

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: MICHAEL GOLDFARB

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 10:02 a.m.

Present: Representatives Conaway, Ros-Lehtinen, Stefanik, Schiff, and Swalwell,

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]

For MICHAEL GOLDFARB:

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██████████ Good morning, all. This will be a transcribed interview of Michael Goldfarb of the Washington Free Beacon. Thank you for speaking to us today. For the record, I am ██████████ ██████████ here at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the majority. There will be other members and staff present who will identify themselves during the course of the proceedings.

But before we begin, I wanted to state a few things for the record. Questioning will be conducted by members and staff. During the course of this interview, members and staff may ask questions during their allotted time period. Some questions may seem basic, but that is because we need to clearly establish facts and understand the situation. Please do not assume we know any facts you have previously disclosed as part of any other investigation or review.

This interview will be conducted at the unclassified level.

We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions, based on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You are entitled to have counsel present for you during this interview, and we see that you have done so.

At this time, if counsel could please state their name for the record.

MR. COLDEBELLA: My name is Gus Coldebella with Fish & Richardson.

██████████ Thank you.

The interview will be transcribed. There is a reporter making a recording of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers

at a later time. Because the reporter cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer all questions verbally. If you forget to do this, you might be reminded to do so. You may also be asked to spell certain terms or unusual phrases.

Consistent with the committee's rules of procedure, you and your counsel, upon request, will have a reasonable opportunity to inspect the transcript of this interview in order to determine whether your answers were correctly transcribed. The transcript will then remain in the committee's custody. And the committee also reserves the right to request your return for additional questions, should the need arise.

The process for the interview will be as follows: The minority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Then the majority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Immediately thereafter, we'll take a 5-minute break if you should desire. We'll also take any breaks during the course of the proceedings as you desire. After that time period, the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions. These 15-minute rounds will continue until questioning is exhausted from both sides. Time will be kept for each portion of the interview, with warnings given at the 5- and 1-minute mark, respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone other than your attorney.

We remind you that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

And lastly, the record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be under oath.

Mr. Goldfarb, if you could raise your right hand to be sworn.

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Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MR. GOLDFARB: I do.

██████████ Thank you very much. And also just a reminder, if you could make sure the microphone is on, the green light. Pull it toward you so the reporter can hear what you are saying.

And, Mr. Chairman, over to you for opening remarks.

MR. CONAWAY: Gentlemen, thank you for being here.

Adam.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Goldfarb, welcome to the committee. We appreciate you coming in today. We have a number of interviews today, so some of us may not be able to stay with you for the whole interview. Don't take that as any slight.

Let me start by asking you about your role at the Washington Free Beacon. What is your position there and how long have you been with the Beacon?

MR. GOLDFARB: I am the chairman of the Washington Free Beacon. I have been there since its founding in the late winter of 2012.

MR. SCHIFF: And what does the position of chairman constitute? What do you do in that role?

MR. GOLDFARB: Sort of -- I'm the senior person. Final decisions on business and editorial matters ultimately rest with me.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you the publisher as well? Would you describe yourself as the publisher?

MR. GOLDFARB: I think, yes, that's fair too. I -- I don't -- chairman is typically what we use, but publisher would be fair enough, I guess.

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MR. SCHIFF: And what control do you have over content?

MR. GOLDFARB: Well, final control over content rests with our editor-in-chief. So I have influence and I'm able to state an opinion, but a final decision on publication rests with our editor-in-chief, Matthew Continetti.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you express, though, in your role as chairman, opinions about the general direction of the publication or the angle of particular stories?

MR. GOLDFARB: Sure.

MR. SCHIFF: And where were you before you started the Free Beacon?

MR. GOLDFARB: Before I started the Free Beacon, I was working as a consultant at a firm Orion Strategies (ph).

MR. SCHIFF: And what kind of work did you do there?

MR. GOLDFARB: I did work there doing political consulting, communications consulting, and foreign agent representation.

MR. SCHIFF: Is the Free Beacon a political organization or a news organization? How would you describe it?

MR. GOLDFARB: It's a newspaper.

MR. SCHIFF: And is it run by the Center for American Freedom?

MR. GOLDFARB: It is not.

MR. SCHIFF: And does it have a relationship with that center?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So the Free Beacon is purely a press organization, a press publication?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you have a variety of sources of funding, or do you

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have some funding sources that account for the majority of your funding?

MR. GOLDFARB: The majority of our funding comes from Mr. Paul Singer.

MR. SCHIFF: And what role does Mr. Singer have in terms of the content of the publication, if any?

MR. GOLDFARB: Very limited. I would -- I would describe him, sort of his attitude toward the content of the publication as one of benign neglect. But ultimately, again, Mr. Continetti has final editorial control over the product.

MR. SCHIFF: Is he the sole funder of the paper?

MR. GOLDFARB: He is the most significant funder of the paper. We also have advertising revenue and some other less significant revenue streams.

MR. SCHIFF: And during the Republican primary election, did the Free Beacon back a particular candidate?

MR. GOLDFARB: We did not.

MR. SCHIFF: Have you backed a candidate in prior elections?

MR. GOLDFARB: We don't endorse candidates. I'm not quite sure what you mean. I mean, I think if you're asking do we endorse candidates, we don't.

MR. SCHIFF: Did the editorial content of the paper or the reporting in the primary, from your perspective, favor any of the Republican primary candidates?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm not sure that it did, really. I'm not sure that it did.

MR. SCHIFF: Were there any that it expressed a prejudice against?

MR. GOLDFARB: At times.

MR. SCHIFF: And which candidates were those?

MR. GOLDFARB: We take our shots at Mr. Rand Paul on a pretty frequent basis. Kasich came in for some rough treatment, probably. But, you know, we're

ideological more than partisan. So I would say I'm sure each of the candidates could find one or two things that they were unhappy with.

MR. SCHIFF: And during the course of the primary campaign, was there a particular perspective that the paper had on Donald Trump in the primary campaign?

MR. GOLDFARB: Circumspect maybe.

MR. SCHIFF: But not critical in the way the paper was critical of Rand Paul or John Kasich?

MR. GOLDFARB: I mean, I think anybody could read the paper and come to different conclusions about the treatment, but, in my view, we were toughest on Rand.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know whether Mr. Singer backed a candidate in the Republican primary?

