

THE DAMNING REVELATIONS ABOUT GEORGE PAPADOPOULOS IN A DOJ IG REPORT CLAIMING EXCULPATORY EVIDENCE

I'm still working through my deep dive of the DOJ IG Report on Carter Page (see the list below for links to my prior posts). But to prep for a post showing that DOJ IG did not meet the standard it held the FBI to in its investigation, I want to first lay out what the IG Report shows about George Papadopoulos.

Why Papadopoulos matters in an IG Report on Carter Page

Papadopoulos is discussed in this IG Report for three reasons. First, the investigation into whether anyone on the Trump campaign was coordinating with Russia, called Crossfire Hurricane, was opened after the Australian government passed on a report about what Papadopoulos said to their representative to the UK, Alexander Downer, over drinks in May 2016. The tip raised legitimate questions about whether the Trump campaign was coordinating with Russia and if so via what channels, so FBI opened an investigation to find out. So Papadopoulos is in the IG Report because his big mouth predicated the investigation.

Papadopoulos is also included because after the GOP embraced conspiracy theories that FBI had "spied" on Trump's campaign by introducing informants into it, the IG reviewed

Papadopoulos' interactions with two Confidential Human Sources (CHS; along with interactions Carter Page and Sam Clovis had with informants), ultimately showing that no CHSes were infiltrated *into* the campaign, but were instead used as what FBI believed was the most discrete but efficient way to investigate whether there was something behind Papadopoulos' blather.

Finally, the review into the interactions between informants and Page and Papadopoulos led the IG to conclude that the FBI should have highlighted information from those interactions in Carter Page's FISA applications. That judgment is undoubtedly true for Page's meetings with informants, as he denied several of the specific allegations from the Steele dossier that made up a key prong in the probable cause against him.

But it's a closer call with regards to Papadopoulos, even just based off the information included in the IG Report (and all the more so when matched up with information in other public documents). Two of the seventeen "significant inaccuracies and omissions" that the IG Report faults FBI for pertain to information on Papadopoulos, and a third pertains to Joseph Mifsud's denials of telling Papadopoulos about the emails:

5. Omitted Papadopoulos's statements to an FBI CHS in September 2016 denying that anyone associated with the Trump campaign was collaborating with Russia or with outside groups like WikiLeaks in the release of emails;

[snip]

15. Omitted Papadopoulos's statements to an FBI CHS in late October 2016 (after the first application was filed) denying that the Trump campaign was involved in the circumstances of the DNC email hack;

16. Omitted Joseph Mifsud's denials to the FBI that he supplied Papadopoulos with the information Papadopoulos shared

with the FFG (suggesting that the campaign received an offer or suggestion of assistance from Russia); and

Given that FISA applications never get shared with defendants, this information *should* be shared, at least with DOJ's Office of Information that does the applications. But all of these references were deemed to be – for good reason – cover stories. So I think they deserve more attention in any analysis of how to “fix” (or scrap) FISA moving forward, because they demonstrate one problem with warrant affidavits that will never see the light of day, what to consider exculpatory or not.

As background for that (and to rebut Papadopoulos' claims that this Report backs any of the fevered claims he has made about the investigation into him), I want to lay out what the IG Report reveals about the investigation into Papadopoulos.

July 28 through August 10 2016: FBI receives the tip from Australia then opens the investigation

Days after WikiLeaks released the DNC emails, on July 26, Australia told someone in London (probably CIA, but the report describes the State Department being involved) about what George Papadopoulos told Alexander Downer (and, probably, his aide Erica Thompson, who had an earlier meeting with Papadopoulos as well as the one she attended with Downer) in May 2016.

The Report does not include the full text of the Australian tip, which has led people from the Attorney General on down to diminish the import of it based off a partial quote. In addition, DOJ has – at its own discretion – kept a few words reflecting other details from the

Australian tip that the FBI used to predicate the investigation classified.

The opening EC describing the predication for Crossfire Hurricane relied exclusively on Papadopoulos's statements to the FFG [REDACTED] in the FFG information.

