

DAISY-CHAIN: THE FBI APPEARS TO HAVE ASKED DANCHENKO WHETHER DOLAN WAS A SOURCE FOR STEELE, NOT DANCHENKO

You might be under the impression that John Durham has charged Igor Danchenko with multiple counts of lying regarding the role of Charles Dolan in the sourcing of the dossier. You might similarly be under the impression that, in the indictment, Durham alleges that Dolan was the source for the pee tape.

You'd be forgiven for believing those things. After all, the WaPo reported charges, plural, showed that "some of the material" in the Steele dossier came from Dolan.

The indictment also suggests Danchenko may have lied to Steele and others about where he was getting his information. Some of the material came from a Democratic Party operative with long-standing ties to Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, according to the **charges**, rather than well-connected Russians with insight into the Kremlin.

The allegations cast new uncertainty on some past reporting on the dossier by news organizations, including The Washington Post.

Relying on that report, Jonathan Swan described charges, plural, that Dolan was, "one of the sources for the rumors about Trump."



Jonathan Swan ✓
@jonathanvswan

The charges are that not only did Clinton/Democrats fund the dossier but a longtime Clinton/Dem operative was one of the sources for the rumors about Trump. Doesn't get much worse.
[washingtonpost.com/national-secur...](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/)



Igor Danchenko, source for Steele dossier, arrested as part of Durham probe
[washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

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And Barry Meier, who so badly misunderstood the import of Oleg Deripaska in his book on private intelligence, also claimed there were charges, plural, relating to Dolan and insinuated that Durham had alleged the pee tape came from him.

In Durham's indictment, however, Danchenko comes across more like the type of paid informant often found in the world of private spying – one who tells their employer what they want to hear.

According to those charges, he supposedly fed Steele some information that did not come from Kremlin-linked sources, as the dossier claims, but was gossip he picked up from an American public-relations executive with Democratic Party ties who did business in Moscow. In 2016, the indictment states, the manager of the Ritz-Carlton in Moscow gave that executive a tour of

the the hotel's presidential suite, and soon afterward, Danchenko took a selfie of himself and the executive at the hotel.

Reporting on Danchenko's arraignment, WaPo went off at more length, not only failing to distinguish an uncharged accusation as such (one likely source of the belief that Durham charged multiple counts pertaining to Dolan), but stating as fact that Danchenko made up an entire conversation – one Danchenko has consistently attributed to a named Russian source – regarding the pee tape.

He is also accused of lying about revealing to sources that he was working for Steele.

Durham says Danchenko made up a conversation he claimed was the source of one of the dossier's most salacious claims, that Trump paid prostitutes at a Moscow hotel room to urinate on a bed in which President Barack Obama had once slept. The dossier also suggested Russian intelligence agencies had secretly recorded that event as potential blackmail material. Trump has denied any such encounter.

The indictment suggests that story came from Dolan, who in June 2016 toured a suite at a hotel in Moscow that was once occupied by Trump.

There is a single charge related to Dolan in the Danchenko indictment. It claims that Danchenko, "denied to the FBI that he had spoken with [Dolan] about any material contained in the Company Reports."

On or about June 15, 2017, within the Eastern District of Virginia, IGOR DANCHENKO, the defendant, did willfully and knowingly make a materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statement or

representation in a matter before the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the Government of the United States, to wit, on or about June 15, 2017, the defendant denied to agents of the FBI that he had spoken with PR Executive-1 about any material contained in the Company Reports, when in truth and in fact, and as the defendant well knew, PR Executive-1 was the source for an allegation contained in a Company Report dated August 22, 2016 and **was otherwise involved in the events and information** described in the reports. [my emphasis]

But Durham only claims that Dolan was the *source* for one report in the dossier, a claim that Manafort was forced to resign not just because of the revelations of his Ukrainian corruption, but also because Corey Lewandowski had it in for him.