MR. GOLDFARB: He did.

MR. SCHIFF: Which candidate was that?

MR. GOLDFARB: Marco Rubio.

MR. SCHIFF: And how was the Free Beacon's coverage of Marco Rubio would you say, on balance, positive or negative?

MR. GOLDFARB: Positive, probably.

MR. SCHIFF: When did you first retain Fusion GPS?

MR. GOLDFARB: I think Fusion was retained in the very first or second week of September of 2015.

MR. SCHIFF: And whose decision was it to retain Fusion?

MR. GOLDFARB: Mine.

MR. SCHIFF: How did you first come to learn about them, or who did you

have contact with there?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'd known Glenn Simpson for 3 or 4 years at that point. And we have significant resources at the Beacon for research and reporting, but we've also long used outside research as sources, outside research firms to supplement the work we do in-house.

And at that point, with Trump in the ascent and him being somewhat of an unknown quality to -- quantity to us, we felt like we needed additional capacity to try and wrap our arms around that.

MR. SCHIFF: Was he retained explicitly for the purpose of doing research on Trump?

MR. GOLDFARB: At first.

MR. SCHIFF: Had you done work -- had you retained Fusion GPS prior to that time for any other investigative issue?

MR. GOLDFARB: Prior to that time?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: So you knew of Glenn Simpson's work as a journalist or his research firm's work?

MR. GOLDFARB: I knew of his work as a journalist when he was a journalist, but I came across him also in his capacity as head of Fusion.

MR. SCHIFF: And how did you come across him?

MR. GOLDFARB: I came into contact with Glenn when he was working for Mr. Singer's company.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you know generally what kind of work he did for Mr. Singer?

MR. GOLDFARB: Research.

MR. SCHIFF: Did he do work for Mr. Singer researching any candidates in the 2016 election?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm not sure I understand the question. Did he have a separate arrangement?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes. Did Mr. Singer retain Mr. Simpson's services for research during the 2016 campaign?

MR. GOLDFARB: Not to my knowledge.

MR. SCHIFF: The decision to hire Fusion GPS, was that your decision?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Did anyone else recommend that to you?

MR. GOLDFARB: Recommend it to me? I mean, we had conversations about it so others were part of those conversations, but, I mean, ultimately it was my decision.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, what I mean to ask is, did someone propose this to you and then you made the final decision, or was this something you initiated?

MR. GOLDFARB: It was something that came out of conversations I had with some of my colleagues in New York. But they were recommended to me in the past. They had experience. I knew they had experience with Republican candidates, which, frankly, is something we did not have a ton of experience with, the firms that we traditionally work with.

MR. SCHIFF: I'm not going to ask you about unrelated work that Fusion may have done for Mr. Singer, but, to your knowledge, did Mr. Singer retain Fusion for anything related to the 2016 campaign or any of the candidates running for President in 2016?

MR. GOLDFARB: Not to my knowledge.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you retain any other opposition research firms from the period of 2015 to 2017?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what other firms did you retain?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Congressman, the Beacon considers the names of those firms to be protected. I mean, they are the sources for the paper. And I would advise the witness not to get into that, if that's all right with you.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I'm trying to figure out how to resolve this with our other witness, because the questions were pretty much on the same lines.

Let me ask you this way: Did you retain other opposition research groups during the period from 2015 to 2017 to conduct research on any of the Presidential candidates?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And which candidates did you authorize the research to be conducted on?

MR. GOLDFARB: Hillary Clinton.

MR. SCHIFF: And is that the only other candidate?

MR. GOLDFARB: For the other firms?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Are you aware of any other political entities or candidates hiring or retaining Fusion GPS for opp research during the Presidential campaign?

MR. GOLDFARB: I am now, based on public press reporting, but at the time I was not.

MR. SCHIFF: And apart from what's been reported in the press in terms of the DNC or the Democratic party, are you aware of anyone else, any other political entities, hiring Fusion GPS for opposition research during the Presidential campaign?

MR. GOLDFARB: May I speak with my --

MR. SCHIFF: Of course, any time.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you ever provide Fusion GPS' work product that you received to any third parties?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm not really comfortable speaking about what we ultimately did with the research beyond saying that, you know, the Beacon is -- publishes a public product. And the research they did for us, which as it relates to this investigation we've provided the actual work product to you guys. But I'm really not comfortable speaking with exactly how that research informed our work.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, Mr. Goldfarb, I'm not asking you at this point whether you provided that work product to special counsel or other investigative committees. But I am interested to know whether the work product that Fusion GPS presented to you, which included research it had done vis-a-vis Russia, whether you had provided that to other individuals or entities?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Sir, I think where we see this is that what the Beacon did with the product that you have is protected. It reflects their editorial judgment. It reflects their associational rights.

So I don't want the witness to get into what this news organization did with

the materials it received from a source after it received them.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, I know my colleagues are going to want to ask these questions of the other witnesses and so, Mr. Chairman, I would ask for an answer to the question.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, I mean, if they don't want to answer, they don't want to answer. We'll just have to reflect on whether or not we compel that answer in some other form or fashion. But, you know, it appears to be within his -- he's claiming something that there's no way I can force him at this second to answer the question. I'd like to have the answer too, but if they don't want to answer, they don't want to answer.

MR. SCHIFF: All right, Mr. Chairman, I just remind you that when we have other witnesses in, you're going to ask them exactly the same questions and you're going to want an answer.

MR. CONAWAY: And I'll work really hard to maintain consistent answers to them as well, in terms of the role that I play in trying to compel answers.

MR. SCHIFF: So, just for our record, do you decline to answer the question as to who you provided the work product to that was produced by Fusion GPS?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Yes.

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: How much did you pay for the service provided by Fusion GPS?

MR. GOLDFARB: I don't have the documents in front of me, but overall, my recollection is it's something just under half a million dollars.

MR. SCHIFF: And was it on the basis of about \$50,000 a month?

MR. GOLDFARB: For the period from September of 2015 through May of 2016, yes.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you also retain their services through February 2017?

MR. GOLDFARB: We did.

MR. SCHIFF: And that was for approximately \$15,000 or \$20,000 a month?

MR. GOLDFARB: It was on a -- that's about right. There were some months that were less, I think, and some that were a little bit more.

