the submission of the fourth and final Page FISA application, the issue of Page's relationship with the OGA was raised with the FBI's OGC by the FBI affiant on that application. In particular, the

¹¹³³ *Danchenko* Tr. 10/11/2022 PM at 99-100.

¹¹³⁴ SCO_105159 (Summary re Sergei Millian).

¹¹³⁵ SCO_105145 (Case Closing Electronic Communication dated 01/17/2019) at 5.

¹¹³⁶ OSC Report of Interview of Brian Auten on July 26, 2021 at 21; OSC Report of Interview of Kevin Helson on July 27, 2021 at 3-4.

¹¹³⁷ See *Redacted OIG Review* at xi, 157-58.

affiant, Supervisory Special Agent-2, sought clarification from Kevin Clinesmith, the OGC attorney who was working with the Crossfire Hurricane investigators, on what, if any, relationship Page had with the OGA.¹¹³⁸ Clinesmith (i) inquired of the other agency, (ii) received a response stating that Page did in fact have a relationship with it during a relevant time period, (iii) altered that response to reflect the opposite, and (iv) sent the altered document to the affiant, which the affiant then relied on in making representations to the FISC. After discovering this misconduct, OIG timely informed the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI of the matter pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.¹¹³⁹ Further information about Clinesmith's activities is set forth below:

i. FBI attorney Kevin Clinesmith

From July 2015 until September 2019, Clinesmith was employed by the FBI's OGC as an Assistant General Counsel in the National Security and Cyber Law Branch.¹¹⁴⁰ Among other duties, Clinesmith assisted FBI agents in preparing FISA applications and worked directly with attorneys in OI.¹¹⁴¹

In the late summer and fall of 2016, Clinesmith was assigned to provide legal support to FBI personnel working on the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. In this role, Clinesmith interacted with an OGA on issues of importance to the Crossfire Hurricane effort. In addition, Clinesmith provided support to the Crossfire Hurricane investigators who worked with OI to prepare the FISA applications seeking authority to conduct surveillance of Page.¹¹⁴²

On August 17, 2016, months prior to the October 21, 2016, approval of the initial FISA application targeting Page, the OGA provided the Crossfire Hurricane investigators a memorandum (the "August 17 Memorandum") advising that Page had been approved as an "operational contact" for the OGA for the period 2008 to 2013. The Memorandum described the reporting Page had provided to the OGA, including detailing his prior contacts with certain Russian intelligence officers.¹¹⁴³ As discussed in greater detail below, Clinesmith would later claim to the OIG that he did not recall reviewing the August 17th Memorandum and that he did not have access to it in FBI OGC office space.¹¹⁴⁴ Although technically true that the document

¹¹³⁸ *Id.* at 157-58, 248; OSC Report of Interview of Supervisory Special Agent-2 on May 5, 2021 at 3.

¹¹³⁹ *See Redacted OIG Review* at 256.

¹¹⁴⁰ *United States v. Kevin Clinesmith*, Crim. No. 20-cr-165 (JEB), (D.D.C.), Doc. 9 (Statement of Offense) at 2. As part of his plea agreement, Clinesmith agreed "to be personally debriefed" by the FBI regarding the FBI's review of FISA matters and "any information he possesses . . . that should be brought to the attention" of the FISC. Letter from John Durham to attorney Justin Shur, *Re: United States v. Kevin Clinesmith*, at 7 (Aug. 14, 2020). Clinesmith otherwise declined to be interviewed by the Office or cooperate with our investigation.

¹¹⁴¹ *Id.*

¹¹⁴² *United States v. Kevin Clinesmith*, Crim. No. 20-cr-165(JEB) (D.D.C.), Doc. 1 (Information) at 1-2.

¹¹⁴³ *Id.* at 2.

¹¹⁴⁴ OIG Report of Interview of Kevin Clinesmith on Aug. 29, 2019 at 19.

was not located in OGC space, the document was located at FBI Headquarters and available upon request to Crossfire Hurricane personnel, including Clinesmith.¹¹⁴⁵

The first three Page FISA applications made no reference to Page's prior relationship with the OGA. However, before the FBI's submission of the final FISA application, Page himself publicly stated that he had assisted named government entities in the past.¹¹⁴⁶ During the preparation of the final FISA application, the affiant on the proposed application, Supervisory Special Agent-2, asked Clinesmith to ask whether Page had ever been a source for the OGA.¹¹⁴⁷

On June 15, 2017, Clinesmith sent an email to a liaison from the OGA ("OGA Liaison-1") stating:

We need some clarification on Page. There is an indication that he may be a '[digraph]' ¹¹⁴⁸ source. This is a fact we would need to disclose in our next FISA renewal . . . To that end, can we get two items from you? 1) Source Check/Is [Page] a source in any capacity? 2) If he is, what is a [digraph] source (or whatever type of source he is)? ¹¹⁴⁹

OGA Liaison-1 responded by email that same day and provided Clinesmith with a list (but not copies) of pertinent OGA documents. That list included a reference to the August 17 Memorandum the OGA had previously provided to the Crossfire Hurricane team. The liaison also wrote that the OGA uses

the [digraph] to show that the encrypted individual . . . is a [U.S. person]. We encrypt the [U.S. persons] when they provide reporting to us. My recollection is that Page was or is . . . [digraph] but the [documents] will explain the details. If you need a formal definition for the FISA, please let me know and we'll work up some language and get it cleared for use. ¹¹⁵⁰

Clinesmith responded that same day to OGA Liaison-1 stating, "Thanks so much for the information. We're digging into the [documents] now, but I think the definition of the [digraph] answers our questions." ¹¹⁵¹

At the time of the exchange between Clinesmith and OGA Liaison-1, Supervisory Special Agent-2 was on leave, so Clinesmith forwarded the liaison's email to two other Crossfire Hurricane investigators ("Special Agent-3" and "Supervisory Special Agent-4"). Notably, before forwarding the email, Clinesmith removed his initial email to OGA Liaison-1 that

¹¹⁴⁵ OSC Report of Interview of Supervisory Special Agent-4 on Nov. 20, 2019 at 4.

¹¹⁴⁶ Letter from Carter Page to FBI Director Comey (Sept. 25, 2016).

¹¹⁴⁷ See OSC interview of Supervisory Special Agent-2 on Oct 17, 2019 at 4.

¹¹⁴⁸ The digraph was redacted for classification reasons.

¹¹⁴⁹ FBI-EMAIL-444179 (Email from Clinesmith to OGA Liason-1 dated 06/15/2017).

¹¹⁵⁰ FBI-EMAIL-444164 (Email from Clinesmith to OGA Liason-1 dated 06/15/2017).

