THE GOP PAC-THETIC EFFORT TO DISCLAIM CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA

In the wake of Friday's news that Cambridge Analytica had not deleted psychographic data based off Facebook data, Republicans have claimed they didn't rely on CA in 2016's election. Major Garrett, for example, reported that, for most but not all uses, the Trump campaign replaced CA with RNC data after proving the latter more accurate.

> In late September 2016, Cambridge and other data vendors were submitting bids to the Trump campaign. Then-candidate Trump's campaign used Cambridge Analytica during the primaries and in the summer because it was never certain the Republican National Committee would be a willing, cooperative partner. Cambridge Analytica instead was a hedge against the RNC, in case it wouldn't share its data.
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> The crucial decision was made in late September or early October when Mr. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and Brad Parscale, Mr. Trump's digital guru on the 2016 campaign, decided to utilize just the RNC data for the general election and used nothing from that point from Cambridge Analytica or any other data vendor. The Trump campaign had tested the RNC data, and it proved to be vastly more accurate than Cambridge Analytica's, and when it was clear the RNC would be a willing partner, Mr. Trump's campaign was able to rely solely on the RNC.
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> Cambridge Analytica data was used for some targeted digital advertising and a large TV buy, but the main source of "get out the vote" and matching digital

> outreach data came from the RNC.

This story is not much different from one that got told last fall, in the wake of Brad Parscale's testimony before the House Intelligence Committee. After using CA data for the first month of the general, the campaign transitioned to using RNC data (for whatever reason).

> But according to both Parscale and [CA Chief Product Officer] Oczkowski, the campaign didn't use Cambridge's trove of data, opting instead for the RNC's data file.
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> "The RNC was the voter file of record for the campaign, but we were the intelligence on top of the voter file," Oczkowski says. "Sometimes the sales pitch can be a bit inflated, and I think people can misconstrue that."
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> Parscale describes the firm's work this way: "As I've said multiple times over prior statements, Matt Oczkowski and his team created a daily tracker of polling, so that I could see how Trump was doing in key swing states. They provided that to me daily." Parscale says Cambridge also helped the campaign with what he calls "persuasion online media buying. They also helped us identify potential donors. And they created a visualization tool that showed in each state which areas were most persuadable and what those voters care about."

As I noted at the time, however, Oczkowski claimed to be unaware of what CA was doing *because the PAC activities were firewalled from campaign activities*.

> "I had absolutely no understanding any of this was going on, and I was surprised as everybody else when I saw the story" about Nix's approach to

> Assange, Oczkowski says. During the campaign, he says his team was walled off from the rest of Cambridge, because the company was also working with a Trump Super PAC. Federal regulations prevent campaigns from coordinating with Super PACs. Of the 13 Cambridge staffers who worked in Trump's San Antonio office, only four remain at the company.

Which, of course, suggests that the interesting stuff with CA was happening at the Super PAC, which just happens to have been run by the Mercers.

Today, Daily Beast reported that a Cambridge Analytica employee, Emily Cornell, gleefully pounced on the opportunity presented by the release of more stolen Hillary emails.

> Cambridge Analytica hoped to capitalize on Russian hacking of Hillary Clinton and her ally, an email written by one of its employees indicates.
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> Emily Cornell, the employee, sent the email on July 29, 2016. It went out to people working with Make America Number One, the pro-Trump super PAC funded by Republican super-donors Robert and Rebekah Mercer.
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> After noting some of the firm's work for the super PAC, Cornell wrote: "With her campaign getting hacked, I can only imagine what a new swatch [sic] of emails will do to her already fractured base!"

This seems to confirm two things. First, the Mercer directed efforts remained happy to exploit Russia's theft even later in the process (remember the Alexander Nix email to Julian Assange kept Mercer in the loop). And also, the Trump campaign claim to have ditched Cambridge Analytica are only meaningful insofar as they really maintained that firewall between campaign

and PAC.