MR. SCHIFF: And on what basis did you retain their services after June, May or June of 2016?

MR. GOLDFARB: They continued to do research for us on an ad hoc basis, but no longer focused on Mr. Trump.

MR. SCHIFF: Did it continue to be focused on any of the other candidates for President?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the nature of the services for which you retained him after May or June of 2016?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Congressman, just on that point, again, this gets into the editorial judgment of the paper on what stories they were sourcing and how they were using Fusion. The matters that are responsive to the committee's request have been provided.

There's a group of documents that I think were produced during that first phase and another set of documents on Mr. Manafort that was produced in the period that Mr. Goldfarb is now talking about. But outside of the materials that are responsive to the committee's request, I would suggest that the witness not get

into that editorial judgment on the newspaper's part.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, just for our record then, do you decline to answer the question of the purpose for which you retained Fusion GPS' services after May or June of 2016?

MR. GOLDFARB: For research. It was for research. But I do decline to get into what we were researching, because they're a source for us.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you have provided materials to the committee vis-a-vis Manafort and Gates. Was that part of the subject of what you had retained them for?

MR. GOLDFARB: After -- after we got off the Trump research, we did continue to do work on Mr. Manafort.

MR. SCHIFF: In reports about Christopher Steele's dossier and its funders, in late 2017 your newspaper reported that an unknown GOP client had funded the work. Three days later, it was revealed that the Washington Free Beacon was, in fact, that unknown GOP client. To what do you attribute that reporting?

MR. GOLDFARB: We put up an editor's note about this. We felt pretty bad about it. What happened there is, you know, things are siloed. And those items that referred to the unknown GOP donor were simply, we call them squibs. They're like little brief write-ups of work that others have done. It's like aggregation. And the kids who write those are kids, and -- and those go through a less rigorous editorial process than the original reporting we do. So the editors who oversaw that are also really not -- not as senior and were not aware of our relationship with Fusion.

And so what happened there is the people who did it, it's not their fault. It

was our fault. It is an editorial lapse which we've apologized for. But the bottom line is the people who wrote the item and then edited the item before publication were not aware of that relationship.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, when you --

MR. COLDEBELLA: Mr. Schiff, just before you continue, I'm sorry, just to clarify -- and I don't have your question in front of me -- I do want -- and I know you want to hear from the witness instead of me, but I just want to make sure that it's clear that -- I believe you used the phrase "Steele dossier" in your question. Nothing that the paper published suggested that they were the source of, you know, funding for that, but there was, as Mr. Goldfarb just explained, this series of corrections or one correction about the Republican donor issue.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, some of the initial reporting that Fusion GPS did for the Washington Free Beacon included information about the Trump campaign's relationship to Russia, did it not?

MR. GOLDFARB: I wouldn't describe it as relationship between the Trump campaign and Russia. I don't think that's accurate.

MR. SCHIFF: What reporting did Fusion GPS do on Russia then in its reporting while you were financing its work?

MR. GOLDFARB: We've turned over those documents, and I don't want to say anything that -- I'm not sure that everything I say will catch perfectly what's in the documents, but my -- the way I would describe it and I think is accurate is there was a number of Russian nationals in Mr. Trump's orbit, in his business dealings. And those Russian nationals were -- the research done around those Russian nationals was responsive to the committee's request and, therefore, provided.

MR. SCHIFF: And which Russian nationals are you talking about?

MR. GOLDFARB: Felix Sater is one. There's another gentleman named Schnader (ph) I believe is the pronunciation. Those are the two that come to mind.

MR. SCHIFF: Getting back to your comments, though, about why the Washington Free Beacon reported it had done work for -- that the -- that Fusion GPS had done work for an unknown GOP client, you mentioned that those articles or squibs were written by kids?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: What do you mean by kids?

MR. GOLDFARB: Young people, you know, 22-, 23-, 24-year-old young people who are sort of -- you know, they're not doing their own original reporting. Instead, they're doing this kind of aggregation where they take notable stories, write up a few lines about them, link to the original story, and it becomes an item on the site.

MR. SCHIFF: And the editors you mentioned, were they also young editors, is that part of the explanation?

MR. GOLDFARB: I mean, I don't mean it in a way as degrading to their work. It's just that the knowledge of Fusion's work for us was limited to senior reporters and editors.

MR. SCHIFF: So senior reporters and editors were aware that the Washington Free Beacon had retained Fusion?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: That it was the GOP client?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes. And these stories just didn't get in front of them,

and so that would have slipped by them. You know, they just wouldn't have seen it before publication.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, they would have seen it, as you would have, after publication, right?

MR. GOLDFARB: You know, there's a lot of content that goes up on the site every day. I think -- I think this was an innocent mistake, honestly, and I think we've dealt with it forthrightly and been apologetic about it.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware that your paper had reported that the GOP client for Fusion was unknown?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm aware now that those stories were up there. They were, again, these sort of squib aggregation stories. I don't think anyone can point to an example of reporting done on the site. And we did cover issues around this investigation, issues around the dossier. I don't think anyone can point to a piece of original reporting that was misleading in this regard. I don't think there was any attempt to mislead our readers.

MR. SCHIFF: Is it your position that in between the time where the Washington Free Beacon published that the GOP client was unknown and when it was exposed that that client was, in fact, your paper, that none of the senior reporters, none of the senior editors, and yourself were aware that your paper had misrepresented whether the client was unknown?

MR. GOLDFARB: No one brought it to my attention.

MR. SCHIFF: That's a slightly different question or a different answer. My question is, is it your position that none of the senior reporters and senior editors who were knowing of the fact that Washington Free Beacon was the client read the part of the paper where it was reported that that client was unknown?

MR. GOLDFARB: I believe if they had, they would have brought it to my attention.

MR. SCHIFF: But none of them corrected the error in the paper.

MR. GOLDFARB: That's why I'm saying I don't think they -- I don't think they saw it. I think they would have brought it to our attention and we would have corrected it at the time.

MR. SCHIFF: When you retained Fusion GPS, what did you ask them to do?

MR. GOLDFARB: Research on Donald Trump.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you ask them to look into any particular issue or did you give Fusion GPS the running room to determine what it thought would be of concern or interest to the paper?

