

THE DAILY BEAST GUCCIFER SCOOP AND THOSE GRU OFFICERS SANCTIONED LAST WEEK

The Daily Beast has a story reporting (in addition to the already reported news that the DNC hack got moved under Robert Mueller) that the person behind the Guccifer 2.0 persona “slipped up” once and failed to use the VPN hiding his location in the GRU headquarters in Moscow.

[0]n one occasion, The Daily Beast has learned, Guccifer failed to activate the VPN client before logging on. As a result, he left a real, Moscow-based Internet Protocol address in the server logs of an American social media company, according to a source familiar with the government’s Guccifer investigation.

The US identified which particular officer was behind the Guccifer persona.

Working off the IP address, U.S. investigators identified Guccifer 2.0 as a particular GRU officer working out of the agency’s headquarters on Grizodubovoy Street in Moscow.

And then, according to TDB, the Guccifer persona was handed off to a more experienced GRU officer, with better English skills.

Sometime after its hasty launch, the Guccifer persona was handed off to a more experienced GRU officer, according to a source familiar with the matter. The timing of that handoff is unclear, but Guccifer 2.0’s last blog post, from Jan. 12, 2017, evinced a far greater

command of English that the persona's earlier efforts.

TDB's sources did not reveal the name of the officer identified from the VPN "slip up."

The Daily Beast's sources did not disclose which particular officer worked as Guccifer.

But we may already know the name or names of the GRU officers involved. As I noted last week, Treasury added two names to the list of GRU officers sanctioned in conjunction with the DNC hack: Sergei Afanasyev and Grigoriy Viktorovich Molchanov. Both would actually be (very) experienced officers – they are 55 and 62. And both include very interesting "as of" dates identifying the last point when our intelligence officials identified their positions: February 2017 and April 2016, respectively.

The latter is of particular interest, as it came during the period when Guccifer 2.0 was setting up his infrastructure. But the government doesn't know a ton about this guy – they know his birth year, but not his birth date, and possibly not even his passport information.

In any case, last week, the government revealed two new people it blames (and therefore sanctioned) for the DNC hack.

As TDB notes, the revelation that the government has tied Guccifer 2.0 to a known GRU officer is utterly damning for Roger Stone, who has admitted talking to him. But they don't lay out how squirrely Stone was in early March when trying to deny he was in trouble for his dalliances with Guccifer 2.0 and Wikileaks, which I laid out here.

In his response he does the following:

- *Raises doubts that he was actually talking to Guccifer 2.0 (even*

though Guccifer 2.0's only identity was virtual, so Stone's online interactions with any entity running the Guccifer Twitter account would by definition be communication with Guccifer 2.0)

- Repeats his earlier doubts that Guccifer 2.0 is a Russian operative
- Emphasizes that he couldn't have couldn't have been involved in any hack of the DNC Guccifer 2.0 had done because he first spoke to him six weeks after the email release (in reality, he was speaking to him three weeks after the Wikileaks release)
- Admits he once believed Guccifer 2.0 did the hack but (pointing to the Bill Binney analysis, and giving it a slightly different focus than he had in September) claims he no longer believes that
- Invents something about a WaPo report that's

not true, thereby shifting the focus to receiving documents (as opposed to, say, information)

- *Denies he received documents from anyone but not that he saw documents (other than the Wikileaks ones) before they were released*

This denial stops well short of explaining why he reached out to Guccifer. And it does nothing to change the record – one backed by his own writing – that Stone reached out because he believed Guccifer, whoever he might be, had hacked the DNC.

At the time Stone reached out to Guccifer (as I pointed out, he misrepresented the timing of this somewhat in his testimony), he believed Guccifer had violated the law by hacking the DNC.

He never does explain to Todd why he did reach out.

Guccifer 2.0 never comes back in the remainder of the interview.

Just weeks ago, when his buddy Sam Nunberg was giving (potentially immunized) testimony to the grand jury, Stone was really really squirrely about whether his conversations with Guccifer 2.0 put him at legal jeopardy. The confirmation of the GRU tie may provide one reason why he's so squirrely.

Update: As Kaspersky's Aleks Gostev notes, Treasury should know far more on Sergei Afanasyev. RT publicly described him as Deputy

Chief of GRU in April 2016. And Molchanov is, at least now, head of GRU's academy.