

TRUMP'S EXCUSE FOR HIS PROMISED SPEECH ON HILLARY CLINTON

On June 21, 2016, the day after Christopher Steele submitted the first installment in his dossier, Guccifer 2.0 published what the persona deemed a dossier on Hillary Clinton. It included a bunch of files – many dating to April 2015 – that summarized potential attacks on Hillary, often providing rebuttals. These documents appear to be the kind of reports campaigns do to prepare for attacks they expect to be hit with.

The “dossier” included four files relating to the Clinton Foundation (two of which were responses to the Peter Schweizer book *Clinton Cash*), one on defenses to attacks on her email server, another on attacks on Bill and Chelsea, and a summary of the attacks GOP primary candidates had made on her, a number of which focused on national security. While the files were definitely dated (and the financial records, in particular, worthless), it is the closest thing to a “dossier” of “kompromat” released during the entire Russian operation.

The timing of that release and its focus – including on Schweizer’s book – is worth revisiting given the explanation Trump gave Mueller (starting on PDF 427) for his aborted promise, on June 7, 2016 to, “give a major speech on probably Monday of next week and we’re going to be discussing all of the things that have taken place with the Clintons.”

g. On June 7, 2016, you gave a speech in which you said, in part, “I am going to give a major speech on probably Monday of next week and we’re going to be discussing all of the things that have taken place with the Clintons.”

i. Why did you make that statement?

ii. What information did you plan to

share with respect to the Clintons?

iii. What did you believe the source(s) of that information would be?

iv. Did you expect any of the information to have come from the June 9 meeting?

v. Did anyone help draft the speech that you were referring to? If so, who?

v. Why did you ultimately not give the speech you referenced on June 7, 2016?

[snip]

In remarks I delivered the night I won the California, New Jersey, New Mexico, Montana, and South Dakota Republican primaries, I said, "I am going to give a major speech on probably Monday of next week and we're going to be discussing all of the things that have taken place with the Clintons." In general, I expected to give a speech referencing the publicly available, negative information about the Clintons, including, for example, Mrs. Clinton's failed policies, the Clintons' use of the State Department to further their interests and the interests of the Clinton Foundation, Mrs. Clinton's improper use of a private server for State Department business, the destruction of 33,000 emails on that server, and Mrs. Clinton's temperamental unsuitability for the office of President.

In the course of preparing to respond to your questions, I have become aware that the Campaign documents already produced to you reflect the drafting, evolution, and sources of information for the speech I expected to give "probably" on the Monday following my June 7, 2016 comments. These documents generally show that the text of the speech was

initially drafted by Campaign staff with input from various outside advisors and was based on publicly available material, including, in particular, information from the book *Clinton Cash* by Peter Schweizer.

The Pulse Nightclub terrorist attack took place in the early morning hours of Sunday, June 12, 2016. In light of that tragedy, I gave a speech directed more specifically to national security and terrorism than to the Clintons. That speech was delivered at the Saint Anselm College Institute of Politics in Manchester, New Hampshire, and, as reported, opened with the following:

This was going to be a speech on Hillary Clinton and how bad a President, especially in these times of Radical Islamic Terrorism, she would be. Even her former Secret Service Agent, who has seen her under pressure and in times of stress, has stated that she lacks the temperament and integrity to be president. There will be plenty of opportunity to discuss these important issues at a later time, and I will deliver that speech soon. But today there is only one thing to discuss: the growing threat of terrorism inside of our borders.

I continued to speak about Mrs. Clinton's failings throughout the campaign, using the information prepared for inclusion in the speech to which I referred on June 7, 2016.

If the documents submitted to Mueller do back his claims that the speech was in preparation ahead of time, then Trump's answer is one of the most responsive ones he gave Mueller. But we've already seen one instance – whether Trump ever

declined an invitation to St. Petersburg from Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Prikhodko (if footnotes are understood to be comprehensive, Trump submitted an unsigned letter, but not a signed copy or the emails that supposedly extended the invitation) – where Trump’s written responses claimed that documentation submitted to Mueller substantiated more than they appear to have.

And Trump didn’t really answer the question why he didn’t give a designated speech focused on those topics; he instead simply suggested he covered those topics along the way, generally.

Elsewhere, the report describes a discussion at a meeting that Mueller believes happened on June 6 relayed by Rick Gates at which Don Jr promised damaging information about the Clinton Foundation which – though vague – appears to reference an upcoming meeting.

Rick Gates, who was the deputy campaign chairman, stated during interviews with the Office that in the days before June 9, 2016 Trump Jr. announced at a regular morning meeting of senior campaign staff and Trump family members that he had a lead on negative information about the Clinton Foundation.⁷⁰³ Gates believed that Trump Jr. said the information was coming from a group in Kyrgyzstan and that he was introduced to the group by a friend. ⁷⁰⁴ Gates recalled that the meeting was attended by Trump Jr., Eric Trump, Paul Manafort, Hope Hicks, and, joining late, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner. According to Gates, Manafort warned the group that **the meeting** likely would not yield vital information and they should be careful.⁷⁰⁵ Hicks denied any knowledge of the June 9 meeting before 2017,⁷⁰⁶ and Kushner did not recall if the planned June 9 meeting came up at all earlier that week.⁷⁰⁷ [my emphasis]

Which is why I find it interesting that Guccifer 2.0 released a set of documents that – while not all that exciting, were nevertheless directly on point regarding the topics Trump claimed were already being drafted into a speech he'd give.

As I disclosed last 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.