MR. GOLDFARB: I gave them quite a bit of running room, at times would give them some direction, but, for the most part, gave them quite a bit of running room and, you know, had -- you know, these guys were, Glenn in particular, you know, like Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists. So we sort of assumed they were bringing a level of expertise that might not exist in-house for us.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you ask them in particular to look at the number of Russian nationals or people of Russian origin who were doing business with Mr. Trump or had contacts with Mr. Trump? Was that one of the specific things you asked Fusion to look into?

MR. GOLDFARB: It was. And at the time, that issue was not as salient as it is at this point, so it just wasn't really on anyone's radar I think at that time.

MR. SCHIFF: So what were your instructions to Fusion GPS?

MR. GOLDFARB: You know, look at his business record. We were

curious about his business record in the main.

MR. SCHIFF: And what in particular?

MR. GOLDFARB: Bankruptcies. Bankruptcies, you know, dodgy business deals, you know, lawsuits, that kind of stuff.

MR. SCHIFF: So, to the degree that Mr. Simpson found evidence that he thought you would be interested in in terms of Russian contacts of then Candidate Trump, that was something that he found on his own initiative?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm sorry. Restate.

MR. SCHIFF: To the degree that Mr. Simpson of Fusion GPS found information they thought worthy of bringing to your attention about then-Candidate Trump's ties to Russian nationals or ethnic Russians, that was something that Fusion GPS found of its own accord and not because you directed them in particular to that?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. COLDEBELLA: And, Mr. Schiff, not to interrupt, but I think what Mr. Goldfarb said earlier was that it was almost collateral. And this is in the documents; I don't have to characterize the documents. But the relationship that was of interest after reading the documents does not seem to be that they were Russian but, instead, that they were involved in crime. But because they were Russian, that's the reason that we produced the documents to the committee.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. I appreciate that explanation, Counsel, but would prefer to hear that testimony from the witness.

MR. COLDEBELLA: I understand.

MR. SCHIFF: And was Mr. Trump the only candidate you were engaging Fusion to investigate --

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: -- at that time?

MR. GOLDFARB: At what time?

MR. SCHIFF: During the primary.

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: And what other candidates did you engage them on?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Again, we don't feel comfortable having the witness talk about the other research that Fusion did for them on other candidates in the primary. You can talk about how many.

MR. GOLDFARB: There was one other candidate they worked for -- they worked on for us.

MR. SCHIFF: And, for the record, you decline to answer which other candidate that was?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Yes.

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: At a news briefing on August 1st, 2017, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders described Fusion GPS as a Democratic-linked firm. Was that your understanding when you hired them?

MR. GOLDFARB: I was aware that they had worked for Democrats in the past.

MR. SCHIFF: Were you aware of whether they worked for Republicans as well?

MR. GOLDFARB: I was not aware of work for Republicans as well.

MR. SCHIFF: But you retained them nonetheless because you thought highly of their capabilities?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: How often did you receive reports from Fusion GPS?

MR. GOLDFARB: Not on a regular basis, but -- it's hard to characterize the interval, honestly.

MR. SCHIFF: Just so I understand your production to the committee, you have produced the reports that Fusion GPS provided you that were relevant to Mr. Trump and Russia or all those relevant to Mr. Trump?

MR. GOLDFARB: Mr. Trump and Russia was what the committee asked for.

MR. SCHIFF: So material that Fusion GPS provided to you on the subject of Mr. Trump but did not specifically involve Russia, you have not provided to the committee?

MR. GOLDFARB: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: And material that Fusion GPS provided to you on other candidates other than Mr. Trump, you have also not provided to the committee?

MR. GOLDFARB: Correct.

MR. SCHIFF: And, again, Mr. Chairman, we'll have to discuss how this differs quite dramatically from the other witnesses that we've been asking similar questions.

Did you seek to verify the information that was presented to you in the documents you received from Fusion GPS regarding Mr. Trump?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: In what ways?

MR. GOLDFARB: I mean, really, that, again, gets into the sort of editorial process of the Beacon and -- and I'd prefer not to get into the details of how we

operate. But anything we publish, we report it out and confirm it.

I would also note, though, that the material that Fusion provided to us, as you can see in the examples we've provided, typically didn't require a lot to confirm. It typically included -- everything was typically delivered in a way that provided a public site to a credible news outlet, the accompanying court documents if it was related to a court case, public records. That was really the meat of what they did for us was provide the material that verified the issues at hand.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you provide any of the -- during the period of the Presidential campaign, did you provide any of the material that you received from Fusion GPS to any government agency or government personnel?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: When you would receive reports from Fusion GPS on different issues related to Candidate Trump, did you have meetings periodically with Glenn Simpson or others at Fusion GPS to discuss the nature of the material they were providing?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what kind of feedback did you provide Mr. Simpson on the material he was providing regarding Candidate Trump?

MR. GOLDFARB: Mostly positive. But I don't -- I don't remember making specific complaints about it.

MR. SCHIFF: On the subject of the material that he provided concerning Candidate Trump's Russian business contacts, can you tell us what discussion you had about that with Mr. Simpson?

MR. GOLDFARB: I don't recall any specifics of those conversations.

Sater was the only one that -- this other one, Schnader (ph), who's in there, I don't even remember that, but it was -- you know, it's in the documents. I don't remember it from the time. Sater was the only one I ever remember having any discussion with -- with Glenn about.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was your discussion with Mr. Simpson about Sater?

MR. GOLDFARB: I think it was more of just like, geez, what a -- what a kind of colorful character.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you give Mr. Simpson any indication that you were interested in more information about Mr. Sater or any of the other Russian contacts?

MR. GOLDFARB: I don't recall telling him to follow up on it, but I think he understood that I was interest -- Mr. Sater was actually an interesting character and I sort of assume either -- either I told him to get whatever he could on it or he delivered it in a way where he said, this is everything we could get on it. I don't -- I don't remember the exact, but I remember sort of vaguely that we had had some discussion about it.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you specifically request information on Manafort, Gates, and Roger Stone, or was this something that Fusion GPS initially provided on its own?

MR. GOLDFARB: I specifically requested the information on Manafort. I don't think I singled out Gates, but, you know, he was part of the package. I never requested specifically anything on Mr. Stone.

