

GET CARTER, REDUX

[Note the byline, please – this is Rayne, NOT Marcy.]



[Get Carter by MGM c.
1971]

By now you've probably heard, viewed, read a lot about the Justice Department's release of the four FISA applications submitted to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) requesting authorization to surveil U.S. citizen Carter Page. All 412 pages of four applications.

Can I just say how much Carter Page annoys me? He's perfected the art of acting like a complete doofus, which made reading his testimony to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) absolute torture to read; he even gave Russian spies Evgeny Buryakov, Igor Sporyshev, and Victor Podobnyy pause back in 2014-2015 when he was in contact with them here in the U.S. I've yet to find a searchable text version of his HPSCI testimony because no one apparently wanted to OCR his babbling.

He's also appeared on television frequently,

producing bizarre interviews which undermine the idea he is capable of damage.

Yet this “idiot,” as Russian spies have called him, pulled off meeting contacts only one and two degrees of separation from Vladimir Putin. He’s weaseled and lied about these repeated contacts when he hasn’t refused to answer questions altogether.

But his crazy-pants interviews and patchy statements combined with intelligence from other credible sources establish a snapshot of what a reasonable person would believe is an agent of a foreign power.

He was already quite iffy given his contacts in 2014-1015 with Buryakov, Sporyshev, and Podobnyy. But his actions during 2016 were a magnitude more questionable, particularly with additional intelligence not all of which was Christopher Steele’s.

Come on now, on the face of it Page was worth monitoring: the “idiot” ends up on the Trump campaign team, travels to Moscow smack in the middle of the election season, ends up hobnobbing with Putin’s circle while watching Europa football exactly one month after a U.S. diplomat was physically attacked in Moscow, then gives U.S. foreign policy-bashing speeches two successive days in a row in front of Russian dignitaries at a university funded in part by oligarch Len Blavatnik.

Two weeks later he praised Trump campaign team members for their efforts to change the RNC platform which softened the party’s position on arming Ukraine.

All the while holding an investment stake of ADRs in PJSC Gazprom.

Nothing to see here, no probable cause, move along – right? [*insert boldface snark tag*]

It’s very easy for the uninitiated to see how much more suspicious the level of Page’s contacts and activities appeared to the FBI

without doing a lot of fine reading. Here is an excerpt from the October 2016 FISA app (pages 32-33 of 412), consisting of the FBI's conclusion:



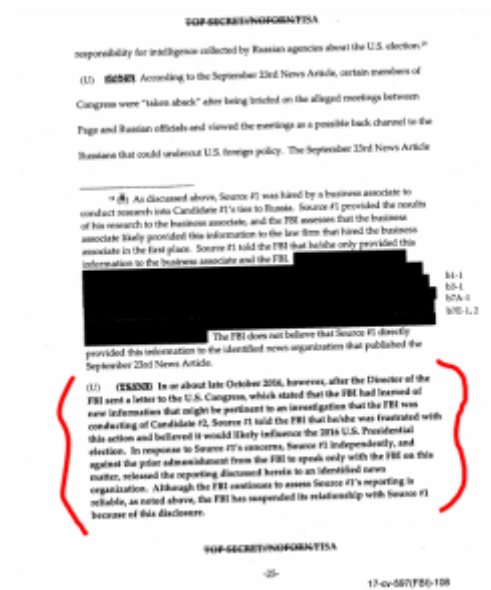
And here is the conclusion from the subsequent January 2017 FISA app, filed when the October 2016 application was about to lapse:



Each excerpted Conclusion above ends at section 4 Proposed Minimization Procedures. Though both conclusions are heavily redacted, the second conclusion exploded from not quite two pages to nearly six pages, suggesting that Page's statements and actions combined with other additional and new intelligence provided the FBI with even more reason to suspect Page was an agent of a foreign state who should be surveilled.

Could some of the redacted material consist of Steele dossier intelligence? Sure. But as Marcy pointed out earlier today, the dossier's

use will likely prevent Page from being prosecuted. However the second application contains a half-page-long footnote about Steele and the dossier:



Note the boldface; the FBI made certain to qualify "Source #1" (Steele) and his material. It also appears the FBI had adequate additional sources without Source 1 including intelligence from the Buryakov spy case.

~ | ~

A troll infestation across the internet continues its work, insisting the FBI didn't make adequate disclosures to the FISC about Steele's intelligence. It's funny, though, how their elected-yet-trollish counterparts Representatives Devin Nunes, Matt Gaetz, Mark Meadows and Jim Jordan look after the release of these applications.

The retweet at the top of Jordan's feed as I draft this post:



Jordan sounds frantic in that embedded video. One could only wonder why a representative under pressure for ignoring sexual abuse claims might be so anxious about investigating the DOJ (denials about the sexual abuse scandal just happen to be the tweet preceding this one in Jordan's timeline).

Meadows doubles down on stupid:



Does he really believe the declassification and unredacting any more of these FISA apps will make the HPSCI's GOP members' obstruction look any better?

Speaking of obstruction, Devin Nunes tweeted a little over 24 hours after the FISA apps were released that his memo was accurate:



So desperate and unhinged.

And Matt Gaetz appeared in denial with this tweet which remained at the top of his timeline for more than 24 hours, ignoring the FISA apps altogether; the retweet preceding it contains a Fox News video in which Florida's Rep. Ron DeSantis blames Obama for Putin's meddling:



Not a horse I'd bet money on.

~ | ~

Other takes on the FISA applications you'll want to read:

David Kris at Lawfareblog: What to Make of the Carter Page FISA Applications

Julian Sanchez on Twitter

Matt Tait (Pwnallthethings) on Twitter

Leah McElrath on Twitter noting changes in status to certain app signers

Charlie Savage on Twitter

The Hoarse Whisperer on Twitter, who brings up an interesting point

and our good friend Cynthia Kouril via Twitter, bringing a prosecutor's eye.

~ | ~

Now I have to go through the Carter Page timeline and see if anything in this 412 pages changes or adds to its content. Damn you, Page – as if I had nothing better to do this week.

Treat this as an open thread – leave comments in Marcy's posts focused on topic.