¹¹⁵¹ *Id.*

inquired about Page's status as a source.¹¹⁵² That same day, Supervisory Special Agent-4 emailed Clinesmith and OI Unit Chief-1, informing OI Unit Chief-1 that she (Supervisory Special Agent-4) would "pull these [documents] for you tomorrow[.]"¹¹⁵³ In a subsequent reply to Clinesmith, Supervisory Special Agent-4 suggested that OI Unit Chief-1 may have previously been aware of Page's relationship with the OGA.¹¹⁵⁴

Later that evening, notwithstanding the information he received from OGA Liaison-1, Clinesmith told FBI OGC Unit Chief-1 that Page was not a source, but rather a "U.S. subsource of a source."¹¹⁵⁵ Clinesmith also sent an email to OI Attorney-1, the OI attorney working on the Page FISA renewal, and requested a time to talk the following day.¹¹⁵⁶

The next day, Clinesmith and OI Attorney-1 spoke for approximately 30 minutes.¹¹⁵⁷ Following the call, Clinesmith forwarded to OI Attorney-1 the June 15, 2017, email from OGA Liaison-1.¹¹⁵⁸ Once again, Clinesmith omitted the initial email he sent to the liaison that inquired about Page's status as a source.¹¹⁵⁹ When interviewed by the OIG, OI Attorney-1 did not recall the substance of his telephone call with Clinesmith.¹¹⁶⁰ However, documents reviewed by the Office reflect that OI Attorney-1 replied to Clinesmith's forward of OGA Liaison-1's email and stated, "thanks I think we are good and no need to carry it any further."¹¹⁶¹ Copying Case Agent-1, Clinesmith replied, "Music to my ears."¹¹⁶² The Office has found no evidence to indicate that Case Agent-1 went back to look at the OGA documents after he received OI Attorney-1's guidance on the issue from Clinesmith.

On June 19, 2017, Supervisory Special Agent-2, who had returned from leave, exchanged a series of Lync messages with Clinesmith regarding Page:

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Do we have any update on the
[OGA] CHS [that is, Page]
request? Also, [Case Agent-1]

¹¹⁵² FBI-EMAIL-444176 (Email from Clinesmith to OI Unit Chief-1 & Supervisory Special Agent-4 dated 06-15-2017).

¹¹⁵³ FBI-EMAIL-441659 (Email from Supervisory Special Agent-4 to Clinesmith, OI Unit Chief-1 dated 06/15/2017).

¹¹⁵⁴ FBI-EMAIL-441647 (Email from Supervisory Special Agent-4 to Clinesmith & OI Unit Chief-1 dated 06/19/2017).

¹¹⁵⁵ FBI-AAA-EC-00006440 (Lync exchange between Clinesmith and FBI OGC Unit Chief-1 dated 06/15/2017).

¹¹⁵⁶ FBI-EMAIL-441654 (Email from Clinesmith to OI Attorney-1 dated 06/15/2017).

¹¹⁵⁷ FBI-EMAIL-447802 (Lync archive dated 06/16/2017).

¹¹⁵⁸ FBI-EMAIL-444161 (Email from Clinesmith to OI Attorney-1 dated 06/16/2017).

¹¹⁵⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁶⁰ OIG interview of OI Attorney-1 on Sept. 11, 2019 at 5-9.

¹¹⁶¹ FBI-EMAIL-444159 (Emails between Clinesmith and OI Attorney-1 dated 06/16/2017).

¹¹⁶² *Id.*

said [OI Attorney-1] is not so optimistic.

Clinesmith: [OGA] CHS: You are referring to Page?

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Yes.

Clinesmith: He is cleared.

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Cleared to fly?

Clinesmith: [digraph]=Masked USPER.¹¹⁶³

Supervisory Special Agent-2: So, he was, and the relationship officially ended?

Clinesmith: So, essentially, the real . . . source was using Page as a [Steele]-like subsource.¹¹⁶⁴

Clinesmith: [Carter Page] was never a source.

Supervisory Special Agent-2: You mean the [OGA] officer?

Clinesmith: Right. Whomever generated the reporting from the [documents].

Clinesmith: It was just liaison with Page which resulted in reporting, eventually they closed it out as unhelpful.

Clinesmith: So, in discussing with [OI Attorney-1], he agreed we do not need to address it in the FISA.

Clinesmith: [OI Attorney-1] is always Eeyore in drafting these special FISA applications.

Supervisory Special Agent-2: So, Page was a [digraph] or Page was a subsource of the [digraph].

¹¹⁶³ "USPER" is short for "U.S. Person."

¹¹⁶⁴ Steele is a reference to Christopher Steele, who prepared certain reports, based on information from subsources. The FISA applications on Page relied, in part, on information taken from those reports.

Clinesmith: It's [sic] sounds like a subsource of the [digraph].

Clinesmith: And yes, [the OGA] confirmed explicitly he was never a source.

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Interesting.

Clinesmith: But like, interesting good, right?

Clinesmith: *I mean, at least we don't have to have a terrible footnote.*

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Sure. Just interesting they say not a source. We thought otherwise based on the writing . . . I will re-read.

Clinesmith: At most, it's [another person] being the CHS, and you talking to [the other person].

Supervisory Special Agent-2: Got it. Thank you. Do we have that in writing.

Clinesmith: On TS. I'll forward.¹¹⁶⁵

As reflected above, Clinesmith told Supervisory Special Agent-2 that Page "was never a source" and that "[the OGA] confirmed explicitly he was never a source." When Supervisory Special Agent-2 asked if Clinesmith had that in writing, Clinesmith responded he did and that he would forward the email that the OGA had provided.

Immediately after the Lync messages between Clinesmith and Supervisory Special Agent-2, Clinesmith forwarded to Supervisory Special Agent-2 a version of OGA Liaison-1's June 15, 2017 email containing alterations that Clinesmith had made. The altered email from the liaison read as follows:

My recollection is that Page was or is "[digraph]" *and not a "source"* but the [documents] will explain the details. If you need a formal definition for the FISA,

¹¹⁶⁵ FBI-AAA-EC-00006440 (Lync exchange between Clinesmith and Supervisory Special Agent-2 dated 06/19/2017) (emphasis added); *see also* OSC Report of Interview of Supervisory Special Agent-2 on May 5, 2021 at 3. (Supervisory Special Agent-2 believes Clinesmith lied to him about Page's history with the OGA).

please let me know and we'll work up some language and get it cleared for use.¹¹⁶⁶

Clinesmith had altered the original June 15, 2017 email from the liaison by adding the words “and not a source” to the email, thus making it appear that OGA Liaison-1 had written in the email that Page was “not a source” for the OGA. Relying on the altered email, Supervisory Special Agent-2 signed the application that was submitted to the FISC on June 29, 2017.¹¹⁶⁷ This final FISA application did not include Page’s history or status with the OGA.

The Office’s investigators, like the OIG investigators, confirmed with OGA Liaison-1 that she had no recollection of ever having told Clinesmith that Page was not a source for the OGA.¹¹⁶⁸

h. CHS meetings with Papadopoulos, Page, and a third Trump campaign member, the *Yahoo! News* article about Page, and Page’s offer to be interviewed

In addition to opening Crossfire Hurricane, the FBI opened or had open investigations of four individuals associated with the Trump campaign.¹¹⁶⁹ FBI CHSs or undercover employees (“UCEs”) met with two of those individuals (Papadopoulos and Page), as well as with a senior Trump campaign foreign policy official, and recorded many of these meetings.¹¹⁷⁰ Many of the omissions and much of the misleading information found in the Page FISA applications, described by the OIG, deserve additional emphasis in this report based on the Office’s review of the transcripts and careful review of the actual recorded conversations themselves. Indeed, listening to the recordings and reviewing the transcripts was especially important when considered against the backdrop of an unauthorized disclosure made to *Yahoo! News* about the federal investigation into Page, and Page’s subsequent offer to be interviewed by the FBI.

i. *The FBI’s engagement with CHS-1 and first consensual recording of Carter Page on August 20, 2016*

Approximately ten days after the Crossfire Hurricane investigation was opened on Page, Case Agent-1 worked to arrange a meeting with CHS-1, a long-term counterintelligence source who the FBI had paid a substantial amount of money over many years. WFO closed CHS-1 for cause in January 2011 for “displaying aggressiveness toward handling Agents as a result of what he/she perceived as not enough compensation . . . and for exhibiting questionable allegiance to

¹¹⁶⁶ FBI-EMAIL-444157 (Email from Clinesmith to Supervisory Special Agent-2 dated 06/19/2017) (emphasis added).