MR. SCHIFF: And your request vis-a-vis Manafort, did that come when you engaged Mr. Simpson or during the course of his work for the Washington

Free Beacon?

MR. GOLDFARB: It came around the time of Mr. Manafort's elevation in the Trump campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: And what made you interested in finding out information about Manafort?

MR. GOLDFARB: I've spent a lot of years working in the space of eastern Europe. I've worked as a foreign agent, and I also worked for Senator John McCain. And I was aware of -- at times acutely aware of Mr. Manafort's relationship to Russia, and I was acutely concerned about it.

MR. SCHIFF: A March 2016 invoice -- we can show you the document Bates stamped number 9 -- has a \$4,114 line item for Russia research. What does this make reference to?

MR. GOLDFARB: I'm not certain. I would have to spend a lot more time with the documents to figure that out. I'm sorry.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, would those be the documents that you provided in production, or are there other documents you would need to look at to refresh your recollection?

MR. GOLDFARB: I assume that if there's anything that required Russia research that it would be in the documents produced.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you specifically request Russia research from Fusion GPS?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know why Fusion characterized this as Russia research?

MR. GOLDFARB: I bet it was translation services, but I can't -- I can't tell

you exactly.

MR. SCHIFF: So you think that may have been translation services to translate the documents that were obtained, either vis-a-vis Manafort or for some other reason?

MR. GOLDFARB: I suspect it was translating Russian press would be my assumption, but, again, I can't tell you exactly. I just don't know the answer.

MR. SCHIFF: And why would Russia press be relevant to what you had engaged Mr. Simpson to do?

MR. GOLDFARB: I could speculate if you want me to.

MR. COLDEBELLA: Well, I don't want you to.

MR. GOLDFARB: I would be speculating.

MR. SCHIFF: Is there a particular document that we can show you that will help you understand why in March of 2016 you were billed for -- \$4,000 for Russia research?

MR. GOLDFARB: Could I follow up with you later, if we could go through the documents later and I could try and connect the dots as best I could?

MR. SCHIFF: I'm sure that we'll take a break at some point. Maybe we'll have you go through the documents during a break.

Was part of the reason that you engaged Mr. Simpson you were interested in his research for the purpose of stories you were going to write?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you write stories on the basis of what Mr. Simpson provided?

MR. GOLDFARB: We did.

MR. SCHIFF: And what stories would those have been?

MR. GOLDFARB: Again, I prefer not to speak directly to the editorial process we have at the Beacon, but you have a substantial tranche of the material and you obviously have access to everything we've published. But as far as disclosing specific sources for specific stories, I'd rather not go down that road.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you publish stories -- let me narrow it down this way -- on the basis of the Russia research that the firm did for you?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the nature of those stories?

MR. GOLDFARB: Again, I mean, I just -- I really feel like, as a news organization, as a news organization, it's not appropriate for me to be talking about the sources of my reporters and how they go about writing their stories. But I do think it's not -- it would not be difficult for this committee to look at that research and look at our website and -- and -- and make their own reasonable judgments about what led to what.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, Mr. Goldfarb, you've already identified the source of the information here, which is Fusion GPS. What we're interested to know is what stories were written on the basis of this information. That will tell us, particularly vis-a-vis Russia, what was significant about -- at least from the Free Beacon's point of view, about the Russia research that was done by Fusion GPS.

MR. GOLDFARB: I just --

██████████ Five minutes.

MR. GOLDFARB: I'll just say, you know, I hope the committee will consider that this puts us in a very difficult position. And we are -- we understand how important this investigation is. We're here to be cooperative with it.

But I also have an obligation to the institution, our institution and our

reporters, and it's just a very difficult position. So I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm not trying to obscure the relationship between the research they did and the reporting that subsequently was produced by the Beacon. I just feel like it's not appropriate for me to sort of say to this committee, well, here's how exactly this one story works and that kind of thing.

MR. SCHIFF: Mr. Goldfarb, I'm not asking you about stories you wrote on the basis of Fusion GPS' work on other candidates or other clients or other issues or even work you did for the Washington Free Beacon that you engaged him to do during the Presidential primary campaign.

I am asking about the very narrow category for which you've already testified he produced information for you on the subject of Russia that made it into your reports. I'm not asking your other sources of information, but I am asking you about the articles that you published on the basis of his work. Are you declining to answer that question?

MR. GOLDFARB: I am, but I do --

MR. COLDEBELLA: Yes.

And just to follow up for one sentence, sir, it's -- you do have the source. You do have the material that they provided. The question is sort of peeking behind the curtain of the editorial process of the paper, and I feel uncomfortable having the witness discuss how the stories are created at the Washington Free Beacon.

MR. SCHIFF: No one is asking how the stories are created at the Washington Free Beacon. But you are asking us to speculate, if you wrote four stories on Russia, which one you wrote on the basis of the information you got from Fusion GPS. And we would rather not speculate when the witness knows

the answer and when you've already identified the source.

So that's the reason for the question. If you are going to maintain a declination to answer the question, then obviously, we'll have to discuss, in light of the position we take with other witnesses, what we need to do about that.

But at this point, you are declining to answer a question about the stories that you wrote on the basis of this source of information?

MR. COLDEBELLA: Yes.

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: When was the contract with Fusion GPS terminated?

MR. GOLDFARB: In February of 2017, we paid our final invoice.

MR. SCHIFF: And why was it terminated?

MR. GOLDFARB: I was -- I was kind of shocked at the publication of the dossier, and the realization that Fusion had played a role in that. And I thought that was really a pretty toxic document that I didn't want to associate the Washington Free Beacon with. And so our relationship ended pretty abruptly at that point.

MR. SCHIFF: During the course of the Presidential campaign, did you discuss with anyone associated with the Trump campaign the research that Fusion GPS had done for you?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Never discussed it with Mr. Bannon?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Have you discussed it with Mr. Bannon since the Presidential campaign?

MR. GOLDFARB: I don't do discussions with Mr. Bannon.

MR. SCHIFF: Have you discussed the research that Fusion GPS did for the Free Beacon with anyone else in the Trump campaign or the now-Trump administration?

MR. GOLDFARB: On October 27th of 2017, when we came forward to disclose our work with Fusion to this committee, I did reach out to someone at the White House to apprise them that we had done so.

