

# **THE SHINY OBJECT OF THE MAY 2017 RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION: THE EVIDENCE MOSTLY CAME IN AFTER AUGUST 1**

There's a reason today's NYT story so infuriates me – to say nothing of Trump's efforts to declassify documents from the Russia investigation that, because of the personnel moves of virtually everyone involved, would mostly end by August 1, 2017.

That's because it's clear that – because Peter Strzok lost an August 2016 battle to investigate more aggressively in summer and fall 2016 – DOJ, FBI, and then Mueller were only obtaining key information around about August 1, 2017, a year later. It's no surprise, then, that (as the frothy right has been obsessing about recently) Lisa Page and Strzok weren't sure if there was evidence of "collusion" on May 17, 2017. Of course they weren't. The government hadn't started collecting the evidence in earnest yet.

Consider the following investigative steps:

FBI appears not to have sent a preservation request to Government Services Administration for George Papadopoulos' material until March 9, 2017, and they appear not to have pursued his privately held call records (especially the Facebook ones that would have revealed the existence of Ivan Timofeev) until some time later.

On June 6, 2017, the Mueller team was still debating whether they would access Section 702 materials, something they otherwise do routinely with assessments, to say nothing of fully predicated national security investigations.

The John Dowd letter wrongly claiming unprecedented cooperation reveals that Mueller

started to receive the documents requested by congressional committees on July 21; that would presumably be the first that the government obtained the version of the June 9 emails that included Paul Manafort's replies.

Copies of all documents provided to the committees by the Campaign, and all search term lists and the privilege log, were also provided to the Special Counsel.

- *By letter dated May 17, 2017, the Campaign received a request for documents from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI).*
- *By letter dated June 7, 2017, the Campaign received a request for documents from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI). The records requested included records generated from June 16, 2015, to 12pm on January 20, 2017, and hence, included the transition period.*
- *The Campaign voluntarily responded to these requests by providing 840 documents on July 21, 2017, and another set of 4,800 documents on July 31, 2017. By letter dated*

*July 19, 2017, the Campaign received a request for documents from the Senate Judiciary Committee (SJC).*

Mueller sent a preservation request for Transition materials on June 22. He obtained all the emails and devices from 13 transition staffers in late August.

Specifically, on August 23, 2017, the FBI sent a letter (i.e., not a subpoena) to career GSA staff requesting copies of the emails, laptops, cell phones, and other materials associated with nine PTT members responsible for national security and policy matters. On August 30, 2017, the FBI sent a letter (again, not a subpoena) to career GSA staff requesting such materials for four additional senior PTT members.

The list of documents the White House provided, organized by Bates number, show that some key documents couldn't have come in until July 2017. Indeed, documents pertaining to Comey's firing appear to be the last of the document sets obtained, sometime after the disclosure of the June 9, 2016 meeting in July 2017.

BuzzFeed's big scoop on financial transfers between Aras Agalarov and Ike Kaveladze around the time of the June 9 meeting shows banks didn't start looking for such suspicious transfers until after the June 9 meeting was disclosed on July 8, 2017.

None of these transactions was discovered until 2017, after the New York Times revealed the Trump Tower meeting. Shortly after that report, investigators asked financial institutions to look back at their

accounts to learn how money flowed among the people who planned and attended the meeting: Agalarov; Kaveladze; Agalarov's pop star son, Emin; their employee, Rob Goldstone, who sent the original email to Trump Jr.; and others.

To unearth connections between some of their accounts, banks took an extraordinary step: They invoked a provision of the Patriot Act – a post-9/11 law that included new tools to track money laundering and terrorist financing. That provision, rarely used in the Trump-Russia investigation, allowed the banks to share information about customers with one another.

Three financial institutions – Citibank, JP Morgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley – discovered the \$3.3 million that flowed from Agalarov to Kaveladze.

My interview with the FBI (I believe I was the second source about one aspect of what I shared, but believe I was the first about the stuff that tied more obviously to the campaign) was July 14. I believe my materials were moved under Mueller when Ryan Dickey got moved under Mueller in November, 2017.

So the constant six-year old soccer chases by journalists trying to learn what happened in May 2017 – when things were chaotic because Trump was breaking all norms and firing people who actually weren't investigating that aggressively – to the detriment of attention on what happened in the months thereafter really does a huge disservice to the truth. The investigation into Trump's conspiracy with Russia started in earnest around about August 1, 2017. Once the government actually started looking for evidence, I imagine the evidence of conspiracy was pretty obvious.

*As I disclosed in July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the*

*Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.*