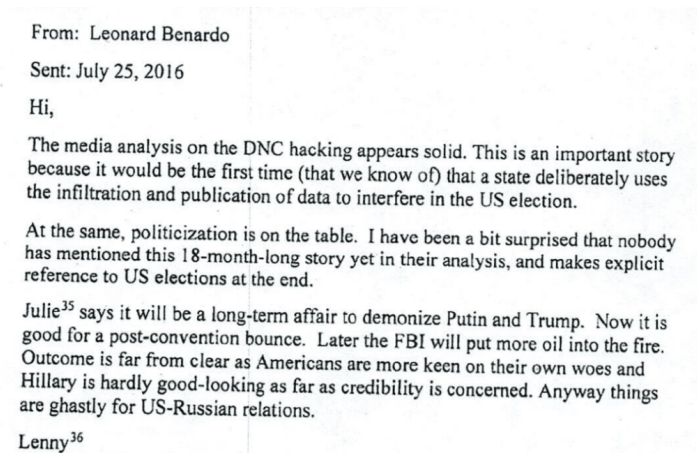


# DAYS AFTER THE FBI ANNOUNCED AN INVESTIGATION, RUSSIAN SPIES DELIBERATELY “PUT MORE OIL INTO THE FIRE”

I really don't think enough people are getting the pee-your-pants humor – at least if you're Russian and want to destroy the United States – at the core of the classified annex from the Durham Report.

Durham describes that, in a May 21, 2021 interview with Leonard Benardo, Durham showed the Open Society Foundation Executive an email purportedly stolen from him in 2016 and asked him if he wrote it. Benardo told Durham, “he would not have used certain terms, such as ‘oil into the fire.’”



From: Leonard Benardo  
Sent: July 25, 2016  
Hi,  
The media analysis on the DNC hacking appears solid. This is an important story because it would be the first time (that we know of) that a state deliberately uses the infiltration and publication of data to interfere in the US election.  
At the same, politicization is on the table. I have been a bit surprised that nobody has mentioned this 18-month-long story yet in their analysis, and makes explicit reference to US elections at the end.  
Julie<sup>35</sup> says it will be a long-term affair to demonize Putin and Trump. Now it is good for a post-convention bounce. Later the FBI will put more oil into the fire. Outcome is far from clear as Americans are more keen on their own woes and Hillary is hardly good-looking as far as credibility is concerned. Anyway things are ghastly for US-Russian relations.  
Lenny<sup>36</sup>

Durham, you see, was pretty aroused by the term, “put more oil into the fire,” because he was chasing a conspiracy theory that Hillary *framed* Donald Trump by paying for a dossier that – unbeknownst to her – was likely riddled with Russian disinformation, thanks to Oleg Deripaska, and also – unbeknownst to her – got

shared with the FBI, and because – unbeknownst to her – Michael Sussmann brought allegations about a DNS anomaly to the FBI (one that the guy I went to the FBI about had a role in inflaming just weeks later). So that phrase, “put more oil into the fire,” looked like paydirt. It seemed to confirm the exact same conspiracy theory Durham was chasing: that Hillary *intended* to frame Trump at the FBI (even though the FBI had already announced their investigation).

Durham doesn’t quote what Benardo said directly. It may well have been more colorful than that he wouldn’t have used that term. Benardo has lived in Moscow and other parts of the former Soviet Union, and so he surely recognizes the phrase not only is not one most Americans would use – they would say, “pour fuel on the fire” or “add fuel to the fire.” They definitely wouldn’t use “oil.”

But he would recognize it as a Russian idiom.

And to be clear, while Chuck Grassley and Tulsi Gabbard are redacting most details about the provenance of these documents, the introduction says, “the above-referenced [SVR] memorandum included the English text of a document ... the document contained a purported email from Benardo” on which, a redacted passage from Durham suggests, the SVR report “was partially based.”

That appears to confirm that this text appeared in the intelligence report that Durham chased like a toddler for four years *in English*. That is, it’s not a problem of translation – English to Russian back into English. A document that Durham spent years trying to verify as authentic uses a Russian idiom to describe the chaos that might ensue as a result of the FBI investigation that was publicly confirmed the very date of the email, July 25, 2016.

And this is one reason why the timing of these documents matters, which Grassley and Gabbard aggressively obscure. This is as close as we can establish:

- July 25: Thomas Rid story
- July 25, 11 to 11:35AM: Smith texts other people trying to figure out if there was any investigation of the hack, and then discovering the FBI has just announced such an investigation (as I noted here, Durham doesn't disclose anywhere in his report that during the Michael Sussmann prosecution, Sussmann forced him to obtain these emails that show FBI releasing a statement *without consulting with the Dems*, the victims of the hack, which goes a long way to debunking his conspiracy theory).
- July 25, undisclosed time: Maurer responds to the Rid story
- July 25, undisclosed time, but the date could be made up: Two drafts of purported Benardo emails
- July 26: Email between two Russian spooks suggesting "doing something about a task from someone"
- July 27: Email between two Russian spooks about illuminating Hillary's attempts to vilify Trump and Putin that links to a

purported July 27 Benardo email which among other things reports that Hillary has “approved Julia’s idea”

- July 26 to July 28: A draft Russian spy memorandum claiming that on July 26, Hillary Clinton approved a plan to smear Donald Trump, citing July 25 emails purportedly from Benardo
- July 27: Email from Smith soliciting signers for a letter condemning Trump’s attack on NATO

Importantly, Durham describes that this email between two Russian spooks was “dated the following day” from the email with the Russian idiom in the English text, so July 26.