What the IG Report does include from the Australian report explains that Papadopoulos had,

suggested the Trump team had received some kind of suggestion from Russia that it could assist this process [damaging Hillary] with the anonymous release of information during the campaign that would be damaging to Mrs. Clinton (and President Obama). It was unclear whether he or the Russians were referring to material acquired publicly of [sic] through other means. It was also unclear how Mr. Trump's team reacted to the offer. We note the Trump team's reaction could, in the end, have little bearing of what Russia decides to do, with or without Mr. Trump's cooperation.

A later quote from Bill Priestap, the FBI Manager who opened the investigation, reveals part of what DOJ chose to exclude from Papadopoulos' quote: before mentioning the detail about Russia to Downer, Papadopoulos had expressed confidence that Trump would win because there was so much dirt on Hillary.

In fact, the information we received indicated that Papadopoulos told the [FFG] he felt confident Mr. Trump would win the election, and Papadopoulos commented that the Clintons had a lot of baggage and that the Trump team had plenty of material to use in its campaign.

So Papadopoulos said, in May 2016, that Trump would win by throwing a ton of dirt at Hillary, and then said that the Russians were going to

anonymously release dirt of their own. Two and a half months later, material Russia stole got released via WikiLeaks, hiding the Russian role, seemingly (and, the evidence shows, in fact) confirming that Papadopoulos had had advance knowledge of the dump.

It took two days for this tip to make its way from the UK to FBI HQ, which means Australia would have shared it before but it would have arrived after Trump made his "Russia if you're listening" comment on July 27 suggesting he'd be happy to get help from Russia.

FBI HQ then spent 3 days deciding what to do about the tip. On July 31, the FBI opened an investigation to try to figure out whether the Trump campaign had gotten advance notice of the email drop and if so via what channel.

The next day, August 1, Peter Strzok and a Supervisory Special Agent went to London to find out more from Australian officials, plural, which suggests Thompson was included in the interview. The interview gave the FBI no clarity about whom Russia may have told about the emails and it did not rule out Papadopoulos being told himself.

According to Strzok and SSA 1, during the interview they learned that Papadopoulos did not say that he had direct contact with the Russians; that while his statement did not include him, it did not exclude him either; and that Papadopoulos stated the Russians told "us." Strzok and SSA 1 also said they learned that Papadopoulos did not specify any other individual who received the Russian suggestion

That information led the FBI to do some intelligence analysis using database and name searches to draw up possible candidates. As a result of that analysis, the FBI opened investigations into Papadopoulos himself, as well as Mike Flynn, Carter Page, and Paul

Manafort, the latter three of whom had known ties to Russia.

August 10 to November 8: FBI pursues no legal process to collect on Papadopoulos

The Report confirms, obliquely, something I have long noted: the FBI did not do basic things like getting call records on Papadopoulos or anyone else (though the NY Field Office had gotten two basic National Security Letters on Carter Page earlier in the year). The Report notes that FBI did not ask NSD to help it submit criminal legal process *on anyone* in conjunction with this investigation before the election.

the FBI did not ask CES to assist with criminal legal process at any time before the 2016 U.S. elections

This is an important issue for both the political and policy debate. The FBI actually might have discovered really damning details about both Papadopoulos (who was planning a back channel meeting with Putin when the investigation was opened) and Paul Manafort (who was sharing campaign strategy in a meeting discussing how to carve up Ukraine) had they chosen to investigate more aggressively. By waiting, the FBI gave both men an opportunity to cover these activities up. Even if they had just gotten call detail records – something not considered any more intrusive than using informants – they would have discovered Joseph Mifsud's ongoing communications with Papadopoulos. They chose not to take those steps, in part, to prevent any word of the investigation from leaking. But as a result, the FBI failed to collect details about suspicious behavior in real time, potentially forgoing the possibility of mitigating follow-on damage from the Russian attack.

