The Trump-Russia Collusion Case

Updated to January 2021

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For those who have been following my page for a while: my main target is not Trump, my target is Putin. Putin, not Trump, is the most dangerous person in the world. Trump is just a lackey, a small-time crook and bit-time liar whom Putin is using to attack the USA. The problem is not that there is no evidence of Trump-Putin collusion, the problem is that there is too much of it.

I have added some background about the motive of Russia's interference in US politics. In my opinion, it was not only a general attempt at undermining US institutions (that came later) but originally it was a determined effort to make sure that Hillary Clinton did not become president. Putin feared her more than anyone else.

For those who have NOT followed this page from the beginning: this website was one of the first to talk about the Trump-Russia collusion at a time when few dared mention the Steele dossier. I am pleased to report that two years later the whole world talks about this.

Just to be very clear: this is not about whether Russia's interference changed the results of the election (i personally think that the FBI investigation into Clinton's email server had a much bigger impact). It is about Putin's strategy to attack the USA, and, secondly, it is about the extent of Trump's collaboration with Putin.

And, just to be very clear, Putin's Russia is not the only country that ever interfered in US politics. For example, the USA has fought countless wars in the Middle East because of the interference of powerful Israeli and Arab lobbies on US
elections. And Trump is not the first president that colluded with a foreign power to get elected: several presidents won narrowly thanks to the help of Israeli and Arab lobbies. The book on the "history of collusion" still has to be written.

You can also go straight to to my conclusions.

(See also my timeline of Russia).

Timeline of the Trump-Russia collusion case:

- 2009: Christopher Steele, who has been a British secret agent specializing in Russia since 1990, starts his own private intelligence agency Orbis Business Intelligence
- 2010: England's Football Association hires Steele to investigate allegations that England's bid for the 2018 World Cup is under attack by Russia (England is considered vastly favorite over other bidders, and Russia is considered the least likely to win the bid)
- December 2010: FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) awards the 2018 World Cup to Russia but Steele informs the FBI of corruption within FIFA, including Chuck Blazer, the highest-ranking soccer official in the USA (See this summary published nine years later)
- January 2011: Chuck Blazer, who lives in Trump Tower, accepts to cooperate with the FBI and admits having accepted Russian bribes to favor Russia over England in the World Cup bid

- December 2011: Tens of thousands of Russians march in the streets against Vladimir Putin's rule, and Putin blames it on interference by the US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton. Putin states: "We need to safeguard ourselves from this interference in our internal affairs."
Thousands of Russians protest against Putin

- 2012: Paul Manafort, later Trump's campaign chairman, lobbies Europe and the USA on behalf of Ukraine's president Victor Yanukovych, widely considered a Russian puppet, while Hillary Clinton supports the Ukrainian opposition.

- 2012: Putin's ally Konstantin Rykov begins promoting Donald Trump as a future president of the USA.

- December 2012: The USA enacts the Magnitsky Act, inspired by Hillary Clinton, to punish Putin and his cronies for the persecution of the Putin critic Sergei Magnitsky, an activist who was sentenced to jail, and eventually died in jail in 2009, after exposing a massive fraud scheme involving Russian officials. The lawyer hired by Russia to lobby against the Magnitsky Act is Natalia Veselnitskaya.

April 2013: The FBI uncovers a Russian money-laundering network that is run by Alimzhan Tokhtakhounov out of unit 63A in Trump Tower (an investigation for which the FBI wiretapped Trump Tower).

November 2013: Following many years of business ties with Russia (see for example this *New Yorker magazine* article), Donald Trump travels to Moscow to attend the Miss Universe pageant. Trump will later deny staying overnight in Moscow but flight records will be uncovered showing that he stayed 46 hours.
November 2013: Attending Trump’s Miss Universe pageant is Alimzhan Tokhtakhounov, a Russian mobster wanted by the FBI and the Interpol.

January 2014: Michael McFaul, US ambassador to Russia, notes that Putin continues to consider Hillary Clinton a personal enemy.