MR. SCHIFF: And who was that that you reached out to at the White House?

MR. GOLDFARB: Mark Short.

MR. SCHIFF: And what did you tell Mr. Short?

MR. GOLDFARB: I told him that --

██████████ One minute.

MR. GOLDFARB: -- I wanted to make him aware that we had disclosed to the House Intelligence Committee our work with Fusion, and, you know, basically just said to him, you know, it was a long time ago, but it's an embarrassing disclosure, but I hope you guys will not hold it against our reporters.

And -- and, you know, he's a friend of mine, so it was more of just letting him know that he was likely to read this about us and, you know, I was not happy about the situation, but it is what it is.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was his response?

MR. GOLDFARB: Thanks for letting me know.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you have any other conversation with anyone in the administration about the work that Fusion GPS did for you?

MR. GOLDFARB: I did not.

MR. SCHIFF: I'll yield back to the majority.

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MR. CONAWAY: All right. Again, Mr. Goldfarb, thank you for coming here.

My colleague asked about documents you've provided to the committee, and you said you were responsive to our question. Had we structured our question better and asked in one sentence for documents related to Mr. Trump and Fusion, period, and then asked for documents related to Mr. Trump and Russia, period, would you have given us the documents with respect to Mr. Trump?

MR. GOLDFARB: It's kind of a hypothetical.

MR. CONAWAY: It's no longer a hypothetical. I just asked you, will you give us those documents had we asked?

MR. COLDEBELLA: I'm sorry to jump in, Mr. Conaway. I don't know if any of those documents exist. We will go back and figure that out and talk to the committee about it.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Including the minority staff.

MR. COLDEBELLA: The entire committee, yes.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Who at your shop would have dealt, directly or indirectly, with Simpson throughout this period?

MR. GOLDFARB: Some of our reporters; the president of our organization, Aaron Harrison; our editor-in-chief, Mr. Continetti.

MR. CONAWAY: All right. Were they free to direct research, to expand the role that Fusion was playing? Could they have done that?

MR. GOLDFARB: Yes.

MR. CONAWAY: Who had -- any one of them could have? Would somebody have had a -- the one guy that said no, we're not going there. Who

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would have been the main supervisor, or just anybody could have expanded the scope any way they wanted to?

MR. GOLDFARB: I mean, in the sense of a -- you know, I would have expected something like that in the sense of, you know, you're having a conversation about a specific item and a reporter says, can you look at this? And nobody would have needed to sign off on that type of thing.

MR. CONAWAY: So would that have included hiring Christopher Steele and spending a lot of money with the firm Black Vent (ph) somebody else would have had to approve that other than an individual reporter?

MR. GOLDFARB: If it required additional expense, I would have had to approve it.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Did you, in fact, approve the hiring of Christopher Steele at any point during your relationship with Fusion?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Have you ever heard of him before?

MR. GOLDFARB: Not --

MR. CONAWAY: Before this document?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Did, in fact, Fusion hire subcontractors to do the work that you were asking for, that you're aware of?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Did you or your reporters -- since you're here on behalf of the firm, I'm going to ask you questions for people that work for you. But did you or your team, editors, reporters, anyone ask Fusion to do research on collusion between the Trump campaign at that time and Fusion -- and Russia?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Did you hire or participate in any way in the preparation of the Steele dossier?

MR. GOLDFARB: No.

MR. CONAWAY: Given that -- I could ask a lot of questions in terms of the media about trying to prove a negative. I'd rather not do that; I don't like to answer those questions. But I need to ask you, can you prove to us that -- other than just your word, that the Free Beacon had nothing to do with the Trump dossier or the underlying data?

MR. GOLDFARB: We provided one email. You asked us to produce any documents related to Orbis or Christopher Steele. There really is nothing except for one email from myself to Glenn. And in the spirit of trying to get to that core issue you all are addressing, but also because we want nothing to do with this, I want it to be clear that we had nothing to do with this, I provided one email to the committee that I think comes as close as one can to proving the negative that --

MR. CONAWAY: What was the date of that email?

MR. GOLDFARB: That was on January 11th, 2017, I believe.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. All right. What's your opinion of Glenn Simpson? I know he was a reporter at the Wall Street Journal. You may have known him during that timeframe. Is his -- what his political biases are, any idea what those are?

MR. GOLDFARB: I think he's -- I think he's pretty flexible on that at this point.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. All right. I have to go start another interview, so I'm going to turn the questioning over to my colleague [REDACTED] Sir, but thank you

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for being here. And I'll thank you, sir. Or --

MS. ROS-LEHTINEN: No, I'm good. I'm going to the other one too.

EXAMINATION

BY [REDACTED]

Q I just have a few questions. I appreciate you coming in. I want to try to nail down this timeline. I'm not the best with dates.

Can you just go over your relationship, that is, of the Washington Free Beacon's relationship for retaining Fusion GPS, when it began, how it began, when it ended, how it concluded?

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[10:59 a.m.]

MR. GOLDFARB: As far as retaining them, you know, again, we had a pretty robust research operation at the time.

And in our defense, we've been criticized for using research firms as a source before, but I think it's a perfectly legitimate reporting technique. But at the time, we felt like we did not have bandwidth to deal with the size of the Republican field and particularly with Mr. Trump, who had a record -- a footprint in public records that was well beyond any candidate we'd ever dealt with really.

And around August of 2015 had some discussions at the Beacon, also had some discussions with Mr. Singer, and there was clearly an appetite, you know, at our organization from end to end for a greater sense of Mr. Trump's record. And we sort of felt like we had to hire up and increase our capacity.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Is it fair to say that September of 2015 is the time in which you officially retained services of Fusion GPS?

A I think September 1 would be the fairest way to -- I don't know what the exact date was, but I think September 1 is where I would sort of put it.

Q And prior to September of 2016 the Washington Free Beacon had no professional relationship with Fusion GPS.

A No.

Q Did you enter into a formal contract or was it just a business dealing between you and Mr. Simpson?

A We had an agreement, we had a formal agreement.

Q Okay. And how long did that formal agreement between the Washington Free Beacon and Fusion GPS continue to uninterrupted?

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A Until February of 2017.

Q Okay. So there was no interruption from September 2015 through February of 2017, correct?