¹¹⁶⁷ See OSC Report of Interview of Supervisory Special Agent-2 on May 5, 2021 at 3-4.

¹¹⁶⁸ OSC Report of Interview of OGA Liaison-1 on Oct. 3, 2019 at 2.

¹¹⁶⁹ See *supra* § IV.A.3.c.

¹¹⁷⁰ The *AGG-Dom* lists consensual monitoring as an authorized investigative method that requires legal review. *AGG-Dom* § V.A.4. It defines consensual monitoring as “monitoring of communications for which a court order or warrant is not legally required because of the consent of a party to the communication.” *Id.* § VII.A. The party consenting to the monitoring may be an FBI CHS or UCE.

the [intelligence] targets with which CHS-1 maintained contact.”¹¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, Case Agent-1 reopened CHS-1 within two months of the CHS’s closing and continued to serve as his/her handling agent through the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.¹¹⁷² (Case Agent-1 had served as CHS-1’s handling agent for most of the five-year period before the opening of Crossfire Hurricane).¹¹⁷³

When the FBI approached CHS-1 in August 2016 to determine whether he/she knew Papadopoulos, CHS-1 said that he/she was not familiar with Papadopoulos. However, CHS-1 asked Case Agent-1 and two other FBI employees who were present if the FBI had any interest in Carter Page, with whom CHS-1 had met a month earlier in July 2016.¹¹⁷⁴ ¹¹⁷⁵ The FBI learned that Page had been invited to attend a July 2016 meeting focused on intelligence and global security affairs. Page’s attendance at the overseas event occurred just days after his visit to Russia, where he had delivered a commencement address at the New Economic School in Moscow. Given the circumstances and familiarity that CHS-1 had with Page from their recent meeting together at the overseas seminar, the FBI believed CHS-1 could initiate contact with Page without arousing any suspicions.¹¹⁷⁶ CHS-1 contacted Page at the behest of the FBI and a meeting was arranged for August 20, 2016, which CHS-1 recorded.¹¹⁷⁷ The primary purpose of

¹¹⁷¹ FBI-0000812 (Source Closing Communication dated 01/25/2011).

¹¹⁷² FBI-0000814 (Source Reopening Communication dated 03/23/2011).

¹¹⁷³ CHS-1 also maintained relationships with other government agencies, and had likewise been paid for his/her services.

¹¹⁷⁴ One individual interviewed by the Office advised that CHS-1 was directly involved in deciding which individuals would be invited to that earlier meeting and had authorized an invitation being sent to Page. OSC Report of Interview of U.S. Person-4 on 06/04/2020 at 1.

¹¹⁷⁵ It does not appear that, at that time, CHS-1 disclosed to the Crossfire Hurricane investigators that on May 3, 2016, CHS-1 sent an email to Trump Policy Director-1 that contained his/her resume, spoke of her/his prior political experience regarding foreign policy matters, offered to help Trump in the foreign policy area, and, although stating that he/she was not seeking a position in a Trump administration, said he/she believed it was important to see Trump elected. When the Office asked about the email, CHS-1 said that Page had asked him/her to send it. However, when reminded that he/she had not even met Page until nearly two months later, CHS-1 said he/she probably sent it because he/she thought he/she could be helpful to the campaign regarding a particular country (which was not Russia). OSC Report of Interview of CHS-1 on April 6, 2021 at 3.

Relatedly, shortly after Trump’s election in November 2016, CHS-1, while still an FBI CHS, sent a senior Trump transition team member an email offering his/her congratulations on Trump’s victory and expressing an interest in assisting the new Administration. *See* Email from CHS-1 to Trump Senior Foreign Policy Advisor-1 dated 11/14/ 2016. We have no information to suggest that the FBI requested CHS-1 to send this email.

¹¹⁷⁶ FBI-0016044 (EC “Meeting with CHS to discuss CROSSFIRE HURRICANE” dated Aug. 11, 2016).

¹¹⁷⁷ FBI-0002721 (EC “Meeting with CHS-1 to discuss CROSSFIRE HURRICANE” dated 08/12/2016).

the meeting (and three additional consensually recorded meetings with Page made by CHS-1) was to assist in determining whether Page had information relevant to the allegation that predicated the opening of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.

The first meeting between Page and CHS-1 took place as scheduled on August 20, 2016. Before the meeting, the FBI briefed CHS-1 on the information received from Foreign Government-1 that predicated the opening of Crossfire Hurricane. Because Page and CHS-1 were acquainted from their July meeting, they discussed a number of topics during the August 20th engagement. CHS-1 said that he had once known Manafort, the Trump campaign manager who had resigned the previous day.¹¹⁷⁸ Page told CHS-1 that he (Page) had “actually literally never met Manafort . . . never said one word to him.”¹¹⁷⁹ When Page added that he had sent Manafort a couple of emails, the CHS interrupted him and said, “And he [Manafort] never responded probably.” Page then replied, “Never, never responded one word.”¹¹⁸⁰ Since that time, Page has repeatedly stated that, despite allegations to the contrary, he never met or corresponded with Manafort while they worked on the campaign.¹¹⁸¹ Later in the conversation, Page told CHS-1 that, “I was never from the beginning a Manafort fan”¹¹⁸² Page also said that he believed Manafort might be in some trouble, but he provided no further information regarding the source of the trouble.¹¹⁸³ Page’s statements about Manafort, especially about their having no relationship, seriously undercut the reports from Steele subsequently received by the Crossfire Hurricane investigators that alleged that Page was engaged in a conspiracy with Manafort, the Trump campaign and the Russians.¹¹⁸⁴

Importantly, FBI records reflect that the Crossfire Hurricane investigators apparently failed to determine at that time whether Page’s statements to CHS-1 had a basis in fact. Had they done so, investigators would have found that Page had previously sent Manafort one direct email message and copied him on two other messages, none of which Manafort appears to have answered.¹¹⁸⁵ This documentary evidence provides significant corroboration of Page’s

¹¹⁷⁸ Transcript of Aug. 20, 2016 conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 at 40.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Id.* at 39.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Id.*

¹¹⁸¹ See U.S. House of Representatives Permanent Select Cmte. on Intelligence Testimony of Carter Page on Nov. 02, 2017 at 21-22.

¹¹⁸² Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 08/20/2016 at 136.

¹¹⁸³ *Id.* at 137-38.

¹¹⁸⁴ As noted previously, the first Steele Reports were provided to the FBI by Steele beginning on July 5, 2016. Steele Source File at A-022 (“July 5 rpt”); OIG Interview of Handling Agent-1 on Aug. 30, 2018 at 152-158. For some still unexplained reason, however, members of the Crossfire Hurricane team working on drafting the Page FISA did not receive them until September 19, 2016. FBI-EMAIL-129902 (Email from Handling Agent-1 to Supervisory Special Agent-1 dated 09/19/2016); FBI-EMAIL-129908 (Email from Handling Agent-1 to Supervisory Special Agent-1 dated 09/19/2016).

