

IN DEFENSE OF SUBPOENA FOR FUSION BANK RECORDS, HPSCI ALLEGES FUSION PAID JOURNALISTS

The House Intelligence Committee continues to fight with Fusion GPS over records and testimony. Most specifically, they continue to fight over how many of Fusion's bank records it should have to turn over. Yesterday, HPSCI submitted a filing that suggests a number of fairly inflammatory things about Fusion's work, most notably that they may have paid up to four journalists and/or researchers besides Steele in conjunction in relation to topics relating to Russia, if not the dossier.

HPSCI is currently asking for:

- the 30 transactions included in the Initial Production;
- 12 transactions associated with previously-identified counterparties for whom some but not all transactions were included in the Initial Production;
- 19 transactions associated with payments from eight (8) law firms other than ██████████ or ██████████;
- 12 transactions associated with payments to four journalists and/or researchers other than ██████████ or ██████████;
- 8 transactions associated with ██████████;
- 12 transactions associated with payments from Media Company A (██████████);
- 19 transactions associated with two ██████████ firms, Business A (██████████) and Business B (██████████); and
- metadata associated with the 112 identified transactions and contained within specified pages of the Responsive Records.

The context in the declaration from Scott Glabe suggests the following about these requests.

The 30 initial transactions would relate to Perkins Coie and BakerHostetler, as well as the payments to Steele's firm, though a redaction elsewhere suggests there are 6 counterparties total that Fusion has already provided records on.

HPSCI is interested in the law firms because of the way Fusion's true clients (the Democrats and

Prevezon, for example) have had law firms pay Fusion to hide their role in the project. It wants to know if those 8 law firms served as cut-outs for other Russian related work.

It is interested in Business A because it might pertain in some way to "links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any other U.S. person," particularly some policy matter at issue in the inquiry/reflected in the dossier. HPSCI is interested in Business B because it may pertain to collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign.

With regard to journalists or researchers, Fusion has apparently already provided records related to one journalist or researcher. HPSCI is seeking records pertaining to three more. Given the reference, below, which seems to suggest an earlier redacted reference to *Mother Jones*, I don't rule out the earlier one being David Corn or someone else from *Mother Jones*, and MoJo has a specific effort associated with Russia coverage. The 8 transactions mentioned must pertain to payments from Beacon, which funded the early work on the dossier.

The 12 transactions appear to involve payments *from* Yahoo to Fusion, based on the following passage:

As Mr. Steele has acknowledged in other dossier-related litigation, in addition to sharing memos comprising the dossier with *Mother Jones*, in fall 2016 he met with at least five major media outlets at Fusion GPS' direction. Those outlets included *Yahoo News*, which on September 23, 2016, reported purported meetings between Trump campaign advisor Carter Page and specified high-ranking Russian officials, attributed to a single "well-placed Western intelligence service." Substantively similar allegations were contained in the dossier. Given Fusion GPS' demonstrated patten of dossier-related engagement with media outlets, the Requested Records include records

from [line and a half redacted].

Mind you, I don't understand why Yahoo would be paying Fusion if they were at the same time publishing its dirt. But the allegation is of particular interest given the way Michael Isikoff's September story has been a central self-referential piece of "proof" dossier boosters always rely on to prove its value.

First, note that Sipher relies on "renowned investigative journalist" Michael Isikoff to validate some of these claims.

Renowned investigative journalist Michael Isikoff reported in September 2016 that U.S. intelligence sources confirmed that Page met with both Sechin and Divyekin during his July trip to Russia.

[snip]

A June 2017 Yahoo News article by Michael Isikoff described the Administration's efforts to engage the State Department about lifting sanctions "almost as soon as they took office."

Among the six journalists Steele admits he briefed on his dossier is someone from Yahoo.

The journalists initially briefed at the end of September 2016 by [Steele] and Fusion at Fusion's instruction were from the New York Times, the Washington Post, Yahoo News, the New Yorker and CNN. [Steele] subsequently participated in further meetings at Fusion's instruction with Fusion and the New York Times, the Washington

Post and Yahoo News, which took place in mid-October 2016.

That the Yahoo journalist is Isikoff would be a cinch to guess. But we don't have to guess, because Isikoff made it clear it was him in his first report after the dossier got leaked.

Another of Steele's reports, first reported by Yahoo News last September, involved alleged meetings last July between then-Trump foreign policy adviser Carter Page and two high-level Russian operatives, including Igor Sechin – a longtime associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin who became the chief executive of Rosneft, the Russian energy giant.

In other words, Sipher is engaging in navel-gazing here, citing a report based on the Steele dossier, to say it confirms what was in the Steele dossier.

Fusion is claiming a First Amendment interest in keeping this all hidden. Me, I'm actually a bit interested in which journalists and researchers were getting and giving Fusion money.