A No, they were on service the entire time.

Q And to February of 2017. Was there a specific incident that led you to terminate your relationship, that is the Washington Free Beacon's, with Fusion GPS?

A The publication of the dossier.

Q What specifically in relation to the publication of the dossier caused you to decide for the Washington Free Beacon to terminate your relationship with Fusion GPS?

A I just -- I was shocked when I saw the dossier. I was shocked to learn that Fusion had a hand in it. And I just thought it was an appalling document. I just -- I wanted nothing to do with it.

Q When you say -- and just trying to be clear -- when you say appalling and shocked, do you mean that the document that BuzzFeed published, which is now known as the Trump dossier, the Steele dossier, was unsubstantiated, unverified, or was accurate or inaccurate?

A I thought it was bullshit, I mean, to be honest. I thought it was just not credible. It didn't pass the smell test for me.

Q Did that publication of that document change your opinion of Fusion GPS?

A My opinion of Fusion has evolved from the day of that publication until today.

Q And can you walk us briefly through that evolution? What are your

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thoughts as it relates to Fusion GPS as a research firm?

A I was disturbed to learn -- I didn't understand that they did that kind of work, which is not the kind of work I would want to associate the Beacon with, insofar as sort of very in this thinly sourced rumor, innuendo, human intelligence. It's to my mind sort of separate and apart from the kind of research we typically employ.

I was a little surprised that they were working for the Clinton campaign and the DNC, although I don't begrudge them, I guess, but I was surprised by that.

I was surprised to learn that they were working for Baker Hostetler. I'd been involved in Magnitsky Act work on a consultant basis, I'd worked with Mr. Browder. I would -- I probably would have had real concerns about entering into the arrangement if I'd understood the work they were doing on the other side of that.

Q That's my next question. I mean, if you're doing work related to the Magnitsky Act and it's been widely publicly reported that Fusion GPS was hired by the law firm Baker Hostetler to oppose all things Magnitsky Act- related, did you know that at the time of your entering into the contract with Fusion GPS?

A I did not know that.

Q Did you think that was a slight of hand by Glenn Simpson, or an honest mistake, or just an intentional omission?

A I didn't ask him who his other clients were. In retrospect, that might have been a mistake on my part. I don't know if I would have gotten an answer anyway. But that issue is particularly near and dear to me. So I thought it was an unfortunate revelation when I discovered it.

Q And turning to Glenn Simpson, I may have misheard this, but correct

me if I'm wrong, you came into contact with Mr. Simpson because he was working for Paul Singer's company at a certain time?

A Yes.

Q What was he doing for Mr. Singer, he being Glenn Simpson?

MR. COLDEBELLA: We can just talk about it in general and you can also talk about the time period, which I don't think Mr. Schiff asked him.

██████████ That's what I'm more interested in.

MR. COLDEBELLA: Okay.

MR. GOLDFARB: It was in 2013, I think.

BY ██████████

Q Did you meet Mr. Simpson, like, in person during the course of that --

A Yeah.

Q -- of his employ of Mr. Singer?

A Yeah.

Q And did you just have sort of an ongoing relationship from that point in time?

A Yeah, I would say we were friendly.

Q Okay. Do you have -- do you or did you have a relationship with any of the other folks at Fusion GPS, either a Peter Fritsch or Thomas Katan or anyone else?

A Fritsch.

Q How do you know Mr. Fritsch?

A Purely through Fusion's work for the Beacon.

Q Have you been contacted by any government authorities in relation to the matters we're discussing here today?

A No.

MR. COLDEBELLA: With the exception of the Senate Intelligence.

██████████ Right, right. That's fair enough.

BY ██████████

Q And circling back to Chairman Conaway's position on it being difficult to prove a negative, if you could just give me some answers to the following questions.

How can you best inform this committee that your relationship ended with Fusion GPS in February of 2017 due to the publication of the dossier?

A I think we provided all the invoices that we have, and that final invoice was paid in February, received in early February, paid in February, and we have no financial relationship with them since then.

Q Okay. And I guess a little more difficult question is, how can you explain to this committee that none of the information that Fusion produced for you pursuant to your employment agreement with them was for the purposes of creating this quote, unquote, Trump dossier, Steele dossier?

A I've read the dossier. I feel very confident that no material that was produced and delivered to us appears in that dossier. It was all new information to me when I read it.

And beyond that, I think the dossier itself makes pretty clear that the information was gathered after the time that we ceased working with Fusion on matters related to Donald Trump, to my recollection. There's markers in the dossier about when meetings happened, and when information was gathered and this kind of thing that post-dates our Trump research. And I personally see zero overlap in the work product.

Q Did you or anyone at the Washington Free Beacon ever direct Fusion GPS or anyone thereunder to look for material that was revealed in the Trump dossier in your employment relationship for obtaining opposition research?

A No.

Q I think that's all I have.

[REDACTED]

MR. COLDEBELLA: Would you mind if we just got up and stretched for a few moments?

[REDACTED] Yes.

[Recess.]

[11:14 a.m.]

[REDACTED] All right. Again, my name is [REDACTED] I am the [REDACTED] over here.

I just have for you follow-up questions. So we discussed earlier an invoice for Russia work. I would like to give you a document and perhaps you can review it, and let me know if this looks familiar, and then whether this may be what we were discussing or not. I'll give you a minute to look it over.

MR. COLDEBELLA: Do you have a copy?

[REDACTED] I'm good.

[REDACTED] Memorized it.

MR. GOLDFARB: Can you give me the invoice again?

BY [REDACTED]

Q Sure. Here we go.

A It could be. It would make sense, but I can't say for certain based on what I have in front of me just because for two reasons. One, I just don't know the exact date we received this. And second, I never -- you know, as long as the bills looked reasonable, I never, you know, is that from that month or is it translation from the month prior that goes into a document that's delivered and -- I didn't scrutinize the bills to that extent.

Q Sure.

A I could try harder to pin it down based on the record of when that document came in, but I would have to circle back with you.

Q Sure. I think, you know, to the extent you could get that fidelity I think it would be useful for us.

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MR. COLDEBELLA: And again, I know you want to hear it from him, but in going through the documents, it seems like those things line up from a date point of view.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Sure. And I think as you pointed out Mr. Goldfarb, the Trump and Russia document number 65 doesn't have a date on it. I think to the extent that you could determine when you received that would be helpful.