¹¹⁸⁵ Email from Carter Page to Paul Manafort, Sam Clovis & J.D. Gordon dated 07/25/2016; Email from Page to Hope Hicks & Manafort dated 08/15/2016; Email from Page to Hicks & Manafort dated 08/16/2016. Our investigation found no evidence that Manafort responded to

statements about Manafort and should have raised, at the time when the FBI was assessing the Steele reporting, serious concerns about the reliability of an important piece of that reporting.

In addition to discussing Manafort, Page and CHS-1 also discussed three other topics:

First, at several points in the conversation, Page was asked about a possible “October surprise” being planned by the Trump campaign.¹¹⁸⁶ In one place CHS-1 referenced an October surprise from an earlier Presidential election, and Page responded that he wanted to know the definition of an October surprise “because there’s a different October surprise in, uh, this year, but you know . . . [a]lthough maybe some similarities.”¹¹⁸⁷ Toward the end of their meeting, Page was bluntly asked, “[w]hat is the October surprise you are planning?” The recording reflects that this was followed by someone laughing. Page responded “[W]ell I want to have the conspiracy theory about the, uh, Ru- the next email dump with these 33 thousand, you know.” In reply, CHS-1 asked, “Well the Russians have all that don’t they?” and Page stated, “I don’t, I-I don’t know.”¹¹⁸⁸

Second, Page discussed with and confirmed for CHS-1 certain recent media reports regarding his (Page’s) business relationships in Russia.¹¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, during this meeting and all other subsequent recorded meetings with CHS-1, Page either implicitly or explicitly denied that those relationships were with the Russian government.¹¹⁹⁰ Additionally, during all of his meetings with CHS-1, Page never provided any information, evidence, or documentation indicating knowledge of any relationship between the Trump campaign and the Russian government. Rather, in this meeting and on several occasions during their subsequent meetings, Page told CHS-1 that Trump wanted improved relations between the United States and Russia and Russian President Putin.¹¹⁹¹ At no time did Page discuss anything about the campaign working in concert with the Russian government.

Third, CHS-1 initiated a discussion with Page about Papadopoulos, asserting that, “someone in [redacted] said there’s a guy in London [Papadopoulos] who’s talking about the Trump campaign relations with the Russians,”¹¹⁹² alluding to the information passed to the FBI by Australia that FBI officials stated formed the basis for the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. Page, however, did not confirm or even address CHS-1’s insinuation of a relationship between

any of these emails sent by Page. The three emails were contained on a thumb drive voluntarily provided to the FBI in August, 2017 by an attorney representing then-President Trump.

¹¹⁸⁶ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 08/20/2016 at 52-53, 71-74, 159-160.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Id.* at 53.

¹¹⁸⁸ *Id.* at 159-160.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Id.* at 64-66.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Id.* at 66; Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 10/17/2016 at 17; Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 12/15/2016 at 19-20; Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 01/25/2017 at 7, 38, 42-43.

¹¹⁹¹ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 08/20/2016 at 92-93.

¹¹⁹² *Id.* at 95.

the Trump campaign and Russia.¹¹⁹³ Rather, Page was somewhat dismissive of Papadopoulos's youth and described him as "[having gotten] in some hot water" over comments he (Papadopoulos) made about British Prime Minister David Cameron owing Trump an apology. Again, Page did not display any knowledge of an illicit relationship between the Trump campaign and Russia. Finally, when CHS-1 again tried to elicit information on this subject by stating, "So this fellow Papadopoulos is just, um, a young guy who's . . . [s]aying things that he shouldn't say or what," Page responded by simply stating, "No, he's a fine guy." Again, Page did not state or display any knowledge of an existing relationship between the campaign and Russia despite CHS-1's baited statements designed to elicit such information from Page. Page's recorded statements were significant because this was the first time Crossfire Hurricane investigators had an opportunity to obtain direct evidence that might corroborate or, alternatively, raise questions about the allegations passed on by Australia. In this first recorded conversation, Page did not corroborate this information.

Five days later, a briefing concerning this first recording of Page was held at FBI Headquarters for Deputy Director McCabe, Assistant Director Priestap, General Counsel Baker, Section Chief Strzok, Deputy General Counsel Anderson, and other FBI personnel. In addition to a discussion of the meeting between CHS-1 and Page, excerpts from the recorded meeting were played at the briefing.¹¹⁹⁴

- ii. *The receipt of the first Steele Reports, publication of the Yahoo! News article naming Page, and Page's expressed willingness to be interviewed by the FBI*

There were no additional meetings between Page and CHS-1 until almost two months later. In the interim, on September 19, 2016, FBI personnel conducting the Crossfire Hurricane investigation received documents that were represented to be intelligence-type products authored by former British intelligence official Christopher Steele. These documents were part of what has become known collectively as the "Steele Dossier." While other sections of this report discuss in detail Steele and his reporting, two allegations relating to Page are relevant to this section. In particular, one allegation stated that "there was a well-developed conspiracy of cooperation between them [the Trump campaign] and the Russian leadership . . . [that] was managed on the Trump side by . . . Paul MANAFORT, who was using foreign policy advisor Carter PAGE and others as intermediaries."¹¹⁹⁵ In that role, Page purportedly served as the liaison or "go between" for Trump campaign Chairman Manafort and Russian officials working with the Trump campaign. This allegation was in stark contrast to, and in direct conflict with, what CHS-1 had recorded Page saying in August. Somewhat inexplicably, in subsequent meetings between CHS-1 and Page, CHS-1 never attempted to re-engage Page on the subject of

¹¹⁹³ *Id.* at 94-97.

¹¹⁹⁴ OSC Report of Interview of James Baker on Feb. 7, 2020, at 12; *see also Redacted OIG Review* at 319-320.

¹¹⁹⁵ SCO-105084 (Documents Known to the FBI Comprising the "Steele Dossier") at 9 (Company Intelligence Report 2016/095) (capitalization in original). Interestingly, CHS-1 had met Page in a different country on or about July 12, 2016, approximately one month prior to being approached by the FBI about Page, and Company Intelligence Report 2016/094 implicating Page was dated July 19, 2016.

his relationship with Manafort. Moreover, prior to submitting the initial FISA application to the FISC in October 2016, the Crossfire Hurricane investigators apparently never sought to obtain Page's email or phone records (whether from Page himself or otherwise) to verify or disprove Page's statement about his lack of a relationship with Manafort. As a result, at no time either before or during the electronic surveillance of Page did the FBI resolve the glaring conflict between Page's unequivocal statement regarding Manafort and the critical assertion in the Steele reports that Page served as one of Manafort's liaisons to the Russians.