February 2014: The Ukrainian revolution overthrows the pro-Russian regime of Victor Yanukovych and installs a pro-Western government, that Putin publicly describes as
a coup orchestrated by Hillary Clinton

- March 2014: Russia invades and annexes Crimea, a region of Ukraine and the USA (Obama is president) imposes sanctions against the Russian elite

- April 2014: Russia, obeying orders from Vladimir Putin in person, begins setting up a “troll farm” to create fake social media posts and sends operatives to the USA to undermine the political process

- July 2014: A rocket shot from Russian-held territory in Ukraine downs Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur killing all 298 people on board. Russia accuses the pro-Western government
of Ukraine, whereas satellite images convince the CIA that it was pro-Russian rebels who shot the rocket.

- August 2014: The Russian online propaganda firm Internet Research Agency, based in St Petersburg and owned by Putin's friend Yevgeny Prigozhin, dispatches two female operatives, Anna Bogacheva and Aleksandra Krylova, to the USA in order to study how to influence US public opinion via social media. The same Internet Research Agency hires Vitaly Bespalov, who has never been in Ukraine, to write fake stories on fake Ukrainian websites that discredit Ukraine's version of the war with Russia.

- January 2015: The FBI issues arrest warrants for Evgeny Buryakov, Igor Sporyshev and Victor Podobnyy (the Carter Page associate), accusing them of working for Russia's foreign intelligence agency

- May 2015: Steele's report on the 2018 World Cup big, that has unveiled widespread corruption within the soccer governing body FIFA, leads to the arrests of FIFA officials in Switzerland for racketeering and money laundering
May 2015: Putin signs legislation banning most foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that he views has set up by Hillary Clinton to undermine his rule. The first NGO to be banned by Putin is the National Endowment for Democracy, which in 2014 invested $14 million in the "Ukrainian project" to aid mass protests against then president Viktor Yanukovych.

June 2015: Donald Trump, whose business fortune has been mysteriously resurrected after almost going bankrupt, announces his campaign for president (See What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?)

July 2015: For the first time Trump looks like a serious candidate for president, as polls show him leading the Republican field
August 2015: Russia Today, the Russia-sponsored television channel begins a campaign to support Trump’s candidacy and smear Hillary Clinton.

August 2015: Fox News, a radical right-wing TV network, launches a smearing campaign against Hillary Clinton based on her use of an email server, an investigation that (deliberately or not) serves to distract the FBI from the Russian meddling. From that day on, Fox News and Russia become de-facto allies in fighting the candidacy of former secretary of state Hillary Clinton.
August 2015: European intelligence agencies intercept communications between the Trump organization and Russia for the first time.

October 2015: Asked on CNN and MSNBC about a report from Dutch investigators that Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was shot down by a Russian-made rocket, a fact already confirmed by the CIA, Trump replies "It may have been their weapon, but they didn't use it, they didn't fire it" and "Putin and Russia say they didn't do it, the other side said they did, no one really knows who did it". He's the only politician in the USA who doubts that Russia did it.

September 2015: The Washington Free Beacon, funded by billionaire Republican supporter Paul Singer, hires the firm Fusion GPS, founded by former investigative reporters of the right-wing Wall Street Journal (Glenn Simpson and Peter Fritsch), to investigate multiple Republican candidates as well as Hillary Clinton.
November 2015: Mikhail Lesin, the founder of Russia Today and an adviser to Putin, dies in a Washington hotel of a mysterious death.

