

HOMELAND SECURITY CHAIR RON JOHNSON THINKS IT SCANDALOUS THAT LAWYER OF HACKING VICTIM TALKS TO FBI ABOUT HACK

In the never-ending scandal industry of Republican members of Congress trying to make a huge deal out of the fucking Steele dossier, Senate Homeland Security Chair Ron Johnson is demanding that Christopher Wray provide more information (including on the John Doe investigations into Scott Walker's corruption in WI). Johnson never went to such lengths to obtain information from the FBI during the investigation of the Boston Marathon bombing, but I guess he has different priorities.

Among the things he's demanding are details of a conversation that Perkins Coie attorney Michael Sussmann had with then FBI General Counsel James Baker.

According to public reports, former FBI General Counsel James Baker met with Michael Sussman, [sic] an attorney with the Perkins Coie law firm, which retained Fusion GPS in 2016 to research allegations about then-candidate Donald Trump. Fusion GPS hired Christopher Steele, author of the Steele dossier—and Mr. Sussman allegedly provided the FBI with information “related to Russian interference in the election, hacking and possible Trump connections.”

The John Solomon piece that has gotten Ron Johnson all hot and bothered about this contact says that Sussmann gave Baker some materials on Russian hacking and possible Trump connections with it.

Baker identified lawyer Michael Sussman, [sic] a former DOJ lawyer, as the Perkins Coie attorney who reached out to him and said the firm gave him documents and a thumb drive related to Russian interference in the election, hacking and possible Trump connections.

Michael Sussmann has been publicly identified as the person that helped the DNC respond to the Russian hack since June 14, 2016, the day the hack first became public.

Chief executive Amy Dacey got a call from her operations chief saying that their information technology team had noticed some unusual network activity.

"It's never a call any executive wants to get, but the IT team knew something was awry," Dacey said. And they knew it was serious enough that they wanted experts to investigate.

That evening, she spoke with Michael Sussmann, a DNC lawyer who is a partner with Perkins Coie in Washington. Soon after, Sussmann, a former federal prosecutor who handled computer crime cases, called Henry, whom he has known for many years.

His role in helping the DNC help respond to the hack was further described by the NYT's magnum opus on it.

No one knew just how bad the breach was – but it was clear that a lot more than a single filing cabinet worth of materials might have been taken. A secret committee was immediately created, including Ms. Dacey, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Brown and Michael Sussmann, a former cybercrimes prosecutor at the Department of Justice who now works at Perkins Coie, the Washington law firm that handles D.N.C.

political matters.

“Three most important questions,” Mr. Sussmann wrote to his clients the night the break-in was confirmed. “1) What data was accessed? 2) How was it done? 3) How do we stop it?”

Mr. Sussmann instructed his clients not to use D.N.C. email because they had just one opportunity to lock the hackers out – an effort that could be foiled if the hackers knew that the D.N.C. was on to them.

“You only get one chance to raise the drawbridge,” Mr. Sussmann said. “If the adversaries know you are aware of their presence, they will take steps to burrow in, or erase the logs that show they were present.”

The D.N.C. immediately hired CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm, to scan its computers, identify the intruders and build a new computer and telephone system from scratch. Within a day, CrowdStrike confirmed that the intrusion had originated in Russia, Mr. Sussmann said.

The NYT even describes Sussmann and DNC executives meeting with “senior F.B.I. officials” – a description that would fit the FBI’s General Counsel, Baker, whom Sussman would have known from when they worked on national security cases at DOJ together.

The D.N.C. executives and their lawyer had their first formal meeting with senior F.B.I. officials in mid-June, nine months after the bureau’s first call to the tech-support contractor. Among the early requests at that meeting, according to participants: that the federal government make a quick “attribution” formally blaming actors with ties to Russian government for the

attack to make clear that it was not routine hacking but foreign espionage.

"You have a presidential election underway here and you know that the Russians have hacked into the D.N.C.," Mr. Sussmann said, recalling the message to the F.B.I. "We need to tell the American public that. And soon."

In other words, there has been public reporting for years that Sussmann spoke to the FBI, reporting that even explains why he was involved – because he was the guy with experience working on cybersecurity. But in spite of that, the Chair of one of the committees most centrally involved in cybersecurity is now suggesting that victims of nation-state hacking and their lawyers should not talk to the FBI about that hacking.

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.