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Durham Report Reveals Massive Failures in FBI's Investigation of Trump

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11-13 minutes

Special counsel finds probe was 'seriously deficient' and agency was blinded by confirmation bias

The FBI didn't interview the people connected to the information that the agency used to open a full investigation of the Trump campaign during the heat of the 2016 presidential election, according to the report by special counsel John Durham.

The bureau rushed to open the initial investigation based on unvetted intelligence from Australia, according to Durham, who has spent nearly three years investigating the origins of the FBI's investigation of the Trump campaign.

The FBI's rush to open the investigation and the shoddy evidence used as the premise for the probe were a departure from how the department treated other politically sensitive investigations in 2016, the report states. That includes the inquiry into the Clinton Foundation, which was virtually frozen in the leadup to Election Day in 2016.

The much-anticipated report ([pdf](#)), a copy of which The Epoch Times obtained ahead of its public release, also delves into other controversial aspects of Crossfire Hurricane, the FBI codename for the investigation of the Trump campaign.

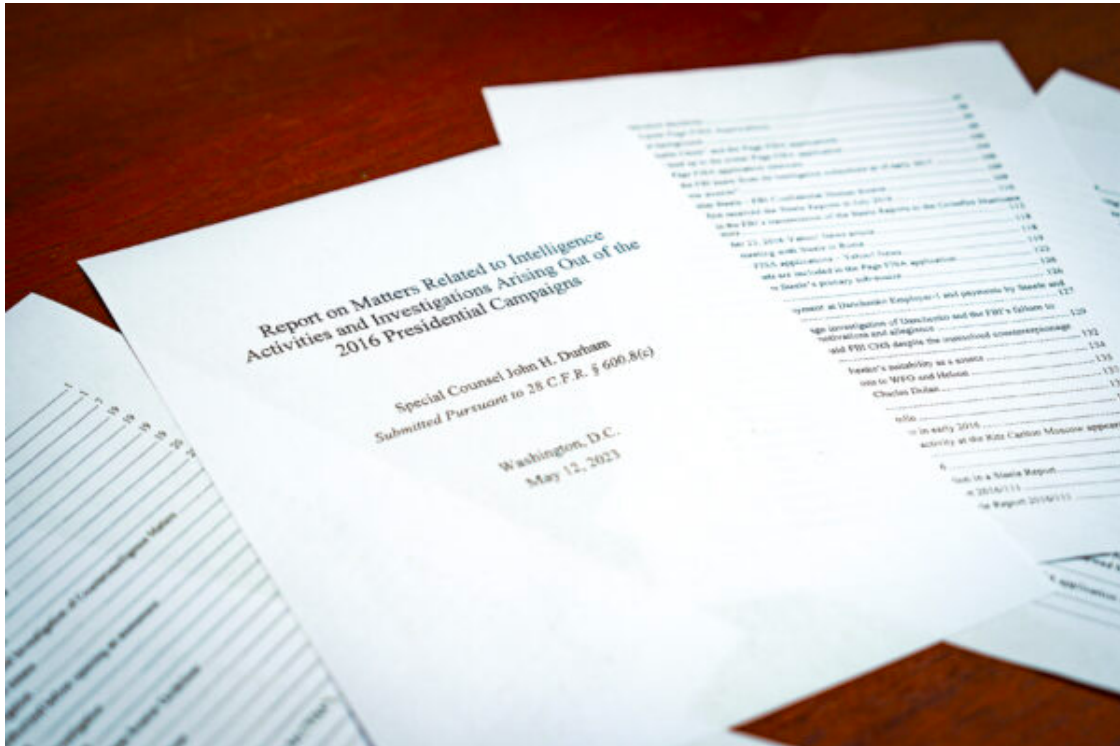
“The objective facts show that the FBI's handling of important aspects of the Crossfire Hurricane matter were seriously deficient,” the report states.

The special counsel further impugned the bureau's error-ridden applications to surveil Trump campaign associate Carter Page. FBI agents applied to renew the secret-court warrants on Page despite admitting, both at the time and subsequently, that they had no probable cause to do so.

Durham concludes that the FBI failed to uphold its “important mission of strict fidelity to the law.”

The special counsel “does not recommend any wholesale changes in the guidelines and policies that the Department and the FBI now have in place.”

“The answer is not the creation of new rules but a renewed fidelity to the old,” the report reads.



Pages from the Durham report, a copy of which was obtained by The Epoch Times. (Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times)

“The promulgation of additional rules and regulations to be learned in yet more training sessions would likely prove to be a fruitless exercise if the FBI’s guiding principles of ‘Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity’ aren’t engrained in the hearts and

minds of those sworn to meet the FBI's mission of 'Protecting the American People and Upholding the Constitution of the United States.'"