November 2015: Interviewed on CNN, Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen states: "I've never come across a situation that Mr. Trump has said something that is not accurate." In 2007 Donald Trump hired as his lawyer Michael Cohen, who seems to have always surrounded himself with Russians and was Trump's business scout in the former Soviet Union, including a major deal in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Cohen has been extremely lucky in real estate: he paid $10 million for some buildings in New York and then someone bought them for three times more just three years later, in 2014. His uncle Morton Levine was associated with the Lucchese mob and with the Russian mob in the 1990s. Both Cohen and his brother Bryan married Ukrainian women and worked with their fathers, Fima Shusterman and Alex Oronov. In 1993 Cohen's father-in-law Fima Shusterman admitted laundering millions of dollars. Cohen also worked with Felix Sater who pleaded guilty of working with the Russian mafia (Sater later became an informant for the FBI). See for example this investigation into suspected dealings with Russia's organized crime.
November 2015: Felix Sater (born Felix Sheferovsky in Russia) and Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen exchange emails (discovered two years later by the New York Times) Sater, behaving as an intermediary between Trump and Putin, delivered the message that, if Trump built a Trump Tower in Moscow, "Our boy can become president of the USA and we can engineer it. I will get Putin on this program and we will get Donald elected" (email of 3 November 2015). In 1998 this same Sater had pleaded guilty to collaborating with Russia's organized crime, and a July 2017 report by the Financial Times revealed that Felix Sater is under investigation by the FBI for an international money laundering scheme. In 2006 this Russian-born Felix Sater was managing director of New York-based real-estate firm Bayrock Group when it entered into a deal with Trump to build the Trump SoHo Hotel, a joint venture with Georgian tycoon Tamir Sapir (who became a billionaire working with the Soviet Union in the 1980s) and funded by Kazakh businessman Alexander Mashkevitch, who called himself a "personal friend" of Kazakhstan's dictator Nursultan Nazarbayev. (Not my fault if Soviet people pop up everywhere in Trump's biography). In 2010 two former Bayrock employees, former director of finance Jody Kriss and Michael Chudi Ejekam, filed a lawsuit alleging that the firm was (quote) "substantially and covertly mob-owned and operated". See Charles Bagli's "Real Estate Exective with Hand in Trump Projects Rose from Tangled Past". In 2013 Trump abruptly cut off a BBC interview when the BBC interviewer asked him about Sater.
• December 2015: Putin tells reporters that Trump is his favorite and predicts that he will win

Putin talking to reporters about Trump

While Trump trails in the polls, Putin predicts he will win

• December 2015: Michael Flynn, later a top Trump adviser, is paid $45,000 by Russia’s national television for a speech in which he embraces the official Russian policy, and later dines
with Russian president Vladimir Putin

- December 2015: Britain begins providing the CIA with intercepted communications between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives that were captured during routine surveillance of Russian operatives by various European intelligence agencies.
- December 2015: Russian cyber-intelligence disrupts the power grid of western Ukraine

- March 2016: Manafort joins the Trump campaign, offering to work with no salary, and Trump announces his foreign-policy team, oddly made mostly of unknown "experts" with friendly ties to Russia. Three days later, one of the members of Trump's foreign-policy team, George Papadopoulos, meets a Russian woman, Olga Polonskaya, in London to arrange a meeting between Putin and Trump.

- March 2016: An article in Bloomberg magazine reveals that Carter Page has deep ties with Russia’s establishment
April 2016: Christopher Steele completes a secret investigation called "Project Charlemagne" that unveils Russia's interference in the domestic elections of France, Italy, Germany, Turkey, and Britain with the goal of destroying the European Union.

April 2016: Joseph Mifsud of the London Academy of Diplomacy informs Trump's campaign aide George Papadopoulos that Russia has compromising material on Hillary Clinton and is willing to help Trump win the elections. Mifsud introduces Papadopoulos to Ivan Timofeev, who works for a think tank close to the Russian ministry of foreign affairs.

April 2016: The Washington Free Beacon terminates its contract with Fusion GPS and Fusion GPS offers its Trump-related material to the Democratic Party, which becomes the new funder of the investigation.

April 2016: Roger Stone, who has officially left the Trump campaign in August 2015, threatens "Days of Rage" if the Republican Party deny the nomination to Trump. The Washington Post reports that Stone "is organizing [Trump] supporters as a force of intimidation", noting that Stone "has ... threatened to publicly disclose the hotel room numbers of delegates who work against Trump". Roger Stone has a close association with Kristin Davis, better known as "Manhattan Madam", who ran a high-end prostitution ring in New York City, was arrested for drug smuggling in August 2013 and was sentenced to two years in prison in September 2014.