Great! A whole bunch of material appeared in the press today regarding this subject. It appears that the noose around Guccifer’s Russian background is tightening. I suggest doing [TN: writing] something about a task from someone, I don’t know, some dark forces, like the FBI for instance, or better yet, Clinton sympathizers in IC, Pentagon, Deep State (or somewhere else?), about American websites deploying a campaign to demonize the actions of Russia’s GRU, acting in accordance to orders by VVP [TN: Vladimir Putin], to undermine the forces of good in the elections in the interest of Donald Trump, who is basically an agent of influence. Using inept GRU operatives (there is such information) and their general inclination to adventurism and idiocy, a number of crucial technical indications pointing to Russia were exposed. And so on. Will that be okay?<sup>38</sup>

This email between two Russian spooks says, let’s do something “about a task from someone, I don’t know, some dark forces, like the FBI, or better yet, Clinton sympathizers in IC, Pentagon, Deep State (or somewhere else?), about American websites deploying a campaign to demonize the actions of Russia’s GRU.” This email between two Russian spooks effectively says, “Let’s do something about a campaign to demonize Trump.”

That’s why the date of the report – the one Durham never disclosed in his entire unclassified report and which he either didn’t disclose here or Grassley and Gabbard are

covering up – matters.

Because even if you believed the emails from Benardo were real, the one with the Russian idiom dated July 25 and one dated July 27 – the very same day Trump would ask Russia to hack Hillary some more and Russian hackers would almost immediately comply, the same day Trump lied about chasing business interests in Russia, a lie Putin's top people had proof was a lie, the same day Trump said he might recognize Crimea (in the days immediately following, Roger Stone attempted to script pro-Russian tweets from Trump) – even if you believed those emails were true, you'd have to notice that a key part of the SVR report, the detail that Hillary had, past tense, *approved* "a campaign to demonize the actions of Russia's GRU" only appears in the July 27 email, not the July 25 one.

From: Leonard Benardo

Sent: July 27, 2016

Hi,

HRC approved Julia's idea about Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections. That should distract people from her own missing email, especially if the affair goes to the Olympic level. The point is making the Russian play a U.S. domestic issue. Say something like a critical infrastructure threat for the election to feel menace since both POTUS and VPOTUS have acknowledged the fact IC would speed up searching for evidence that is regrettably still unavailable. However there seems to be signs GRU penetration (cyrlic, 2.0 VPN elite VPN, Felix Edmundovich). They appear hardly skilled, "incompetent bumbling idiots" as smb [somebody] called them. In absence of direct evidence, CrowdStrike and ThreatConnect will supply the media, and GRU will hopefully carry on to give more facts.<sup>41</sup>

And that email, also in "English," was attached to a follow-up email discussing the plan to "'illuminate' how Clinton was attempting to 'villif[y] Moscow.'"

That all seems to suggest that the intelligence report itself – the one claiming to confirm that Hillary had approved a campaign to demonize Russia? – appeared the day *after* two Russian spooks said, "wouldn't it be cool, now that we know the FBI is looking, to claim that Hillary was seeking to frame Trump?" Let's pour fuel on the fire, as it were.

Durham ultimately concluded that these emails were "composites" of other emails – though he only identifies one, an email about an article

from one of America's foremost intelligence disinformation scholars, Thomas Rid, who is nowhere near as high up on Putin's list of adversaries as Benardo surely is, but certainly someone it'd be hilarious to mock.

Durham doesn't bother to discuss what Rid said, but much of what Rid did say conflicts with what the purported intelligence report does. Perhaps more importantly, Rid discussed how one of the early Guccifer documents included the signature of Felix Dzerzhinsky: "one dumped document was modified using Russian language settings, by a user named 'Феликс Эдмундович,' a code name referring to the founder of the Soviet Secret Police." Likewise, it might have been worth mentioning that in the article whence this "composite" email came, Rid commented on the shitty English of Guccifer 2.0. "Guccifer 2.0's English initially was also weak, but in subsequent posts the quality improved sharply."

Had Durham actually looked these things: the apparent timing – including the coincidence with Donald Trump's overtly pro-Russian statements, to say nothing of his lies about Russian business ties – had Durham actually considered all of this, that "English" phrase, "put more oil into the fire," in shitty English, he might have gotten the joke.

Because honestly, it is fucking hilarious. Well-played, Russian spy dudes. Well-fucking-played.

But instead of seeing how he had been made a laughingstock – and really, the entire US intelligence community, especially the FBI that these conspiracy theories have serially destroyed – Durham instead doubled down, indicting two more men he hoped would fulfill his conspiracy theories, first destroying US DNS capabilities targeting Russia and then chasing Sergei Millian's uncorroborated tweets, for years.

**Nine years** into this influence operation, that phrase, "put more oil into the fire," a phrase that someone at the FBI should have recognized

as a Russian idiom at least five years ago, is still ripping the country to pieces.

And somewhere, some Russian spies are peeing their pants in laughter.