The second Page-related allegation in the Steele reporting was a claim that, in July 2016, while in Moscow to deliver a speech to the New Economic School, Page had met secretly with Vladimir Putin's ally and Chief Executive Officer of Rosneft, Igor Sechin,¹¹⁹⁶ and also with Kremlin Internal Affairs official Igor Divyekin.¹¹⁹⁷ In late September, the allegations concerning Page's meetings with Sechin and Divyekin first made their way into the public domain with the publication of an article in *Yahoo! News* authored by Michael Isikoff.¹¹⁹⁸ In the article, Mr. Isikoff wrote that Page, an American businessman who had been identified as a foreign policy adviser to then-Presidential candidate Trump, was the subject of an investigation being conducted by U.S. intelligence officials. The officials reportedly were trying to determine if Page was having private communications with senior Russian officials. The article went on to refer to a congressional source and said that "[Page's] talks with senior Russian officials close to President Vladimir Putin were being 'actively monitored and investigated' and that a senior U.S. law enforcement official did not dispute that characterization, stating, 'It's on our radar screen' . . . It's being looked at.'"¹¹⁹⁹ The article credited a "well-placed Western intelligence source" as identifying Sechin and Divyekin, both of whom were alleged to be close to Putin, as individuals with whom Page had met while in Moscow.¹²⁰⁰

Two days after publication of the *Yahoo! News* article, Page sent a letter to FBI Director Comey.¹²⁰¹ In that letter, Page requested that the FBI promptly end its inquiry into his recent trip to Russia. Page alluded to the fact that he had previously been interviewed by the FBI and

¹¹⁹⁶ At the time, Rosneft was Russia's largest oil and gas producer. See Isikoff, *Officials Probe Ties*.

¹¹⁹⁷ SCO-105084 (Documents Known to the FBI Comprising the "Steele Dossier") at 8 (Company Intelligence Report 2016/94).

¹¹⁹⁸ Isikoff, *Officials Probe Ties*.

¹¹⁹⁹ So far as we were able to determine, the FBI did not refer for investigation this leak of highly sensitive information by a "senior U.S. law enforcement official" relating to an ongoing investigation of a presidential campaign.

¹²⁰⁰ As discussed in greater detail in Section IV.D.1.b.vi, the initial consensus of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane investigators was that Steele, who himself was an FBI CHS, was the unnamed "Western intelligence source" referenced in the article. However, that consensus, which was set out in footnotes of drafts of the initial Page FISA application, changed for unexplained reasons shortly before the final version of the application was submitted to the FISC. That final version of the application attributed the leak of information not to Steele, but rather to Steele's employer, Fusion GPS.

¹²⁰¹ Letter from Carter Page to FBI Director Comey (Sept. 25, 2016).

specifically volunteered to speak to any member of the FBI “in the interest of helping them put these outrageous allegations [about him] to rest.”¹²⁰² Page denied what he termed “completely false media reports . . . [stating] for the record, I have not met this year with any sanctioned official in Russia.” Page also publicly stated that he had “interacted with members of the U.S. intelligence community including the FBI and CIA for many decades.”¹²⁰³ The FBI, however, did not take Page up on his offer to be interviewed, and, indeed, the Crossfire Hurricane investigators were prohibited by FBI senior executives from approaching Page until former Director Comey finally authorized an interview in March 2017, almost six months after Page’s written offer. In this regard, FBI records reflect the following relevant Lync messages:

On October 13, 2016, one week *before* the initial Page FISA application was submitted to the FISC, two Crossfire Hurricane investigators, Case Agent-1 (a principal source of information for the Page FISA application) and Special Agent-2, had the following exchange:

Case Agent-1: It looks like Mgmt doesn’t want us to do an interview, right now.
Special Agent-2: of course not, that would make too much sense...
Case Agent-1: Yeah, exactly. We... were told by [Supervisory Special Agent-1] that *mgmt wants to see what we get from his meeting with [CHS]*¹²⁰⁴ (Monday) and what we see in the FISA.¹²⁰⁵

Shortly thereafter, the following exchange occurred between Special Agent-2 and Supervisory Special Agent-1:

Special Agent-2: Yeah [Case Agent-1] says no appetite to interview [P]age either. thats [sic] stupid.

Supervisory Special Agent-1: yeah- dude i dont [sic] know why we are even here.¹²⁰⁶

¹²⁰² Other parts of this report discuss the fact that Page had been interviewed several times previously by the FBI, most recently in March 2016, when he was interviewed as a potential trial witness for the government in the prosecution of three Russian nationals in the case known as *U.S. v. Buryakov, et al.*, 1:15-CR-00073 (S.D.N.Y.); *see supra* § IV.A.1.a.

¹²⁰³ Letter from Carter Page to FBI Director Comey (Sept. 25, 2016).

¹²⁰⁴ As discussed below, four days after this exchange, on October 17, 2016, Page met with FBI CHS-1, who recorded their conversation. During the meeting, Page explicitly stated that he had not met with Sechin and that he did not even know who Divyekin was. *See* Section IV.D.1.h.iii.

¹²⁰⁵ FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Special Agent-2 dated 10/13/2016) (emphasis added).

¹²⁰⁶ FBI-AAA-EC-00000365 (Lync message exchange between Special Agent-2 and Supervisory Special Agent-1 on 10/13/2016). FBI records make clear that the decision not to interview Page was being driven by the top-echelon of the FBI, including Comey and McCabe. Six months later, the following exchanges occurred between Crossfire Hurricane personnel:

Special Agent-3 to Supervisory Special Agent-3: What’s the over/under on getting the approval today from the DD [Deputy Director]?

It is clear from the Lync message exchanges that there was frustration on the part of Crossfire Hurricane investigators over their inability to conduct a timely interview of Page. It is

Supervisory Special Agent-3 to Special Agent-3: I bet you one cocktail of choice the approval does NOT come today.

Case Agent-1 to Supervisory Special Agent-3: . . . Do you think this happens today?

Supervisory Special Agent-3 to Case Agent-1: I already bet [Special Agent-3's first name] one cocktail of choice the DD sits on it.

Case Agent-1 to Supervisory Special Agent-3: Question, what's the hold up with the DD?

Supervisory Special Agent-3 to Case Agent-1: It's the political sensitivities and the whole timing of everything.

FBI-AAA-EC-00008079 (Lync message exchange between Supervisory Special Agent-3, Special Agent-3 & Case Agent-1 dated 03/08/2017).

Case Agent-1 to Chicago Agent-1: ...We were all set to interview [Page] this morning, but apparently, we need DD to do it now

Chicago Agent-1 to Case Agent-1: oh great

FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Chicago Agent-1 dated 03/08/2017).

Support Operations Specialist-1 to Case Agent-1: Who is the hold up? McCabe?

Case Agent-1 to Support Operations Specialist-1: I'm wondering if it's McCabe or if it's Priestap holding off telling McCabe

Case Agent-1 to Support Operations Specialist-1: DD is good with it, waiting to hear from the big guy and we're going to head out.

Case Agent-1 to Support Operations Specialist-1: We've been told to follow the letter that he sent to Comey. We can't mention any names today, etc.

Case Agent-1 to Support Operations Specialist-1: Just waiting for the Director to approve, they're in Boston together, so we anticipate it to be within the hour

Support Operations Specialist-1 to Case Agent-1: So there's just been no word from the director? Is that literally all you guys are waiting on?

FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Support Operations Specialist-1 dated 03/08/2017).

Support Operations Specialist-1 to Case Agent-1: It's a normal investigative step. Who cares what the politics are.

Support Operations Specialist-1 to Case Agent-1: If thy [sic] don't want to look political, stop trying not to look political.

FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Support Operations Specialist-1 dated 03/09/2017).

also clear from the messages sent by Case Agent-1, Special Agent-2, and their supervisor on the investigation, Supervisory Special Agent-1, that the timing and circumstances of the interview were not left to the individuals conducting and supervising the investigation, but rather the decisions on those issues were effectively being made by the Director and Deputy Director of the FBI. In this regard, according to McCabe, “Director Comey was getting daily briefings on this stuff, regularly” and the Director was intimately involved with the team that was working the case.¹²⁰⁷

We observed that Page’s letter to Director Comey was received by the FBI less than one week following the Crossfire Hurricane investigative team’s receipt of some of the startling, but uncorroborated, Steele Reports. As noted above, those reports included, among a number of other allegations, specific claims that Page was serving as an intermediary between Manafort and Russian leadership, and that Page had met with both Sechin and Divyekin while travelling to Russia in July 2016.¹²⁰⁸ As to the former, as detailed above, Page had already been recorded on August 20, 2016, informing CHS-1 that he had no relationship with Manafort and, indeed, had never even spoken with him. As to the latter claim, Page would be recorded on October 17, 2016 informing CHS-1 that he had not met with Sechin as reported by Steele and was completely unfamiliar with Divyekin. During this same timeframe, and as set forth in greater detail below, the Crossfire Hurricane investigative team was working with OI to secure authorization from the FISC for a FISA warrant on Page.

An interview of Page at that time, for which he had volunteered, would have undoubtedly been beneficial to the nascent Crossfire Hurricane investigation. As noted, Page had previously been interviewed by the FBI on multiple occasions, unrelated to his work on the Trump campaign,¹²⁰⁹ and there was no indication of any reticence on his part to speak openly and at length with the FBI. Indeed, an interview with Page would have enabled the FBI to explore whatever topics were deemed relevant to the investigation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Page’s assessment of Papadopoulos, whose statement to the Australian diplomats had served as the predication for the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. (At the time Page volunteered to be interviewed, he had already discussed Papadopoulos with CHS-1).
- Page’s relationship, if any, with Manafort, Sechin, Divyekin and other persons of interest to the investigators.
- An evaluation of any in-person denials made by Page of the allegations contained in the Isikoff *Yahoo! News* article, which would have served the dual purpose of enabling the FBI to better assess the credibility of the Steele Dossier reporting by obtaining more detailed information about the allegations directly from Page.
- Explore with Page any contact(s) that he knew of or suspected between individuals working on the campaign and any Russian officials. Because he was familiar with

¹²⁰⁷ OIG Interview of Andrew McCabe dated Aug. 15, 2019 at 33.

¹²⁰⁸ SCO-105084 (Documents Known to the FBI Comprising the “Steele Dossier”) at 8-10 (Company Intelligence Reports 2016/94 and 2016/095).

¹²⁰⁹ See *supra* § IV.A.1.a.

Russia, the FBI might have been better able to assess the credibility of the media reporting on Trump's alleged relationship with Russian officials.

An interview with Page also would have enabled the FBI to better assess the reliability of CHS-1. Finally, if the Crossfire Hurricane investigators believed that Page was not being candid, they could have asked Page to submit to a voluntary polygraph exam and to produce relevant records.

Although there may have been a concern that interviewing Page would adversely affect the FBI's ability to secure a FISA warrant, Page had already denied the allegations in the Isikoff article (and the Steele Reports, which he was not even aware at the time) in his letter to Director Comey. Page again denied the allegations in a September 26, 2016 *Washington Post* article, calling them "garbage."¹²¹⁰ As previously noted, and discussed in more detail below, in a recorded conversation with CHS-1 on October 17, 2016, four days before the FISA surveillance application was approved, Page explicitly denied meeting with Sechin and Divyekin. All of Page's denials were characterized by the FBI in the initial FISA application, as discussed below, as not credible.¹²¹¹ If Page had further denied the allegations in an interview, those denials, too, could have been included in the application. Moreover, again, they also may have succeeded in getting Page to agree to take a voluntary polygraph examination on unresolved issues and areas of concern.

Nevertheless, senior FBI management made the decision not to interview Page and, instead, continued to move forward on the FISA surveillance targeting Page.

Notably, once Comey authorized an interview of Page to go forward in March 2017, Page sat for five voluntary interviews and fully cooperated with the FBI, even going so far as to bring his own PowerPoint presentation to one of the interviews.¹²¹² In those interviews, consistent with representations he had made to CHS-1 in recorded conversations, Page denied meeting with Sechin and Divyekin. Additionally, and also consistent with what he said to CHS-1, Page denied ever meeting with or speaking to Manafort.

Although the Office recognizes the benefit of hindsight in reviewing investigative decision-making, the failure to promptly conduct a voluntary interview of Page, contemporaneous with his request for such an interview, was a missed opportunity to further assess, on a timely basis and in a different light, the actual value of the Papadopoulos information provided by Australia. It also was a missed opportunity to test the reliability of claims about Page contained in the Steele Reports. Other investigative deficiencies with respect to Page – in the Office's assessment – are discussed further below.

¹²¹⁰ Josh Rogin, *Trump's Russia Adviser Speaks Out, Calls Accusations 'Complete Garbage'*, Wash. Post (Sept. 26, 2016).

¹²¹¹ *In re Carter W. Page*, No. 16-1182, at 25-27. The first two denials by Page, in the letter to the Director and the *Washington Post* article, were described as "self-serving" in the FISA affidavit. The latter denial was described as vague statements that minimized his activities.

¹²¹² FBI Interviews of Carter Page on March 9, 2017, March 10, 2017, March 16, 2017, March 30, 2017 and March 31, 2017.

iii. *The second recording of Page made by CHS-1*

On October 17, 2016, CHS-1 and Page had a second meeting, which was also recorded by CHS-1. Regarding the allegation in the Steele reporting that Page had met with Sechin and Divyekin, Page expressly denied that he met with either one and described the reporting on the matter as lies planted in the media by “[Senator] Harry Reid . . . and the Clinton [campaign] team in Brooklyn.”¹²¹³ Additionally, Page stated, “the core lie is that I met with these sanctioned Russian officials . . . several of which I never even met in my entire life.”¹²¹⁴ Later in the conversation, Page also advised CHS-1 that Rosneft (Sechin’s company) had denied that a meeting between Page and Sechin had taken place.¹²¹⁵ Finally, Page referred to a story regarding an interview Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway conducted with CNN during which, according to Page, she said that “[Page] is not allowed to talk to the Russians, we-he was never authorized.”¹²¹⁶ In relating this story, Page told CHS-1, “I told everyone in the campaign . . . you know I never actually talked to these people. So, it’s just kind of . . . you know, complete lies.”¹²¹⁷

CHS-1 and Page also discussed Page’s alleged meeting with Divyekin. Early in the meeting, neither Page nor CHS-1 could even recall Divyekin’s name, with Page wondering whether he may have shaken the hand of some unknown person -- who may have been Divyekin -- after his speech at the New Economic School in Moscow in July 2016. With respect to Divyekin, the following exchange occurred:

CHS-1: And there’s another one who worked for, uh--
Page: There’s another guy—
CHS-1: --Putin
Page: I have never even heard of, you know, he’s like in the inner circle.
CHS-1: What’s his name again?
Page: I—I can’t even remember. It’s so outrageous.
CHS-1: Yeah. Right, he’s in the inner circle. He-he works in the Kremlin or something.

¹²¹³ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 10/17/2016 at 16. Case Agent-1 told the OIG that the Crossfire Hurricane team never fully transcribed the October 17, 2016, recording, but rather only transcribed certain excerpts taken from the recording. See *Redacted OIG Review* at 321. Our investigation made use of the fully transcribed recording.

¹²¹⁴ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 10/17/2016 at 17.