May 2016: Donald Trump in an interview with the Washington Post reveals that Carter Page is one of his foreign-policy advisers.
May 2016: The Facebook page "Heart of Texas" urges Texans to join a protest against an Islamic center in Houston. This page, which garnered a quarter-million followers, is one of 470 Facebook pages (and 3,814 Twitter Russian accounts) created by the Internet Research Agency to sow discord in the USA and help Trump.

June 2016: Fusion GPS hires Christopher Steele, a highly respected former British spy, to research Trump's links to Russia.

June 2016: Trump's campaign manager Paul Manafort, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and Trump's son Donald Jr meet at Trump Tower with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya who offers information that can be used against Hillary Clinton in return for a lifting of US sanctions against Russia.

June 2016: Crowdstrike, a cybersecurity firm working for the Democratic Party, discovers that two Russian hacker groups (Cozy Bear and Fancy Bear) have stolen thousands of emails.

June 2016: The Washington Post reports that Russian hackers broke into the Democratic National Committee's servers and stole its research on Donald Trump.

July 2016: Three days before the Democratic Party's national convention, WikiLeaks releases thousands of emails stolen by Russian hackers from the Democratic Party's servers.
July 2016: Christopher Steele, disturbed by what he discovered, provides the FBI with a dossier linking the Trump organization to Russia.

July 2016: The FBI, aware of the close ties that several Trump aides have to Russia, opens a counterintelligence investigation code-named "Crossfire Hurricane" to determine whether Trump's organization is colluding with this enemy regime that is trying to sabotage the democratic process in the USA, and dispatches agents to London to meet the Australian ambassador Alexander Downer who has evidence of contacts between Trump's campaign advisor George Papadopoulos and Russia. Unlike the investigation into Hillary Clinton's email server, which is being widely publicized, the investigation into the Russia-Trump collusion is kept top-secret. This double standard de-facto helped Trump and hurt Clinton.
July 2016: Live on television, Donald Trump encourages Russia to hack Hillary Clinton’s email server: “I will tell you this, Russia, if you’re listening, I hope you’re able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing” (27 July 2016). In 2018 we will learn that on the very same day (27 July 2016), an incredible coincidence, Russian hackers did attack the servers of the Democratic Party.

July 2016: A few days before the Republican National Convention, Carter Page delivers a lecture in Moscow that sounds exactly like official Russian propaganda.

July 2016: Deutsche Bank specialists report suspicious transactions between Trump’s family and Russia (see this New York Times article)

July 2016: During the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Carter Page and other Trump advisers, including Jeff Sessions (later Trump’s attorney general), meet with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak.
August 2016: CIA director John Brennan informs top lawmakers that Russia supports the Trump campaign, but this is kept secret and FBI director Comey refuses to meet with these top lawmakers.

August 2016: Russian hackers steal 50,000 emails sent by John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, and deliver them to WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks does not publish them for two months.

August 2016: CIA director John Brennan provides intelligence to the FBI that Russia is orchestrating an attack on the presidential election.

August 2016: Donald Trump's son Donald Jr meets at Trump Tower with three dubious characters: Joel Zamel, an Israeli hacker whose firm Psy-Group specializes in social-media campaigns, offering a multimillion-dollar plan to help elect Trump; George Nader, an intermediary representing Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, offering a plan to destabilize Iran (both countries were upset with Obama's and Hillary Clinton's friendly policy towards Iran); and Erik Prince, the former head of Blackwater, a firm involved in all sorts of scandals in the Iraqi "reconstruction" (and also a big Republican donor and the brother of Trump's future education secretary Betsy DeVos). Later, Nader will meet more than once with Trump's national security adviser Michael Flynn and with Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. Nader also paid Zamel a huge sum, pretty much the amount that Zamel requested for his multimillion dollar contract. While this doesn't prove
collusion with Russia, it does prove the willingness of the Trump organization to get help from foreign countries. This is a crime under US law. And, ethically if not legally, this amounts to accepting a bribe in return for a favor. It could be yet another coincidence, but Zamel previously worked for Putin's friend Oleg Deripaska, and Nader visited Russia at least twice during the presidential campaign, in particular to arrange a meeting between a Putin emissary and Erik Prince.