And rather than reviewing a report about why the FBI failed to prevent these ongoing activities, we're instead reading a 400-page report about why, in an attempt to avoid doing the kind of damage it had already done to Hillary's campaign, it did the bare minimum.

August 20: Stefan Halper asks Page about Papadopoulos

So instead of collecting communications and other records (the FBI didn't even obtain Page's financial records until the following spring), the FBI instead used informants. As it happened, Stefan Halper, who was a lifelong Republican and had worked prior presidential campaigns, had met Carter Page and knew Manafort and Flynn. He was a perfectly situated informant. So FBI asked him to collect more information.

In an August 20 meeting with Halper, Carter Page issued some of the first denials that should have been included in the FISA applications. Halper also asked him about the other subjects of the investigation. Page didn't have much to say about Papadopoulos, aside from giving a telling "no comment" in response to a Halper question about how easily Papadopoulos can be set off emotionally.

Page said that Papadopoulos was the youngest guy on the campaign, that he used to live in London, and that he had not been to the last campaign meeting. Page also said he had "no comment" on whether Papadopoulos was easily triggered emotionally.

September 1: Stefan Halper asks Sam Clovis

about Papadopoulos

Next, using an introduction from Page, Halper reached out to Sam Clovis, who had been closely involved with managing both Page and Papadopoulos on the campaign. Clovis had warm things to say about Page (even while admitting he was hard to pin down). Clovis described Papadopoulos, by contrast, as overly ambitious, which made Clovis suspicious of him.

Source 2 also asked about George Papadopoulos, who the high-level Trump campaign official described as “very eager” and “a climber.” The high-level campaign official added that he was “always suspicious of people like that.”

September 15: Two interviews with Stefan Halper

Next, Halper invited Papadopoulos to London to discuss doing a paper on Mediterranean energy issues for him, a ploy designed (the FBI hoped) to recreate the kinds of circumstances that had led Papadopoulos to make the comments he did to Downer four months before. Halper and Papadopoulos (and an undercover FBI Agent using the name Azra Turk) actually had two meetings. At the first, Halper started by eliciting Papadopoulos’ thoughts on other subjects of the investigation, which led Papadopoulos to describe both Page and Flynn as interested in ties with Russia.

During the meeting, Source 2 told Papadopoulos that Carter Page “always says nice things about you.” Papadopoulos told Source 2 that although Carter Page was one of the campaign’s “Russian people,” Page “has never actually met Trump ... [and] hasn’t actually advised him on Russia ... [but]

[h]e might be advising him indirectly through [another campaign official].” Papadopoulos also told Source 2 that General Flynn “does want to cooperate with the Russians and the Russians are willing to ... embrace adult issues.”

Then Halper asked Papadopoulos about his own ties to Russia. According to the parts of the transcript excerpted in the IG Report, he admitted he had been invited to a “faith talk” (an invitation I haven’t heard of before), but said it was too sensitive to go, particularly given what “is going with Paul Manafort.” In response to an initial question, Papadopoulos suggested that Julian Assange had predicted an October Surprise but “no one knows” what that means.

As for Papadopoulos’s own connections with Russia, Papadopoulos told Source 2 he thought that “we have to be wary of the Russians” and mentioned that “they actually invited me to their .. .faith talk. I didn’t go though.” Papadopoulos explained to Source 2 that he made the decision not to go because it is “just too sensitive ... [as an] advisor on the campaign trail...especially with what is going [on] with Paul Manafort.” Source 2 also asked Papadopoulos about the possibility of the public release of additional information that would be harmful to Hillary Clinton’s campaign. Papadopoulos responded that Julian Assange of Wikileaks had said in public statements to “get ready for October ... [but] [w]hatever that means no one knows.”

Papadopoulos’ answer about an October Surprise was not that different than – but almost a month after – a similar response to Halper from Page, though that comment did not get added to his FISA applications until his last renewal. The IG Report does not talk about this similar answer,

which is particularly interesting given details about the campaign's knowledge of Roger Stone's claimed ties to WikiLeaks.