Close associate of TRUMP explains reasoning behind [Manafort's] recent resignation. Ukraine revelations played part but others wanted [Manafort] out for various reasons, especially [Lewandowski] who remains influential

[snip]

Speaking separately, also in late August 2016, an American political figure associated with Donald TRUMP and his campaign outlined the reasons behind [Manafort's] recent demise. S/he said it was true that the Ukraine corruption revelations had played a part in this, but also, several senior players close to TRUMP had wanted [Manafort] out, primarily to loosen his control on strategy and policy formulation. Of particular importance in this regard was [Manafort's] predecessor as campaign manager, [Lewandowski], who hated [Manafort] personally and remained close to TRUMP with whom he discussed the

presidential campaign on a regular basis.

This may be the most provably accurate claim in the dossier. And for good reason: that's because, as Dolan told the FBI, he didn't get it from a friend of his, but instead from public news sources.

PR Executive-1 later acknowledged to the FBI that he never met with a "GOP friend" in relation to this information that he passed to DANCHENKO, but, rather, fabricated the fact of the meeting in his communications with DANCHENKO. PR Executive-1 instead obtained the information about Campaign Manager-1 from public news sources. According to PR Executive-1, he (PR Executive-1) was not aware at the time of the specifics of DANCHENKO's "project against Trump," or that DANCHENKO's reporting would be provided to the FBI.

Durham makes no claim that Danchenko knew that Dolan had a make-believe GOP friend. And, as noted, Dolan told the FBI (it's unclear whether this was Durham's team or Mueller's, which is actually critical to the viability of this charge) that at this point in August 2016, two months after the pee tape report, he did not know the specifics of the dossier project.

I don't doubt that Dolan was the source for the (accurate) Lewandowski claim. And if Durham can also prove that Danchenko considered himself the source for this report (Danchenko seems not to have recognized some reports that Christopher Steele based on his reporting) and that he remembered this particular report when he was asked this question, then Durham might well make this charge stick.

As for the pee tape, Durham insinuates that Dolan had some role in it (and, given Durham's focus on Dolan's Democratic ties, suggests it

was willful) based on the accusation that Danchenko denied that Dolan, “was otherwise involved in the events and information described in the reports,” which is so vague it’s not clear whether Durham actually knows what actually happened with this and the other allegation relating to Dolan in question. Indeed, given that both Danchenko and Steele injected inaccuracies into the process and neither has records of what occurred between them, it would be hard to know for sure.

In his explanation for that report in his first interviews, Danchenko definitely seems to have either borrowed the events Dolan participated in at the Ritz Hotel (Dolan was there in June 2016 to plan a conference that took place in October 2016, and Danchenko visited at the hotel during his own June 2016 trip to Moscow) or independently asked questions of staffers while he was visiting Dolan. That’s because Danchenko’s description suggests “he had a meeting with the managers” in June 2016 that Durham notes, he didn’t attend.

[H]e had a meeting with the managers [redacted]. During a free minute, he asked about “this stuff about Trump at the hotel.” His interlocutors laughed it off, stating that “all kinds of things happen at the hotel” and with celebrities, “one never knows what they’re doing.” [Danchenko] said that it wasn’t a denial. And asking the hotel staff who were assisting with the [redacted] arrangements, one girl commented that “anything goes at the hotel, and added that, “officially, we don’t have prostitutes.”

I’m agnostic; Danchenko might have been deliberately lying here or forgetful – he definitely corrected misimpressions between his first and second day of interviews without prompting from FBI. But he cleaned this claim up in one of his later interviews (Durham does not describe how long it took FBI to clarify this,

and it actually matters to several aspects of his case).

During the Interviews in or about 2017 in which he was asked about this Company Report, DANCHENKO initially claimed to have stayed at the Moscow Hotel in June 2016. DANCHENKO later acknowledged in a subsequent interview, however, that he did not stay at the Moscow Hotel until the October Conference.

