

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SSCI Briefing on Former Employee of Christopher Steele
[REDACTED] Draft Talking Points as of 14 February 2018

1. (U) Introduction/Caveats

- [REDACTED] As agreed between the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and FBI Director Wray, the FBI is providing an overview briefing on [REDACTED] Sources and Methods with the individual who served as one of Christopher Steele's primary sub-sources for the information that has subsequently become known as the "Steele" or "Trump" dossier.
- [REDACTED] Consistent with the January 18th letter from the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, I will not disclose [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource identity. I will, however, discuss the circumstances under which the FBI identified, debriefed, [REDACTED] Sources and Methods.
- [REDACTED] As we have discussed on multiple occasions in the course of our briefings on Christopher Steele's reporting, [REDACTED] Sources and Methods, as well as the identities of his own sub-sources, remains our paramount concern with respect to the Steele dossier.
- [REDACTED] We have successfully protected from public disclosure the overwhelming majority of the individuals who contributed source reporting to the Steele Dossier. We continue to prioritize efforts to protect the identities of these individuals based upon legitimate concerns about their safety.
- [REDACTED] Before continuing with this briefing, I want to strongly emphasize the sensitivity of this information. Although I will not be revealing the specific identity of [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource or his own sub-sources, what I will disclose today is extremely revealing. We want to be supportive of the Committee's investigation, [REDACTED] Sources and Methods.

2. [REDACTED] How we identified [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource

- [REDACTED] As the Committee has been made aware through our production [REDACTED] Sources and Methods documents, we assessed that Steele relied on one primary sub-source in generating the documents that ultimately comprised the dossier.
- [REDACTED] We reached this conclusion after debriefing Steele in early-October 2016. Following that meeting, it was apparent that Steele maintained a primary sub-

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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source, and that this individual collected information from a range of largely unwitting contacts, **Source Identifying**.

- [REDACTED] **Sources and Methods**

3. [REDACTED] **Background/Biography**

- [REDACTED] Steele's sub-source—who I'll refer to **the Primary Subsource** for the remainder of the briefing—**Source Identifying**. Consistent with his academic background **Source Identifying**—which he studied at **Source Identifying**—his professional career **Source Identifying**.

- [REDACTED] **Sensitive FBI Information**

- [REDACTED] **Sensitive FBI Information**

- [REDACTED] **Sensitive FBI Information**

4. [REDACTED] **Findings from January 2017 debriefings**

A. [REDACTED] **Background/Initial Relationship with Steele**

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] The FBI conducted a series of voluntary interviews with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource over the course of three days in late-January 2017. At the conclusion of these interviews—which were conducted by an [REDACTED] Source Identifying
 - [REDACTED] In the course of the interviews, [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource discussed [REDACTED] Source Identifying
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource first met Christopher Steele [REDACTED] Source Identifying, which was an [REDACTED] Source Identifying. Later in [REDACTED] Source Identifying, Steele contacted [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource and offered him full-time employment.
 - [REDACTED] Source Identifying
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource claimed that his broader network of associates and acquaintances [REDACTED] Source Identifying, but they were not aware of the [REDACTED] Source Identifying.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource made it clear to the FBI that he never had insight into the identities of Steele’s clients, nor did he ever see any finished Orbis intelligence reports, at least until the dossier was published by BuzzFeed.
 - [REDACTED] In the course of the interviews, [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource disclosed that he had developed his source network through [REDACTED] Source Identifying.
 - [REDACTED] He also described his [REDACTED] Source Identifying, which included not communicating with Steele while [REDACTED] Source Identifying, not compiling detailed notes from his discussions [REDACTED] Source Identifying, and conducting oral debriefs with Steele in the [REDACTED] Source Identifying at the conclusion of operational travel [REDACTED] Source Identifying.
 - [REDACTED] In response to multiple questions about his relationships with [REDACTED] Source Identifying, [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource initially claimed to have no interaction with individuals in [REDACTED] Source Identifying, but later referred to [REDACTED] Source Identifying his previous [REDACTED] Source Identifying contacts [REDACTED] Source Identifying.” He also discussed the [REDACTED] Source Identifying
- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] While we believed that [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource at times sought to minimize his connections to [REDACTED] Source Identifying, his disclosures regarding his relationships with [REDACTED] Source Identifying [REDACTED] Source Identifying were generally consistent [REDACTED] Source Identifying.