Then there are questions about whether DOJ IG included all the parts of the transcript that would be relevant to this analysis. In Papadopoulos' own depiction of these meetings with Halper, he claimed he pushed back by saying, "I really have nothing to do with Russia." It's possible that was a self-serving claim, or it's possible that the transcript included here does not include it. I asked and did not receive an answer about whether such a phrase appeared in the full transcript or how much of that full transcript they had excerpted. Whether it is or not is actually fairly significant for the DOJ IG case about what should have been included in Page's FISA applications, but alas, it's not available. It would also be useful to see whether these topics followed closely or not, but again, this is just a selection from the transcript that doesn't even offer guidance about what the ellipses are.

Anyway, that's what happened at a brunch meeting between Halper and Papadopoulos. After it, the FBI deemed the meeting sufficiently successful to try to push further in an evening meeting over drinks.

At that evening meeting, Papadopoulos questioned whether the Russians had really done the hack, and then said a bunch of things about Israel that would lead to FBI digging up significant details of Papadopoulos' influence peddling with Israel that almost turned into a Foreign Agent charge.

When Source 2 initially asked about Wikileaks, Papadopoulos commented that with respect to Assange "no one knows what he's going to release" and that he could release information on Trump as a "ploy to basically dismantle ... [or] undercut the ... next President of the United States regardless of who it's going to be." Papadopoulos also stated

that “no one has proven that the Russians actually did the hacking,” then continued to discuss hacking by pointing out that he had “actually had a few .. .Israelis trying to hack” his cell phone, which Papadopoulos said “shocked” him because he had “done some sensitive work for that government,” and he said the Israelis had “allowed [him] quite a high level of access.” Papadopoulos also stated that “no one else” did the work that he did for the Israelis, and that it had led “some folks [to] joke ... [that Papadopoulos] should go into the CIA after this if [Trump] ends up losing.”

Then, Halper asked about WikiLeaks for what would be the third and fourth time that day, this time more directly. Papadopoulos gave the answer that the frothy right has claimed, bizarrely, was exculpatory. By the time he gave this answer, had already admitted receiving a non-public invitation from Russia and offered two different responses about WikiLeaks, along with a claim doubting that Russia had done the hack. That’s particularly notable given that Papadopoulos’ claim that *WikiLeaks* would have an interest in undercutting whoever might be the next President makes no sense unless Russia were the source.

So having expressed meeting with Russia was “sensitive” in the wake of disclosures about Paul Manafort and given inconsistent answers about WikiLeaks already that day, in response to more direct questions, Papadopoulos angrily stated that optimizing the WikiLeaks releases – which Rick Gates and Stephen Miller had been preparing to do leading up to the DNC release, and which Roger Stone had made even more extensive efforts to do, though there’s no evidence Papadopoulos knew of either effort – would amount to treason. Both times he made this denial, Papadopoulos raised Trump’s “Russia if you’re listening” comment.

Later in the conversation, Source 2 asked Papadopoulos directly whether help “from a third party like Wikileaks for example or some other third party like the Russians, could be incredibly helpful” in securing a campaign victory. Papadopoulos responded:

Well as a campaign, of course, we don’t advocate for this type of activity because at the end of the day it’s, ah, illegal. First and foremost it compromises the US national security and third it sets a very bad precedence [sic] So the campaign does not advocate for this, does not support what is happening. The indirect consequences are out of our hands.... [F]or example, our campaign is not. .. engag[ing] or reaching out to wiki leaks or to the whoever it is to tell them please work with us, collaborate because we don’t, no one does that.... Unless there’s something going on that I don’t know which I don’t because I don’t think anybody would risk their, their life, ah, potentially going to prison over doing something like that. Um ... because at the end of the day, you know, it’s an illegal, it’s an illegal activity. Espionage is, ah, treason. This is a form of treason I mean that’s why, you know, it became a very big issue when Mr. Trump said, “Russia if you’re listening ” Do you remember? ... And you know we had to retract it because, of course, he didn’t mean for them to actively engage in espionage but the media then took and ran with it.