He also, in a March 2017 interview, claimed the staff member of the hotel had not confirmed the pee tape allegation, only that there was chatter about such claims (though this claim, too, may have involved Danchenko borrowing the experience of Dolan to claim he had met with a hotel staffer).

he/she spoke with at least one staff member at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Moscow who said that there were stories concerning Trump's alleged sexual activities, not that the activities themselves had been confirmed by the staff member

If Danchenko knowingly lied, it seems to have involved borrowing details from the events Dolan attended to make his own account sound more credible, effectively to explain away why he had such ready access to Ritz staffers. That would require no involvement from Dolan aside from sharing details of his own itinerary with Danchenko at lunch and having them unknowingly used to lend credibility to rumors Danchenko was already sharing. Yet the WaPo nevertheless reported as fact that, "The indictment suggests that story came from Dolan."

I'm not saying Danchenko didn't either lie or shade his testimony or simply work from memory because he, by design, had almost no records of his work. But that doesn't mean the charge – to say nothing of Durham's gratuitous effort to

link it to Hillary – is sound.

That's because the FBI appears to have asked Danchenko *not* whether Dolan had been a source of Danchenko's, but instead whether Dolan had been a source *for Steele*.

Here are the transcript excerpts Durham includes from the June 15, 2017 interview which – as a declassified footnote from the DOJ IG Report has made clear, occurred almost immediately after FBI obtained materials under Section 702 that would have revealed Danchenko's role in introducing Dolan to Olga Galkina and the extensive follow-up communications between Galkina and Dolan.

FBI AGENT-1: Um, because obviously I don't think you're the only ...

DANCHENKO: Mm-hmm.

FBI AGENT-1: Person that has been contributing. You may have said one – and this is the other thing we are trying to figure out.

[...]

FBI AGENT-1: Do you know a [PR Executive-1]?

DANCHENKO: Do I know [PR Executive-1]? Yeah.

FBI AGENT-1: How long have you known him? [laughing] [pause]

DANCHENKO: I've known [PR-Executive-1] for [pause] I don't know, a couple years maybe.

FBI AGENT-1: Couple years?

DANCHENKO: But but but but but but but I've known of him for like 12 years.

[...]

DANCHENKO: Yeah. Yeah he likes Russia. **I don't think he is, uh, – would be any way be involved.** But-but-uh-b-but he's

uh [UI] what I would think would be easily played. Maybe. Uh, he's a bit naive in his, um liking of Russia.

FBI AGENT-1: Okay, so you've had ... was there any ... but you had **never talked to [PR Executive-1] about anything that showed up in the dossier [Company Reports] right?**

DANCHENKO: No.

FBI AGENT-1: You don't think so?

DANCHENKO: **No. We talked about, you know, related issues perhaps but no, no, no, nothing specific.** [emphasis Durham's]

The exchange starts with the FBI Agent saying, "I don't think you're the only ... person that has been contributing," presumably to the dossier. This is consistent with Steele's (weak) claims to have had other reporting sources besides Danchenko. And it's consistent with repeated comments from Danchenko that he didn't know whether or not he was the only subsource collecting for Steele.

Of particular note, on January 25, 2017, Danchenko said this about one of the three reports that Durham insinuates came second-hand from Dolan, one describing the replacement of a staffer at the Russian Embassy in DC.

Looking at Report 2016/111, [Danchenko] was asked about the report's use of the descriptor, "a trusted compatriot." – as in paragraph one, "Speaking in confidence to a trusted compatriot in mid-September 2016..." [Danchenko] said that it might be him, but that it could also be others. [Danchenko's] attorney then jumped in, stating that the "literary device" used by Steele in the dossier was not consistent and not clear, so he wanted to be careful about matching that descriptor to his client.

[Danchenko said that, to the best of his knowledge, he is not sure if he was the only one working on this issue for Orbis [and therefore he is not clear if he is always the “trusted compatriot” mentioned in the document.]