¹²¹⁵ *Id.* at 45 (quoting a Rosneft spokesman’s statement in Julia Ioffe, *Who is Carter Page? The Mystery of Trump’s Man in Moscow*, Politico (Sept. 23, 2016)).

¹²¹⁶ David Cohen, *Conway Denies Trump Campaign Ties to Russia Figure*, Politico (Sept. 25, 2016) (quoting Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway’s statement on CNN’s “State of the Union”).

¹²¹⁷ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 10/17/2016 at 107.

Page: But he's, you know, he's not someone—Again, I—I was asking—I wanted to double check, you know, I wanted to make sure that it—the graduation, I—you know, I called up, the, uh, people that were, you know, when I was a Commencement Speaker, you know. Did I happen to shake hands with this guy? Like—this guy is just completely, you know--they didn't even know of him because he's like—I mean is like for example, uh, a Senior Director on the NSC. Right? I mean they're not household names where, you know . . .¹²¹⁸

Later in the meeting, CHS-1 (not Page) recalled Divyekin's name and the following exchange took place in which Page denied even having heard of Divyekin:

CHS-1: The guy...that we were trying to think of earlier is Devianken [sic].

Page: Oh yeah, yeah, Right, right, right, yeah. *Never heard of him until-*

CHS-1: I never- I never heard of him either.

Page: . . . the Russian guys at the University who are kind of ins and outs- . . . live in Moscow, right?

CHS-1: They don't know him either, no?

Page: *Hadn't heard of him, you know.* He's kind of again Senior Director on NSC.¹²¹⁹

Later in the conversation, in response to an inquiry as to whether Page would be attending the upcoming Presidential debate in Nevada, Page advised that he was taking a break from the campaign. When CHS-1 asked, "Oh, you're not in touch with the campaign . . . ?" Page responded "[I] told them I-I need to fight out- fight against these FBI investigations and, you know it . . . it's not appropriate for me to be making statements if I'm still officially affiliated with the campaign"¹²²⁰

At the end of the meeting, CHS-1 and Page discussed the possible establishment of a think tank to be located in London focused on Russia's relations with the West, a topic they had briefly discussed in their first meeting. After telling CHS-1 that he liked the idea, Page said, "[T]he only big question obviously like most things is, you know, funding for it" In response, CHS-1 stated that, "[I] would imagine that you could probably find funds"¹²²¹ Returning to the topic a little later, Page said, "[W]ell the only interesting question [CHS-1's name deleted], on your point is, I don't wanna say they'd be an open check book, but the Russians would definitely" at which time CHS-1 interrupted saying, "[T]hey would fund it." Page then responded "uh-hum."¹²²²

¹²¹⁸ *Id.* at 18-19.

¹²¹⁹ *Id.* at 99 (emphasis added).

¹²²⁰ *Id.* at 78.

¹²²¹ *Id.* at 111.

¹²²² *Id.* at 112.

A few hours after this meeting, Supervisory Special Agent-1 contacted Strzok to provide a summary of it (which Supervisory Special Agent-1 had received from Case Agent-1). In that exchange, Supervisory Special Agent-1 informed Strzok that Page “did not deny knowing Sechin,” and “*outright denied knowing Divyekin.*”¹²²³ As an initial matter, Page denied *meeting* with either Sechin or Divyekin, the actual allegation set forth in the Steele Report and contained in the initial Page FISA. Supervisory Special Agent-1, however, accurately relayed Page’s “outright” denial that he knew Divyekin. Minutes later, Supervisory Special Agent-1 cut-and-pasted his message to Strzok and sent it to both Brian Auten and Section Chief Moffa. Thus, as of October 17, 2016, a principal source of information for the FISA, Case Agent-1, the two most senior analysts on Crossfire Hurricane, Moffa and Auten, and the Deputy Assistant Director of the Counterintelligence Division, Strzok, were all made aware of the fact that Page explicitly denied knowing Divyekin, and should have been made aware that Page denied meeting with either individual. Nevertheless, Page’s exculpatory statements were not included in the initial FISA application signed just four days later.

iv. *Crossfire Hurricane investigators submit the initial FISA application on October 21, 2016*

On October 21, 2016, four days after the second recorded meeting with Page, the Department submitted its initial Page FISA application to the FISC, which the Court granted that same day. (Unbeknownst to the Court at the time, the application contained numerous significant defects, many of which were identified by the OIG).¹²²⁴ In support of the application, the FBI made several assertions that directly conflicted with explicit statements made by Page in the two recorded conversations with CHS-1. One such assertion was the FBI’s assessment that Page was still likely involved with the Trump campaign despite the facts that (i) Page told CHS-1 that he was taking a break from the campaign;¹²²⁵ (ii) campaign officials by then had publicly distanced themselves from Page and his purported contacts with the Russians;¹²²⁶ and (iii) the campaign manager had publicly stated that Page was not part of the campaign she was running.¹²²⁷ The FISA application attributed this assessment to the fact that because Page was one of the campaign’s first foreign policy advisors and had established relationships with other members of the campaign, this would enable him to have continued access to these advisors and he would attempt to exert influence on foreign policy matters, regardless of any formal role he

¹²²³ FBI-AAA-EC-00006182 (Lync message exchange between Strzok and Supervisory Special Agent-1 dated 10-17-2016) (emphasis added).

¹²²⁴ See *Redacted OIG Review* at viii-ix; 413.

¹²²⁵ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 10/17/2016 at 77-78.

¹²²⁶ Isikoff, *Officials Probe Ties* (quoting Trump campaign advisers Hope Hicks and Jason Miller).

¹²²⁷ David Cohen, *Conway Denies Trump Campaign Ties to Russian Figure*, Politico, (Sept. 25, 2016) (quoting Trump Campaign Manager Kellyanne Conway’s statement on CNN’s “State of the Union”).

played in the campaign.¹²²⁸ This assertion was unsupported by actual evidence that such continued involvement in the campaign was occurring.¹²²⁹

Additionally, notwithstanding Page's explicit denials to CHS-1 and Director Comey of meeting with either Sechin or Divyekin in July 2016, an uncorroborated claim that had been included in the Steele Reports and publicized in the *Yahoo! News* article,¹²³⁰ the FISA application mischaracterized and misrepresented Page's words and actions regarding this subject matter. In particular, the FISA application stated that during his meeting with CHS-1, "Page did not provide any specific details to refute, dispel, or clarify the media reporting [and] he made vague statements that minimized his activities."¹²³¹ This assertion, however, seriously misrepresents Page's recorded statements set forth above.

Finally, even though Page told CHS-1 that he was taking a break from the Trump campaign, the FISA application implies that the opposite was true. It said of Page's discussion on October 17th:

During this meeting with [CHS-1], Page said that he was no longer officially affiliated with [Trump's] campaign, but added that he may be appearing in a television interview within the next week when he travels to the United Kingdom. According to Page, the interview will be discussing the potential change in U.S. foreign policy as it pertains to Russia and Syria if [Trump] wins the election. Accordingly, although Page claimed that he is no longer officially affiliated with the campaign, the FBI assesses that Page continues to coordinate with the Russian Government, and perhaps others, in efforts to influence the U.S. Presidential election.¹²³²

¹²²⁸ *In re Carter W, Page*, No. 16-1182, at 26-27.

¹²²⁹ The initial FISA application on Page contained numerous "assessments" similar to the aforementioned statement which, whether correct or incorrect, conflicted with Page's explicit statements.