When Source 2 raised the issue again, Papadopoulos added:

to run a shop like that. .. of course it’s illegal. No one’s looking to ... obviously get into trouble like that and, you know, as far as I understand

that's, no one's collaborating, there's been no collusion and it's going to remain that way. But the media, of course, wants to take a statement that Trump made, an off-the-cuff statement, about [how] Russia helped find the 30,000 emails and use that as a tool to advance their [story]. .. that Trump is ... a stooge and if he's elected he'll permit the Russians to have carte blanche throughout Eastern Europe and the Middle East while the Americans sit back and twiddle their thumbs. And that's not correct.

There are a lot of reasons why, in context, this denial not only is not credible, but should have raised alarms. All the more so given that, according to the FBI team, Papadopoulos demeanor changed when he made it.

Case Agent 1 added that at these points in the conversation, Papadopoulos "went from a free-flowing conversation with [Source 2] to almost a canned response. You could tell in the demeanor of how [Papadopoulos] changed his tone, and to [the Crossfire Hurricane team] it seemed almost rehearsed." Case Agent 1 emailed SSA 1 and others to report that Papadopoulos "gave ... a canned answer, which he was probably prepped to say when asked." According to Case Agent 1, it remained a topic of conversation on the Crossfire Hurricane team for days afterward whether Papadopoulos had "been coached by a legal team to deny" any involvement because of the "noticeable change" in "the tenor of the conversation."

Granted, it would take a fairly extensive discussion to lay out how Papadopoulos' denial was inconsistent with his earlier comments. The FBI team did not do that and instead left it out, which is one of the things DOJ IG

criticized them for.

Early October/a few days before Page FISA filed: FBI learns that Papadopoulos has a sustained relationship with Sergei Millian

Meanwhile, there was one other significant investigative development, one which gets uneven coverage in the IG Report: the FBI came to focus on Sergei Millian.

Millian appears in the IG Report largely because he was an identifiable source in the Steele dossier whom Steele's Sub-Source disclaimed a direct relationship with. Along the way, however, the Report provides details of an investigation into Millian in his own right. For example, one passage describes him as someone, "previously known to the FBI." Other passages (including a heavily redacted footnote 302 describing a document circulating in early October) reveal the FBI opened a counterintelligence investigation into Millian in either early October or just days before the Page FISA application was approved on October 21. Not only did the FBI have an investigation into Millian, but they knew that he had been in close contact with Papadopoulos since at least August.

The Crossfire Hurricane team had information available to it by early October 2016 that the two reporting streams could have connectivity because they had learned that Person 1, an important Steele election reporting sub-source, had been engaging in "sustained" contact with Papadopoulos since at least August 2016.

The IG Report's treatment of Millian is fairly confusing (partly, presumably, due to DOJ decisions). It deems his possible role as a Steele source to discredit the dossier but does not discuss the possibility he had a role in any disinformation in it (even while it does consider Oleg Deripaska's role in seeding disinformation). It doesn't reflect on what that means for Papadopoulos' comments in fall 2016, including any denials of ongoing involvement in Russian matters. Additionally, whereas elsewhere, DOJ declassified the names of people discussed extensively in the Mueller Report, they don't do that here.

The investigation into Millian would almost certainly be more aggressive than it was with Papadopoulos. So it's possible DOJ accessed Papadopoulos' comments to Millian – which were fairly damning, per the Mueller report – at a time when they were otherwise not collecting communications of anyone besides Page.

Third week of October: First interview with Source 3

DOJ's odd treatment of Millian in the Report is notable for Papadopoulos' comments to the one other informant used with him during the election.

FBI didn't use Stefan Halper with Papadopoulos after September 15. They tried, but failed, to use several other informants with him. But with an informant the IG Report calls Source 3, they did succeed in getting meetings with Papadopoulos, just the pre-election ones which the IG Report describes.