Interviewers drew [Danchenko’s] attention to paragraph 5 of the same report, where Mikhail Kalugin [written as Kulagin] is mentioned. [Danchenko] is not clear how this paragraph was put together. [Danchenko] indicated that no MFA official told him [redacted] because of the election issue. About [redacted], [Danchenko] knows that [redacted]. Danchenko knows that [redacted] [Danchenko] that [redacted] was his replacement [redacted] Kalugin had described Bondarev as “a bright young guy.” Danchenko has no idea where the language in this paragraph regarding [redacted] being “clean in this regard” (with respect to knowledge and involvement in US election matters [redacted])).

Danchenko had offered up the explanation that Durham now claims was him taking credit for the report as part of a rambling explanation for why he had the business card for the Russian source in question (the FBI analyst put it under a heading with the report number, but by description that’s not how it was first broached).

Whether Steele had other reporting sources in addition to Danchenko or not, the FBI Agent started this line of questioning based on the assumption Steele did, stating that he was trying to figure out who else was “contributing” to the dossier in the same way Danchenko was. Given the messages between Galkina and Dolan that FBI would have just obtained via Section 702, it would be unsurprising if the FBI suspected Dolan was a source for Steele, not least because he had better personal access than

Danchenko did, he and Galkina were talking about things that showed up in the dossier, and Steele and Dolan had been in touch since the spring.

Depending on how quickly after that question the FBI raised Dolan (note the ellipsis), then, Danchenko may well have fairly understood this entire line of questioning to pertain to whether Dolan was not his own, Danchenko's, source, but Steele's. If so, then the question of whether Danchenko spoke to Dolan about stuff that showed up in the dossier might be viewed in a variety of different ways, including whether Dolan admitted he was a source for Steele. And while Danchenko's denial that he and Dolan ever spoke of anything specific that showed up in the dossier would be a clearly knowing lie if, when he was asked it, he understood himself to be the source of the Paul Manafort report, remembered the report, and hadn't gotten a second source for the claim, Danchenko did not deny outright that he and Dolan spoke about matters "related" to the dossier, just "nothing specific."

That's all the more true given something else Danchenko said in his first interviews, describing how he worked. "He used his existing contacts and daisy-chained from them to try to identify others with relevant information." If, for example, Danchenko got the names of the Ritz personnel from Dolan, "daisy-chaining" from his existing contact (Dolan) to people Dolan met with at the hotel, either to talk with them directly or to fluff up the report to Steele, he might regard those as "related" to the subject of the report, but not the specific detail – the pee tape allegation – in it.

He may well have answered inaccurately to an FBI question or outright lied, but it's not clear that the FBI was asking him the question that Durham now treats the answer as. And there's no evidence that, in the remainder of the June 2017 interview or the two later interviews with Danchenko in 2017 (both of which took place after Steele was interviewed) the FBI ever asked about the three specific reports that Durham now

believes have some tie to Dolan, which is what it would take to have a solid false statements charge. By comparison, George Papadopoulos wrote the FBI claiming to have checked his record on timing of his contacts with Joseph Mifsud and reiterated his false timeline with the FBI and FBI Agents repeatedly cued Mike Flynn with language he used in his conversations with Sergei Kislyak to make sure he was really lying.

The crazier thing about all this comes from Durham's materiality claim.