• April 2016: Wayne Barrett, an investigative reporter for the Village Voice who spent 30 years investigating Trump's shady deals with organized crime and drug cartels, especially when Trump's lawyer was Roy Cohn, who was also consigliere to two Italian crime families (see for example the 2001 article “Tower of Trouble” and the article “Inside Donald Trump's Empire - Why He Didn't Run for President in 2012”), and who called Trump Tower "a monument to the mob", published a new edition of his biography of Donald Trump titled "Trump, The Greatest Show on Earth".

• September 2016: Christopher Steele, frustrated by FBI inaction, provides his dossier to the New York Times, the Washington Post, the New Yorker and others, but most media refuse to publish it.

• September 2016: The FBI finally provides the Steele dossier to the Crossfire Hurricane team.
October 2016: Trump's associate Roger Stone tweets "Wednesday Hillary Clinton is done. #WikiLeaks." just days before WikiLeaks dumps emails stolen by Russian hacker Guccifer 2.0 from the servers of the Democratic Party.

October 2016: Rumors picked up by the New York Times surface that Mikhail Lesin may have been murdered.

October 2016: FBI agents finally fly to Europe to interview Steele.

October 2016: Russian activist Lyubov Sobol of the Anti-Corruption Foundation investigates corruption by Yevgeny Prigozhin, Putin's close associate who also runs the St Petersburg "troll farm" helping Trump's presidential campaign.

October 2016: The FBI and the Justice Department obtain a warrant to monitor Trump's adviser Carter Page because they found evidence that there is "probable cause" to believe Page has been acting as an agent of a foreign power, Russia.

October 2016: The tiny country of Montenegro in the Balkans arrests 14 people accused of plotting to disrupt parliamentary elections, to assassinate prime minister Milo Djukanovic, and to install an anti-NATO government. Two of them (Eduard Shishmakov and Vladimir Popov) are Russian agents of the military intelligence agency G.R.U. (see this investigation), the same one involved in the disruption of the US presidential elections. Coincidentally, in those days Trump is speaking against NATO.

October 2016: WikiLeaks publishes John Podesta's emails after sitting on them for two months, coincidentally just a few minutes after the Washington Post releases the "Access Hollywood" video in which Trump is heard making extremely lewd statements about how to treat women. A scandal that should have been about Trump's sexism becomes a scandal about the Democratic Party's internal bickering.

October 2016: Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev and Donald Trump meet secretly in Sheldon Adelson's private hangar of the Las Vegas airport (Sheldon Adelson is the casino mogul and Republican mega-donor who at one point was the third-richest person in the USA). In July 2008 (in the middle of the Great Recession when home prices were collapsing) Rybolovlev paid Trump $95 million for a mansion in Palm Beach that was worth much less. That month Trump was due to pay $40 million to Deutsche Bank and Trump...
Entertainment Resorts was due to pay $53 million to bondholders. Rybolovlev gave Trump exactly the money that Trump needed to avoid jail. Rybolovlev never spent a single day in that mansion: he will demolish it and sell the land.

- October 2016: Computer scientists discover a mysterious flow of Internet messages between the Trump Organization and a Russian organization named Alfa Bank, with ties to Russia's government. (The names of the data scientists surfaced only in 2021: David Dagon and Manos Antonakakis of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Rodney Joffe, a famous cybercrime investigator, and April Lorenzen, chief data scientist at Zetalytics). After seeing the data, Paul Vixie, one of top experts on Internet domain name servers, concluded: "The parties were communicating in a secretive fashion... This is more akin to what criminal syndicates do". Days after a New York Times reporter contacted Alfa Bank, the Trump Organization shut down its server (an amazing coincidence) and launched a new server, trump1.contact-client.com. The computer scientists discovered that the very first message received by this new server came again from Alfa Bank. Alfa Bank is Russia's largest private bank and is owned by oligarch Mikhail Fridman, who has close ties to Putin.