¹²³⁰ In *Crime in Progress*, authors Glenn Simpson and Peter Fritsch (owners of the investigative firm Fusion GPS that hired Christopher Steele to investigate Trump's relationships in Russia) write about a series of background interviews they arranged with selected journalists, including Michael Isikoff, for Steele to share the results of his research. Simpson and Fritsch wrote that the information provided by Steele was only to be attributed to a "former senior Western intelligence official." See *Crime in Progress*, at 108-112. The Isikoff article, however, identified the person providing the information as a "Western intelligence source." See Isikoff, *Officials Probe Ties*. Steele also admitted in an interview with Special Counsel Mueller's Office that he had provided information to the American media, specifically to *Mother Jones*. See SCO-006313 (Interview of Christopher Steele on Sept. 18, 2017) at 8. Finally, Steele admitted in testimony given in a civil suit filed in the United Kingdom that in September he and Glenn Simpson had meetings in Washington, D.C. with a number of journalists and shared his information with them. See *Steele Transcript* (Mar. 17, 2020) at 163:14-167:9.

¹²³¹ *In re Carter W, Page*, No. 16-1182, at 27.

¹²³² *Id.* at 28.

The Crossfire Hurricane personnel assessed, without citing any particular fact or explaining the basis for the assessment, that this discussion of a possible television interview was somehow evidence that Page was continuing to coordinate with the Russian government, and perhaps others, in an effort to influence the U.S. Presidential election. In support, the application asserted that Page's discussion with CHS-1 during their October 17, 2016 meeting about the possibility of him (Page) doing an interview with a British television personality on the implications of a Trump campaign victory on the relationship of the United States with Russia and Syria belied his statement to CHS-1 that he was taking a break from the campaign.

v. *The third recording of Page*

Approximately two months after the initial Page FISA surveillance warrant was authorized, Page and CHS-1 had a third meeting on December 15, 2016. The meeting covered a number of topics. At the outset of the meeting, CHS-1 initiated a general discussion of the potential Russian think tank in London. After CHS-1 discussed a possible partnership with a particular UK-based entity in establishing the think tank, Page advised CHS-1 that he had been "kind of talking with the New Economic School a little bit . . . and they were actually quite, uh, quite positive." Page went on to note that "they've got a lot of support internally, you know."¹²³³ When CHS-1 asked whether the "support was from the faculty or from the government or what?" Page responded "[F]rom the government, yeah. High level."¹²³⁴ Later Page and CHS-1 had a more general discussion regarding logistics of such a think tank, discussing issues such as funding and location. When CHS-1 noted that "you [Page] said last time we met that, um, can I, you got to, you thought you had the funding lined up . . . you said the Russians are giving you a blank check," Page responded, "Well I, I don't know that I went that far. I-I-I thought there was some support of, you know, certainly, uh, this trip proved it, but I think you know, having an institutional base . . . they said well come back to us with a proposal so you know . . . and they, again, very high level people [Russians] were quite supportive of a [particular type of entity]."¹²³⁵ Nevertheless, Page later noted during the conversation that, "some people have warned me, be careful with having too much Russian connection for obvious reasons."¹²³⁶ Finally, Page and CHS-1 discussed logistical information about possibly setting up the think tank in London, potentially to be sponsored by a UK entity.¹²³⁷

During this meeting, Page also told CHS-1 that, according to the press, he (Page) was under FBI investigation. Page made this statement in response to an inquiry regarding Page's next trip to Moscow. Page said that he had been invited to Christmas parties at Russian energy companies Gazprom and Rosneft,¹²³⁸ but had told them, "I said I-I got enough investigation [Unintelligible] going along" CHS-1 then asked Page who was investigating him and in

¹²³³ Transcript of conversation between Carter Page and CHS-1 on 12/15/2016 at 8-9.

¹²³⁴ *Id.* at 9.

¹²³⁵ *Id.* at 24-25.

¹²³⁶ *Id.* at 25.

¹²³⁷ *Id.* at 25, 59-61.

¹²³⁸ *Id.* at 44.

response Page said, "Oh the FBI the whole [Unintelligible] . . . well that's what the press says, you know, no one has contacted me" ¹²³⁹

vi. *CHS-1's misrepresentation to Crossfire Hurricane investigators of his/her conversation with Page regarding Page's alleged meeting with Sechin*

Approximately one week after the December 15th meeting between Page and CHS-1, Case Agent-1 had a Lync message exchange with Supervisory Special Agent-1. Case Agent-1 advised Supervisory Special Agent-1 that CHS-1 had reached out to him (Case Agent-1) that day and had advised Case Agent-1 that CHS-1 had just remembered that Page had told CHS-1 that he (Page) had met with Sechin on Page's most recent trip to Russia. When Supervisory Special Agent-1 expressed what appeared to be skepticism about CHS-1's claim, Case Agent-1 responded that CHS-1 stated that he/she had remembered Page's statements after reading Sechin's name in the paper. ¹²⁴⁰ In a Lync exchange two days later with a Crossfire Hurricane analyst ("Analyst-1"), Case Agent-1 advised Analyst-1 that he was trying to determine when Page advised CHS-1 of this purported meeting, while also expressing skepticism that such a meeting had occurred. Case Agent-1 speculated with Analyst-1 that Page may exaggerate things about his meetings. Analyst-1 concurred with Case Agent-1, additionally speculating that there would be no benefit for Sechin in meeting with Page. ¹²⁴¹ Nonetheless, neither Case Agent-1 nor Analyst-1 appear to have considered the possibility that exaggeration regarding the purported Page/Sechin meeting may have come not from Page but rather from CHS-1, whose account of the statement by Page, at least according to Case Agent-1, easily could have been corroborated or disproven by simply listening to the December 15, 2016, recording of the conversation. This was an especially important point for investigators to resolve since, as mentioned above, during his October 17, 2016 meeting with CHS-1, Page had explicitly denied having met with Sechin in July 2016. If it were true that Page had now told CHS-1 that he (Page) had met with Sechin during his most recent trip to Moscow, such information would have been significant in bolstering suspicions about Page and his relationship with the Russians, and also arguably would have given more credibility to the earlier Steele Report assertion that Page had met with Sechin in July 2016. A review of the December 15th recorded meeting clearly shows, however, that

¹²³⁹ As noted, at the time of this third recording made on December 15, 2016, the FBI and Crossfire Hurricane personnel still had not taken Page up on his offer to be interviewed which he had made back on September 25, 2016.

¹²⁴⁰ Case Agent-1: "CHS reached out to me today, remembered that [Page] told [CHS] that he met with Sechin this past trip." Supervisory Special Agent-1: "Come on." Case Agent-1: "yup, said [CHS] just remembered it yesterday after reading Sechin's name in the paper. Supervisory Special Agent-1: "We need that audio then." FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Supervisory Special Agent-1 dated 12/22/2016).

¹²⁴¹ Case Agent-1: "I'm trying to find out when he told [CHS] he met with Sechin." Analyst-1: "man, yeah, I just don't get him or Cohen at all man... it's like they are living in a dream world... that would be pretty interesting if he really did meet with him." Analyst-1: "what possible reason would Sechin have to meet with him now, serves no benefit to him." Case Agent-1: "I really believe he exaggerates his meetings. He may have been in a meeting where he was 1 of 200 people." FBI-AAA-EC-00008439 (Lync Message exchange between Case Agent-1 and Analyst-1 dated 12/23/2016).