Trump, who has long condemned the investigation as a witch hunt and a hoax, responded to the report's release on Truth Social.

"WOW! After extensive research, Special Counsel John Durham concludes the FBI never should have launched the Trump-Russia Probe!" the former president [wrote](#).

"In other words, the American Public was scammed, just as it is being scammed right now by those who don't want to see GREATNESS for AMERICA!"

The FBI stated to The Epoch Times: "The conduct in 2016 and 2017 that special counsel Durham examined was the reason that current FBI leadership already implemented dozens of corrective actions, which have now been in place for some time.

"Had those reforms been in place in 2016, the missteps identified in the report could have been prevented. This report reinforces the importance of

ensuring the FBI continues to do its work with the rigor, objectivity, and professionalism the American people deserve and rightly expect.”

Opening ‘Crossfire Hurricane’

The FBI didn’t speak to the people who provided the information used for opening the investigation, Durham found.

The bureau also failed to examine its own databases, check with other intelligence agencies, interview essential witnesses, and use “any of the standard analytical tools typically employed by the FBI in evaluation raw intelligence,” the report states.

While Durham doesn’t attribute a motive to the shoddy work, he points to “pronounced hostile feelings toward Trump” from Peter Strzok, the person in charge of the investigation.

Had the FBI followed its own rules, the bureau’s agents would have discovered that neither the bureau nor the CIA had any evidence to show that Trump or anyone in his campaign had been in contact with any Russian intelligence officials at any

time during the campaign, the report states.

The handling of the Trump investigation was a departure from the cautious approach the bureau took in handling matters related to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Trump's election opponent, the report found. In one example, the FBI and Justice Department restricted an inquiry into the Clinton Foundation so that little to no investigative activity could take place in the months leading up to the election.



FBI agent Peter Strzok during testimony before Congress on July 12, 2018. (Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times)

Durham highlights the distinct approach the FBI took to intelligence it received from a trusted foreign source indicating that the Clinton campaign planned to smear Trump by tying him to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Clinton campaign's goal, the intelligence said, was to divert attention from the scandal concerning Clinton's use of an unauthorized private server to transmit top-secret government emails.

“Unlike the FBI's opening of a full investigation of unknown members of the Trump campaign based on raw, uncorroborated information, in this separate matter involving a purported Clinton campaign plan, the FBI never opened any type of inquiry, issued any taskings, employed any analytical personnel, or produced any analytical products in connection with the information,” the report states.

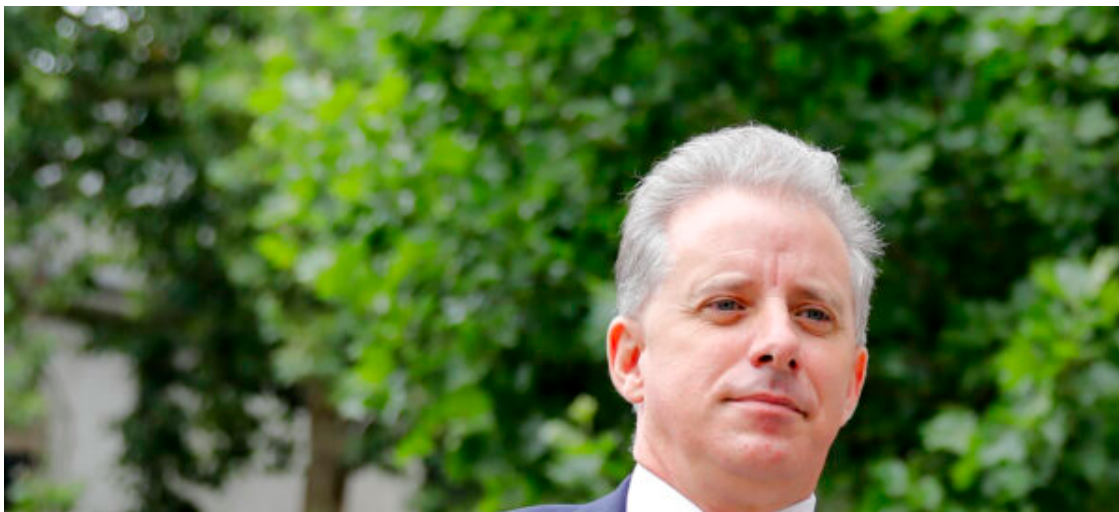
“This lack of action was despite the fact that the significance of the Clinton plan intelligence was such as to have prompted the Director of the CIA to brief the President, Vice President, Attorney General, Director of the FBI, and other senior government officials about its content within days of its receipt.”