A I will follow up with you on this.

Q Thank you.

[The information follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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BY [REDACTED]

Q Did you review the documents as they would come in from Fusion GPS or was this provided directly to your reporters?

A I reviewed the documents sometimes, but, you know, it's a lot of paper and a lot of it as you could see is like -- I sort of relied on them to flag things they thought, you know, going through thousands of pages of documents, that was sort of their job was to flag things that were worthy of particular attention.

Q They being?

A Fusion.

Q Fusion.

So you had, I think -- actually, if I can just sort of clarify a timeframe in terms of the Fusion's work. So you said you retained them late 2015, September, October 2015?

A September.

Q Okay. And then through --

A February 2017.

Q Okay. And then through -- was it spring of 2016 that you said you had requested work on Donald Trump, Trump's business ties largely?

A Yeah. I mean after the Indiana primary when Trump became the presumptive nominee for all intents and purposes, we came to terms with that over a period of days and weeks, and conveyed to Glenn that we were no longer interested in their production of Trump related research.

Q So following the Indiana primary -- and I'm not going to ask you to tell me what specifically you were getting that's outside the scope of our investigation.

Just so I understand the timeframe, after the Indiana primary, or soon thereafter, you no longer received documents on Donald Trump and I presume focused more on the general election?

A Without getting into the specifics of what we focused on, the only thing beyond that timeframe that's been relevant to what you guys have been after is the Manafort stuff.

Q And that continued beyond the Indiana primary?

A Yes.

Q Into February of 2017?

A Until his departure from the Trump campaign.

Q Okay. So late summer 2016.

A Yes. Sorry, yes.

Q So I think you or your paper have said publicly that and you've testified today that nothing you have seen in the dossier relates to what you received from Fusion GPS. Is that correct?

A In my view, I feel confident in saying that there is no overlap between the work provided to us and the work that appears in that document.

Q And have you -- beyond reading the dossier and based on your memory of what you received from Fusion GPS, have you sought to compare the documents?

A I have.

Q And have you spoken to anyone at Fusion GPS for example to determine whether what they provided you was used in the dossier?

A I have not spoken to Fusion guys on that subject. My interaction with them since the publication of the dossier has been pretty limited. But it also

never struck me to ask, because I just -- it also seemed pretty obvious to me that it was not -- it was just so different than the work they had done for us in scope and in kind. It's not the same thing.

Q So in this document number 65, there is a section, the bolded portion of which says, in 2013 Trump met with Aras Agalarov, Alex Zucker and Tim Rosen to discuss developing a Trump branded property in Moscow. And there is some description of the Agalarov family, including I believe his son, Emin.

Now I think there is a section in the dossier that specifically discusses Trump's business relationship with an Azzari business figure Aras Agalarov who had been closely involved with Trump in Russia. And would know most of the details of what the Republican Presidential candidate had got up to there.

When you reviewed the dossier, did that stick out to you?

A Not at all. I mean honestly, I don't recall ever thinking about this guy or his name or -- I mean, you know, again, thousands of pages given to us of this kind of public open source material. When I read the dossier, the thing I was interested on to see if there was overlap was the Manafort section and I felt pretty confident at the end of my review that there was in fact no overlap.

Q So speaking of that I know you provided us several documents, including court filings on Mr. Manafort and Mr. Gates I think specifically if we can look at a couple of documents, I will pass to you.

So this says, update, Paul Manafort, this is number 307 so I suspect this was an update to another document received on Paul Manafort and discusses some of his business dealings and relationships to Russian oligarchs.

Is it your testimony that as far as you understood there wasn't any similar references to Mr. Manafort's business dealings --

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A I don't --

Q -- in the dossier?

A -- recall now so well. I didn't reread the dossier in preparation for this. But my best recollection of the Manafort section of the dossier is that it was more HUMINT driven, that it like anecdotes of meetings in Russia, and reports from people in the room. We certainly never got that kind of -- again, the stuff we get is, you know, it's public records, which there's sort of like no public records in the dossier. It's all whatever it is.

Q But you'd agree that there is reference to Manafort's --

A Yes.

Q -- business relationship with Ukraine and Russia in the dossier?

A Yes. That's what I was particularly sensitive to what I reviewed it.

Q When did you first hear about the dossier? Not the first time you read it, but when did you first hear that a document like that existed?

A Over the Christmas break of 2016.

Q Okay. And how did you come to learn about it?

A A journalist told me that there was a document circulating that had some very damaging allegations.

Q At that point, did you -- were you aware that Fusion may have been connected or did you suspect that they may have been connected?

A No. I had -- the information I had was fairly limited, just this information that a document was circulating and it was these damning allegations and they were likely to be reported out soon.

Q Did your paper seek to report out that story?

A No.

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Q I believe you said you had worked for Senator McKean (ph) previously?

A Yes.

Q I think there is some public reporting that he was involved in receiving the dossier, giving it to some individuals. Did you ever discuss the dossier with Mr. McKean (ph) or anyone connected to him or his business or --

A No.

Q -- campaign? And when did you first read the dossier?

A When everyone else did on January 10th, 2017.

Q And I believe you just spoke about your reflections on it. What was your initial reflection?

A I just did not see in that kind of work and I'd before working in politics and media for, you know, 15 years. And I'd never seen a document like that. It looked to me like somebody was playing at spy, you know, it's just not the kind of material that we come across in campaigns or in journalism.

Q Had you ever heard of Christopher Steele or known --

A I hadn't.

Q -- or known anything about it?

A I had not. Sorry. I apologize.

Q On January 6th of 2017 the Intelligence Community released a declassified Intelligence Community assessment on Russian interference in our election. Have you -- are you familiar with that document?

A I am.

Q Have you read that document?

A Not cover to cover.

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Q What was your reflection with the parts that you did read?

A I mean it's pretty clear to me that, you know, the Russians are as usual up to a lot of dirty business.

[REDACTED] I think those are all my questions.

[REDACTED] I just have one.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Is the Free Beacon aware of any information that the Trump campaign conspired or colluded with members of Russian government or the Russian government during the 2016 election?

A No.

[REDACTED] Thanks. We're adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the interview was concluded.]

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