Whoever Source 3 is, Papadopoulos appears to have trusted – and bragged to – him or her far more than he did Halper. In their first conversation, which took place in the week during which Page's first FISA application was being finalized, Papadopoulos provided

conflicting information about whether he really had left the Trump campaign in the wake of a very pro-Russian Intefax piece. He also refers to Millian as a friend and indicates a plan to travel to Russia the next summer.

In the first consensually monitored conversation, during the third week of October 2016, Papadopoulos described how he had worked for the presidential campaign of Ben Carson before joining the Trump campaign, and that when he was with the Trump campaign, he “set up a meeting with ... [t]he President of Egypt and Trump.” Papadopoulos also told Source 3 that, since leaving the Trump campaign, Papadopoulos had “transitioned into like my own private brand.” Papadopoulos later stated he was “still with ... the campaign indirectly” and that he had made “a lot of cool [connections] and I’m going to see what’s going to happen after the election.” He added that he had learned “[i]t’s all about connections now days, man.” Papadopoulos did not say much about Russia during the first conversation with Source 3, other than to mention a “friend Sergey ... [who] lives in ... Brooklyn,” and invite Source 3 to travel with Papadopoulos to Russia in the summertime.

Late October: Second interview with Source 3

Papadopoulos met – and continued to brag to – Source 3 once more before the election, just after the first Page FISA order. The IG Report focuses more on Papadopoulos unabashed plan to sell access. It focuses less on the fact that, before he issued denials that anyone in the campaign was involved with WikiLeaks, he basically laid out the outline of his interactions with Mifsud and claimed to have been invited to meet Putin. Papadopoulos then

went on to admit that he told Halper what he did because he expected him to go tell the CIA unless he issued a full-throated denial.

In the second consensually monitored conversation, at the end of October 2016, Papadopoulos told Source 3 that Papadopoulos had been “on the front page of Russia’s biggest newspaper” for an interview he had given 2 to 3 weeks earlier. Papadopoulos said that he was asked “[w]hat’s Mr. Trump going to do about Russia if he wins, what are your thoughts on ISIS, what are your thoughts on this?” and stated that he did not “understand why the U.S. has such a problem with Russia.” Papadopoulos also said that he thinks Putin “exudes power, confidence.” **When Source 3 asked Papadopoulos if he had ever met Putin, Papadopoulos said that he was invited “to go and thank God I didn’t go though.” Papadopoulos said that it was a “weird story” from when he “was working at ... this law firm in London” that involved a guy who was “well connected to the Russian government.” Papadopoulos also said that he was introduced to “Putin’s niece” and the Russian Ambassador in London.** 472 Papadopoulos did not elaborate on the story, but he added that he needed to figure out

how I’m going monetize it, but I have to be an idiot not to monetize it, get it? Even if [Trump] loses. If anything, I feel like if he loses probably could be better for my personal business because if he wins I’m going to be in some bureaucracy I can’t do jack ... , you know?

Papadopoulos added that there are plenty of people who aren’t even smart who are cashing in, and asked Source 3 “Do you know how many Members of Congress I’ve

met that know jack ... about anything?
Except what their advisors tell them? ...
They can barely put a sentence together
.... I'm talking about Members of Congress
dude." In other portions of the
conversation with Source 3, Papadopoulos
repeated that what he really wanted to
figure out was how to "monetize ... [his]
connections" because Papadopoulos felt
like he knew "a lot of Ambassadors ...
[and] a lot of Presidents." Papadopoulos
said that once the election was over,
Papadopoulos was going

to sit down and systematically
write who I know, what they want,
and how I can leverage that because
if you know like government guys
and ambassadors you should be
making money, that's all I know
because there's not one person I
know who has those connections that
isn't making ... money.

He observed that what he had to "sell is
access," and "[t]hat's what people pay
millions of dollars for every year. It's
the cleanest job."

