

ALEKSEJ GUBAREV DROPS LAWSUIT AFTER DOJ CONFIRMS STEELE DOSSIER REPORT NAMING GUBAREV'S COMPANY CAME FROM HIS EMPLOYEE

As Josh Gerstein reports, one of the Russians who has used the Steele dossier way as a way to engage in protracted, embarrassing lawfare, Aleksej Gubarev, has dropped his lawsuit.

A Russian internet entrepreneur has dropped a four-year legal battle against BuzzFeed over its publication of the so-called Steele dossier, a politically charged compendium produced during the 2016 presidential campaign that contained allegations about ties between then-candidate Donald Trump and Russia.

BuzzFeed put the document online in unedited form in January 2017, citing the interest in informing the public of the dossier's role in Congressional and FBI investigations. The posting prompted a lawsuit from Russian Aleksej Gubarev, who contended that he was libeled by the dossier's claims about his involvement in the hacking of Democratic Party officials in 2016.

BuzzFeed later redacted Gubarev's name from the version of the dossier posted on the news outlet's website and apologized for leaving it in at the outset.

A federal judge in Miami tossed out the lawsuit in late 2018, ruling that BuzzFeed's publication of the dossier

was legally privileged because of the role the compilation played in ongoing federal investigations, even though the dossier was never formally released by the government.

Gubarev appealed that decision to the Atlanta-based 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, but on Wednesday the Russian businessman and BuzzFeed announced that the appeal was being dropped.

“Mr. Gubarev has decided to end his litigation against BuzzFeed over its publication of the dossier in January 2017. The federal court ruled that BuzzFeed had a right to publish the dossier because it was part of a government investigation, and Mr. Gubarev accepts that judgment,” Gubarev and BuzzFeed said in a joint statement.

The move comes in the wake of the Igor Danchenko indictment that describes that both Gubarev’s PR person, Olga Galkina, and his US PR consultant, Charles Dolan, were sources in the dossier (though the latter claim remains only an allegation). In an FBI interview report released last year, Danchenko had named Galkina as his source for the December 2016 report that Gubarev sued over.

3. ██████████ reported that over the period March-September 2016 a company called ██████████ and its affiliates had been using botnets and porn traffic to transmit viruses, plant bugs, steal data and conduct “altering operations” against the Democratic Party leadership. Entities linked to one ██████████ were involved and he and another hacking expert, both recruited under duress by the FSB, ██████████ were significant players in this operation. In Prague, COHEN agreed contingency plans for various scenarios to protect the operation, but in particular what was to be done in the event that Hillary CLINTON won the presidency. It was important in this event that all cash payments owed were made quickly and discreetly and that cyber and other operators were stood down/able to go effectively to ground to cover their traces. (We reported earlier that the involvement of political operatives Paul MANAFORT and Carter PAGE in the secret TRUMP-Kremlin liaison had been exposed in the media in the run-up to Prague and that damage limitation of these also was discussed by COHEN with the Kremlin representatives).

Galkina had described her position at XBT in a filing submitted in an Alfa Bank lawsuit, the parallel lawfare to Gubarev’s. She also described being introduced to Dolan (though her

denial of discussing subjects in the dossier, both generally and with Dolan, amount to non-denial denials sharply limited in time and subject).

My background is in journalism and public relations. I now work as a communications advisor. Previously, I held a number of positions in public relations and government, including head of the Governor's Press Service in the Saratov Region (2005–2006); deputy head of the city administration in Saratov (2006–2007); and public relations advisor at Servers.com, a part of the XBT Holding group of companies that includes Webzilla (2015–2016).

[snip]

Mr. Danchenko and I met once in 2016. In connection with my job at Servers.com, I traveled to the United States in the spring of 2016 to participate in the Game Developers Conference event and investigate the prospects of running a public relations campaign for the company in the United States. I asked Mr. Danchenko to assist those efforts, and he introduced me to a third party, Charles Dolan, whom he thought could help. Mr. Danchenko and I did not discuss anything related to the Dossier or its contents during this meeting.

Indeed, Durham notes that Galkina's employer appears in the dossier.

In or about early 2016, Russian Sub-Source-I began working at a business based in Country-I ("Business-I") that was owned by a Russian national and would later appear in the Company Reports. Russian Sub-Source-I conducted public relations and communications work for Business-I .

Durham further describes that Danchenko let Dolan know that Galkina was looking for a PR firm, which led to Dolan being hired by Gubarev's company.

In or about March 2016, and prior to the June 2016 Planning Trip, DANCHENKO learned from Russian Sub-Source-I that Business-I was interested in retaining a U.S.-based public relations firm to assist with Business-1 'sentry into the U.S. market. DANCHENKO brokered a meeting between PR Executive-I and Russian Sub-Source-I to discuss a potential business relationship. Thereafter, PR Firm-I and Business-I entered a contractual relationship.

Durham even quoted Dolan making all these connections.

[] I've been interviewed by the Washington Post and the London Times – three times over the last two days over the [Foreign Intelligence Service-I] Dossier on Trump and I know the Russian agent who made the report (He used to work for me). My client in [Country-I] [Business-I] has been accused of being the party that organized the hacking. Presently speaking with the barrister in London who is filing a brief against Former British [Government Employee] [U.K. Person-1] has been unmasked as the man behind an explosive dossier about US president-elect Donald Trump. Also in conversation with former British Ambassador who knows [U.K. Person-I]. Quite right – Oh what a boring life. [underline Dolan's, bold Durham's]

Had this lawsuit continued, BuzzFeed might have had the opportunity to turn the tables on Gubarev, to inquire whether he had a role in the report he was suing over, or perhaps had asked Galkina to give Danchenko a collection tasking

after the dossier came out. It might have invited further scrutiny into how Galkina hired Dolan in the first place.

Indeed, had the lawsuit continued, BuzzFeed might have had the opportunity to do some new reporting on the extent to which the dossier – Galkina’s reports were the most quickly debunked Michael Cohen reports – was intentional disinformation.

Before such an opportunity presented, it seems, Gubarev has decided the suit has achieved its goals.

Update: This settlement has been in the works for some time—though it is not clear whether those discussions precede the Galkina declaration that would have IDed her ties to Gubarev and Dolan.

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