B. [REDACTED] Reporting Related to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

- [REDACTED] Prior to early 2016, [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource conducted research on [REDACTED] Source Identifying likely in support of clients who had hired Orbis [REDACTED] Source Identifying.
 - [REDACTED] In March 2016, Steele asked [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource to begin researching whether Paul Manafort had engaged in corrupt business practices in Ukraine or elsewhere in Russia or Eurasia. [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource described the request as strange, since Steele had never asked him to research anything related to U.S. domestic issues. [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource told us that he did not feel well-postured to respond to this tasking, as he was not familiar with Manafort.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource advised us that he received a subsequent tasking from Steele in late-May 2016 to seek [REDACTED] Source Identifying related to the U.S. Presidential election, to include compromising materials on Donald Trump.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource could not recall if he had been tasked to research both candidates Trump and Clinton, however his attorney advised that [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource had previously stated that Steele tasked [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource to pursue compromising material on both candidates.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource advised that Steele placed no higher priority on the election-related research compared to other ongoing projects, and that he was focused on a separate project [REDACTED] Source Identifying. [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource advised that the election-related work continued to be a "side project" until approximately July-August 2016.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource received two subsequent taskings from Steele. The first was to investigate Sergey Ivanov's potential role in the U.S. Presidential election. The second was to collect information on Carter Page, Michael Cohen, Paul Manafort, and one or two additional individuals [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource could not recall.
 - [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource relied upon [REDACTED] Source Identifying to collect the reporting that he contributed to the dossier. [REDACTED] Sources and Methods. Overall, it appears
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

that ^{The Primary Source} reporting was integrated into at least ten of the Orbis reports that comprise the dossier.

C. Lines of Election Reporting ^{Source Identifying}

- [REDACTED] I'll now turn to ^{the Primary Source} description of the various contacts who provided him information that eventually contributed to the dossier.

- [REDACTED] ^{Source Identifying}.

- [REDACTED] ^{Source Identifying}

- [REDACTED] ^{The Primary Source} initially received the information about Trump's alleged sexual activities at the Ritz Carlton from a ^{Source Identifying} with a wide social circle. This individual told ^{the Primary Source} that it was a "well known story" and recommended ^{the Primary Source} corroborate the story through hotel employees. ^{The Primary Source} claimed that none of the hotel employees with whom he spoke denied the story. ^{The Primary Source} gave Steele the names of the staffers with whom he spoke, and reported the story to Steele as unconfirmed rumor and speculation.
- [REDACTED] ^{The Primary Source} provided Steele with information that reportedly originated from a former ^{Source Identifying} official. ^{The Primary Source} claimed that the former ^{Source Identifying}
- [REDACTED] ^{The Primary Source} claimed to have spoken directly with an individual he believed was individual. Two U.S.-based ^{Source Identifying} had suggested ^{the Primary Source} contact individual. Individual subsequently had a 10-15 minute telephone call with an individual who did not identify himself, but who, from the context and timing of the call,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] believed was [REDACTED] individual [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Primary Subsource's Source was the source for [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource reporting on Paul Manafort's use of Carter Page and others as intermediaries with Russian government leadership, and the reporting about an ongoing exchange of information between the Trump team and the Kremlin.

D. [REDACTED] Perspective on the Dossier, Relationship with Steele, and Additional Disclosures

- [REDACTED] As mentioned, Steele's finished reports were not made available to [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource prior the publication of the dossier in BuzzFeed. Since the FBI interview with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource took place after the dossier was publicly available, we were able to discuss with him whether he believed his information was accurately characterized in Steele's reports.
- [REDACTED] The Primary Subsource advised that several reports appeared to be derived from multiple sources, to include the information he provided to Steele as well as information that he had not collected. He did not cite any significant concerns with the way his reporting was characterized in the dossier to the extent he could identify it.
- [REDACTED] The Primary Subsource described the structure of his debriefings with Steele, which were conducted one-on-one in Orbis offices. [REDACTED] Source Identifying [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource advised that he distinguished between what his sources had told him and his assessment of the information. Steele often pressed [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource multiple times to ensure he was confident in how he characterized certain reporting. Steele also often urged [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource to follow-up with his contacts.
- [REDACTED] The Primary Subsource claimed he resisted reaching out to his contacts with follow-up questions on the election issue due to the sensitivity of the topic, as well as [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource concerns that his efforts would become known [REDACTED] Source Identifying [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] Sources and Methods

- [REDACTED] Sources and Methods [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Sources and Method [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6. Potential SSCI Staff Q&A

- [REDACTED] Does [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource still maintain a relationship with Steele and/or Orbis International?
 - [REDACTED] The Primary Subsource was an employee of Orbis for [REDACTED] Source Identifying prior to the publication of the dossier. He does still maintain a relationship with Orbis and is in periodic contact with Steele. Steele had repeatedly signaled directly and indirectly to the FBI—through debriefings when he was a CHS and via Bruce Ohr—that he was extremely concerned about [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource well-being. It is only natural and logical that Steele maintains contact with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource given his role in compiling the dossier.
 - [REDACTED] We believe Steele knows that we have identified [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource, and that he has surmised that we've spoken with him at least once. [REDACTED] Sensitive Information

- [REDACTED] Sensitive FBI Information
 - [REDACTED] Sensitive FBI Information

 - [REDACTED] Sensitive FBI Information

 - [REDACTED] Sensitive FBI Information

- [REDACTED] How have discussions with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource affected the FBI's understanding of or confidence in the Steele dossier?
 - [REDACTED] At minimum, our discussions with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource confirm that the dossier was not fabricated by Steele. Our discussions with [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource confirmed

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

that he operates within high level academic and government circles, maintains trusted relationships with individuals who are capable of reporting on the material he collected for Steele, and that Steele and [REDACTED] the Primary Subsource utilized reasonably sound intelligence tradecraft.

[REDACTED]