PR Executive-1's role as a contributor of information to the Company Reports was highly relevant and material to the FBI's evaluation of those reports because (a) PR Executive-1 maintained pre-existing and ongoing relationships with numerous persons named or described in the Company Reports, including one of DANCHENKO's Russian sub-sources (detailed below), (b) PR Executive-1 maintained historical and ongoing involvement in Democratic politics, which bore upon PR Executive-1's reliability, motivations, and potential bias as a source of information for the Company Reports, and (c) DANCHENKO gathered some of the information contained in the Company Reports at events in Moscow organized by PR Executive-1 and others that DANCHENKO attended at PR Executive-1's invitation. Indeed, and as alleged below, certain allegations that DANCHENKO provided to U.K. Person-1, and which appeared in the Company

Danchenko revealed the import of the Dolan-organized events in the first interviews – that's literally part of the "proof" Durham offers that Danchenko lied about it. FBI learned of Dolan's close ties to Galkina via Section 702 collection before this alleged lie, and when Danchenko was asked in that same June 2017 interview, he explained the key details,

effectively confirming what FBI would have learned from its FISA collection (and thereby seemingly passing one test of his candor).

In a later part of the conversation, DANCHENKO stated, in substance and in part, that PR Executive-1 had traveled on the October "delegation" to Moscow; that PR Executive-1 conducted business with Business-1 and Russian Sub-source-1; and that PR Executive-1 had a professional relationship with Russian Press Secretary-1.

That leaves, for the question of materiality, Dolan's "historical and ongoing involvement in Democratic politics, which bore upon PR Executive-1's reliability, motivations, and potential bias as a source of information for the Company Reports."

Again, the Paul Manafort report may be the most provably correct report in the entire dossier. Claiming (correctly) that Manafort was ousted not just because of his corrupt ties in Ukraine – a claim that Republicans have spent five years claiming was just a propaganda campaign launched by Democrats – but also because others wanted him out actually undercuts the story that has always claimed to be the most useful to Democrats. The report on Embassy staff changes was, Durham suggests, based directly off quotes Dolan got from the staffer in question; indeed, Durham points to the accuracy of those quotations to prove the report came from Dolan. There was a flourish added – that the person in question was untainted by involvement with the Russian election operation – which Danchenko disclaims, but there's no evidence the flourish comes from Dolan (or even Danchenko – it's the kind of thing Steele seems to have added). In other words, assuming Dolan was the source for the things Durham claims he was, Dolan seems to have been the most accurate source for the dossier.

There was an unbelievable amount of shit in the

dossier and it would be useful if there were an accounting of how that happened (which Durham is not doing here). The Danchenko-to-Steele reporting process (which, contrary to Durham's claims, Danchenko candidly laid out in his first interviews with the FBI) was one source of the problems with the dossier. But at least as much of the shit seems to come from Danchenko's sources, several of whom had ties to Russian intelligence and who may have been deliberately injecting disinformation into the process. Instead of focusing on that – on Russians who may have been deliberately feeding lies into the process – Durham instead focuses on Dolan, not because Durham claims he wittingly shared bad information to harm Trump (his one lie served to boost an accurate story that went against the grain of the Democrats' preferred narrative), but because as a Democrat he – not Russian spies – is being treated by Durham as an adversary.

- Igor Danchenko January 2017 interview report
- DOJ IG Report on Carter Page
- Declassified DOJ IG footnotes
- Olga Galkina Alfa Bank declaration

Danchenko posts

The Igor Danchenko Indictment: Structure

John Durham May Have Made Igor Danchenko "Aggrieved" Under FISA

"Yes and No:" John Durham Confuses Networking with Intelligence Collection

Daisy-Chain: The FBI Appears to Have Asked Danchenko Whether Dolan Was a Source for Steele, Not Danchenko

Source 6A: John Durham's Twitter Charges

John Durham: Destroying the Purported Victims to

Save Them

John Durham's Cut-and-Paste Failures – and Other
Indices of Unreliability

Aleksej Gubarev Drops Lawsuit after DOJ Confirms
Steele Dossier Report Naming Gubarev's Company
Came from His Employee

In Story Purporting to "Reckon" with Steele's
Baseless Insinuations, CNN Spreads Durham's
Unsubstantiated Insinuations

On CIPA and Sequestration: Durham's Discovery
Deadends

The Disinformation that Got Told: Michael Cohen
Was, in Fact, Hiding Secret Communications with
the Kremlin