FBI Couldn't Corroborate Steele Dossier

Federal investigators never managed to corroborate any of the claims in the infamous Steele dossier, Durham's investigators concluded. The dossier's author, former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele, couldn't corroborate any of the claims even when the FBI offered him \$1 million to do so.

Similar to Durham's report, the report by special counsel Robert Mueller in 2019 included [no corroboration](#) of the claims in the Steele dossier.

The Clinton campaign paid for the creation and dissemination of the Steele dossier using a law firm as a cutout. The campaign and the Democratic National Committee [agreed to pay federal fines](#) last year for concealing the nature of the payments for the dossier.





Former UK intelligence officer Christopher Steele in London on July 24, 2020, declined an offer of \$1 million from the FBI to name the sources who proved the debunked allegations in the infamous 2016 ‘Steele Dossier.’ (Tolga Akmen/AFP via Getty Images)

Steele hired a U.S.-based Russian national, Igor Danchenko, to compile the claims in the dossier. Like Steele, Danchenko couldn’t back up any of the claims when confronted by the FBI.

“Rather, Danchenko characterized the information he provided to Steele as ‘rumor and speculation’ and the product of casual conversation,” the report states.

FBI Spies Taped 3 Trump Campaign Advisers

The FBI used three spies, or “confidential human sources,” to target and record Trump campaign advisers, including Carter Page, George

Papadopoulos, and an unnamed senior foreign policy adviser, according to Durham.

Notably, the recordings of Page and Papadopoulos included exculpatory statements that the FBI failed to disclose to the Justice Department (DOJ) and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, Durham's investigators determined. Page's taped statements discredited claims in the Steele dossier about his alleged connection to former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort. The FBI failed to act on those leads and didn't report them to the DOJ, Durham found.

The report's findings follow Durham's successful prosecution and conviction of FBI attorney Kevin Clinesmith, who was found guilty of forging an email used to obtain a warrant to spy on Page.

Dossier Could Be Russian Disinformation


A former associate of Danchenko informed the FBI in 2008 that the Russian national told him that he had access to people who would pay for classified information, according to the report.

The tip triggered a preliminary investigation by the FBI in 2009.

“The FBI converted its investigation into a full investigation after learning that Danchenko had been identified as an associate of two FBI counterintelligence subjects and had previous contact with the Russian Embassy and known Russian intelligence officers,” the report states.

Despite knowing these details in January 2017, the bureau failed to inform the secret surveillance court or to update the applications in which it cited claims that ultimately came from Danchenko. As a result, the court couldn't use the information to assess Danchenko's credibility.





Igor Danchenko, right, walks outside the U.S. courthouse in Alexandria, Va., on Oct. 11, 2022. (Alex Wong/Getty Images)

Instead of following up on the 2011 investigation, the bureau hired Danchenko as a confidential human source in 2017 as it continued to investigate the Trump campaign. Durham suggests that the FBI's lack of curiosity about Danchenko may have made the bureau a victim of Russian disinformation.

“[It] appears the FBI never gave appropriate consideration to the possibility that the intelligence Danchenko was providing to Steele—which, again, according to Danchenko himself, made up a significant majority of the information in the Steele Dossier reports—was, in whole or in part, Russian disinformation,” the report states.

Fake Claim in Steele Dossier Came From Former DNC Official

During the relevant time before and after the 2016 election, Danchenko maintained a relationship with Charles Dolan, who has held multiple positions with

the Democratic National Committee, the report states.

Dolan and Danchenko both traveled to Moscow in the summer of 2016. Danchenko has said that it was during that trip that he learned salacious rumors about Trump from Ritz-Carlton employees in Russia's capital. But Durham's investigators found that it was Dolan, not Danchenko, who interacted with the hotel staff.

The finding suggests that a prominent former DNC official could be the ultimate source behind the most bombastic claim in the Steele dossier.

Dolan also told Durham's investigators that he fabricated another claim in the dossier concerning Manafort's resignation from the Trump campaign.

Although Durham was unable to prove that some of the other claims in the dossier came from Dolan, both Dolan and Danchenko were communicating with the same Russian national, Olga Galkina.

Danchenko had told the FBI that Galkina was a key source for some of the claims in the dossier.

“In fact, when Galkina was interviewed by the FBI in

August 2017, she admitted to providing Dolan with information that would later appear in the Steele Reports,” Durham’s report states.