However, when Source 3 asked
Papadopoulos whether Papadopoulos
thought "Russia's playing a big game in
this election," Papadopoulos said he
believed "That's all bull[]." **Papadopoulos said "[n]o one knows who's
hacking [the DNC] Could be the
Chinese, could be the Iranians, it could
be some Bernie ... supporters."**
Papadopoulos added that arguments about
the Russians are "all...conspiracy
theories." He said that he knew "for a
fact" that no one from the Trump
campaign had anything to do with
releasing emails from the DNC, because
Papadopoulos said he had "been working
with them for the last nine months.... And
all of this stuff has been happening,

what, the last four months?"

Papadopoulos added that he had been asked the same question by Source 2. Papadopoulos said he believed Source 2 was going to go

and tell the CIA or something if I'd have told him something else. I assume that's why he was asking. And I told him, absolutely not ... it's illegal, you know, to do that.. .. [my emphasis]

There's more from that October 2016 interview that remains redacted, according to the discussion of the Rule 13 Letter informing the FISC of information that should have been included in the Page applications (as well as several other things).

In the Rule 13 Letter, NSD advised the court of these statements and added that Papadopoulos told the CHS in October 2016 that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The letter further stated that by March 2017, Papadopoulos had denied any campaign involvement in the release of DNC emails on WikiLeaks during interviews conducted by the FBI and that those denials were included in Renewal Application Nos. 2 and 3.

Again, Papadopoulos' comments, even just to Halper alone, are internally inconsistent particularly as it pertains to WikiLeaks. Depending on how much the FBI had learned about Papadopoulos' communications with Millian by this point, the FBI made have had good reason to doubt some of the things he said (his ongoing ties with Millian, for example, would undermine his claim to have nothing to do with Russian, if in fact he made it). He made it clear to Source 3 that he said what he did to Halper because he believed saying anything else would alert law enforcement. And he made these denials to Source 3 while laying out a network of relationships that should have alerted the FBI that he had been in a situation to learn of the emails in advance.

That's all aside from the comments Papadopoulos made about Page specifically, which should have been in the FISA applications.

The frothy right claims the September 15 Halper interviews included exculpatory information, not just for Page, but also for Papadopoulos, were ridiculous even without knowing that the FBI knew of Papadopoulos' ties to Millian. That's all the more true given the details about his demeanor changing and his admission to Source 3 he was worried that Halper would report him to the CIA.

But that's the problem with FISA. Under a normal warrant situation, it'd be easy to exclude Papadopoulos' dubious denials in a warrant application targeting Page. But because of the ex parte nature of FISA, those rules don't apply.

Perhaps the more pertinent point – one not made here – is that Papadopoulos' denials should have led the investigation to focus on him far earlier than it did.

OTHER POSTS ON THE DOJ IG REPORT

Overview and ancillary posts

DOJ IG Report on Carter Page and Related Issues:
Mega Summary Post

The DOJ IG Report on Carter Page: Policy
Considerations

Timeline of Key Events in DOJ IG Carter Page
Report

Crossfire Hurricane Glossary (by bmaz)

Facts appearing in the Carter Page FISA
applications

Nunes Memo v Schiff Memo: Neither Were Entirely
Right

Rosemary Collyer Responds to the DOJ IG Report
in Fairly Blasé Fashion

Report shortcomings

The Inspector General Report on Carter Page
Fails to Meet the Standard It Applies to the FBI

“Fact Witness:” How Rod Rosenstein Got DOJ IG To
Land a Plane on Bruce Ohr

Eleven Days after Releasing Their Report, DOJ IG
Clarified What Crimes FBI Investigated

Factual revelations in the report

Deza: Oleg Deripaska’s Double Game

The Damning Revelations about George
Papadopoulos in a DOJ IG Report Claiming
Exculpatory Evidence

A Biased FBI Agent Was Running an Informant on
an Oppo-Research Predicated Investigation—into
Hillary—in 2016

The Carter Page IG Report Debunks a Key
[Impeachment-Related] Conspiracy about Paul
Manafort

The Flynn Predication

Sam Clovis Responded to a Question about Russia
Interfering in the Election by Raising Voter ID