

WHY DO YOU SEND YOUR DIGITAL GUY TO MEET WITH THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR?

The HPSCI Democrats have released the report they should have had ready to go last night: their 21-page report on all the things the HPSCI Russian investigation didn't cover but should have. It's an interesting list (though it seriously lets the GOP off the hook for treating this investigation as an obstructive lark). I'll likely reflect on what kind of mirror it holds up to the Republican sense of which witnesses they had to vet for Trump.

For now, I want to point at an interesting little detail. In the section describing why HPSCI should know more about the Trump campaign's digital operations, the report reveals that Jared Kushner sent the Trump campaign Assistant Director of Data Analysis, Avi Berkowitz, to go meet with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak a month after the election, around the same time Russia was floating back channels so banks could bail out Kushner's failing family real estate empire.

Trump Campaign Digital Operation: The Committee ought to interview all relevant persons involved or associated with the Trump campaign's digital operation to determine whether the campaign coordinated in any way with Russia in its digital program. The Committee will not be able to fully evaluate the campaign's digital operation without speaking to a broader cross-section of individuals who can provide greater insight into the digital operation's day-to-day activities or its relationship with Cambridge Analytica. The Committee also must interview individuals from other companies who

conducted technology-related work on behalf of the Trump campaign or on behalf of other entities being funded through independent expenditures to gain a full picture of whether there was any coordination between Russia's extensive social media efforts on Trump's behalf and the campaign itself.

For example, Avraham (Avi) Berkowitz, served as Assistant Director of Data Analytics on the Trump Campaign. He was also an associate of Jared Kushner and Brad Parscale. The Committee has reason to believe that Mr. Kushner may have dispatched Mr. Berkowitz to meet with Russian Ambassador Kislyak in December 2016. Theresa Hong, who served as Digital Content Director for the Trump campaign, should also be asked to testify. Ms. Hong has spoken to the press about the campaign's digital operation and her team's work alongside Cambridge Analytica.

That very same month, I asked whether dark marketing had a role in all the mobs seemingly providing pressure in support of Trump at key moments.

That Berkowitz made that visit did get reported last spring. But not with the emphasis that Berkowitz was so central to the campaign's digital organization.

Maybe (as someone suggested to me on Twitter) Jared was just sending Berkowitz to retrieve the thumb drives they had shared during the campaign?