November 2016: By now all three intelligence agencies of the USA (FBI, CIA and NSA) have uncovered a sophisticated effort by Russia, engineered by Vladimir Putin in person, to influence the outcome of the election in favor of candidate Trump (or, better, to harm Hillary Clinton) via compromising leaks and fake news spread on social media by an army of Russian hackers.
A strong statement from three intelligence agencies.

Putin Ordered Campaign To Influence US Election

We assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the

- November 2016: The FBI begins eavesdropping on Carter Page, a former Trump aide
- November 2016: Trump loses the presidential election by three million votes but becomes president on a technicality, largely due to the Russian efforts to discredit Clinton in key states. Upon hearing the news, the Russian parliament erupts in a spontaneous applause.

- December 2016: Alerted by the intelligence agencies, departing president Obama announces renewed sanctions against Russia for its interference in the presidential election

- December 2016: Trump's aide Michael Flynn (his future national security adviser) secretly meets with the Russian ambassador to discuss lifting the sanctions
- December 2016: Steele completes his dossier, in which he reveals that, according to his Russian sources, Trump was
filmed indulging in an orgy with prostitutes in Russia in 2013 while confirming that Russia has been working with the Trump organization to get him elected president (Click here for the full dossier). Trump denies everything, but later several of Steele's findings have been proven true, and Trump's denials proven false. See for example this article. Only two items of the dossier have not been proven as of 2017: 1. that Trump's attorney Michael Cohen met the Russians in Prague (Cohen states that he has never been in Prague); and 2. that Trump was filmed in Moscow during an orgy with prostitutes.

- December 2016: Flynn, under FBI surveillance, makes phone calls to the Russian ambassador

- January 2017: All intelligence agencies of the USA (FBI, CIA and NSA) have reports proving that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections with the explicit purpose of hurting Hillary Clinton's candidacy and therefore help Trump get elected, and they brief Trump about it
- January 2017: The Swedish academic Martin Kragh publishes a report in the Journal of Strategic Studies vol 40/6 about Russia's strategy for influence in Sweden (presumably Russia is doing something similar in every Western country)
- January 2017: Tom Malinowski, the departing assistant secretary of state for human rights, learns that Trump intends to remove all sanctions against Russia and alerts Congress, a revelation that prompts Republican senator Lindsey Graham to introduce the Russia Sanctions Review Act (February 2017). Many, if not all, of the Russians who have been subjected to sanctions over the years for their anti-American activities will turn out to be involved in the Russia-Trump affair.
January 2017: The Israeli magazine Yedioth Ahronoth reports that Israeli intelligence officials are concerned about sharing sensitive information with the Trump administration because they fear that the Trump administration will pass them on to Russia (which is an ally of Iran and Hezbollah, two arch-enemies of Israel).

January 2017: A few days before Trump's inauguration as president, Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen meets at Trump Tower with Putin's friend Viktor Vekselberg and Vekselberg's cousin Andrew Intrater to discuss how to improve relations between the USA and Russia. Around that time financial records show that Vekselberg starts paying huge sums of money to Trump's attorney Michael Cohen.
January 2017: Trump is inaugurated as president of the USA
January 2017: Trump picks as national security adviser Michael Flynn, the man who was filmed attending Russian Television’s gala of December 2015 at Moscow’s Metropol Hotel with Putin (Russia Today is Russia’s main propaganda machine). Also attending that dinner was the oligarch Viktor Vekselberg. See What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns? for Vekselberg's role in laundering Russian money.
January 2017: Cohen meets with Felix Sater in New York to discuss lifting US sanctions against Russia (this is admitted by Cohen himself).

January 2017: Trump fires attorney general Sally Yates, who has warned him about Flynn's Russian activities
February 2017: As the US news media report that Trump's national security adviser Flynn lied about his contacts with Russia, and indeed met the Russian ambassador, Flynn resigns as national security adviser, and later Flynn pleads guilty of lying to investigators.
• February 2017: Trump tells reporters during a press conference: "I have nothing to do with Russia. To the best of my knowledge no person that I deal with does".
• February 2017: Trump demands "loyalty" from the FBI director James Comey

• February 2017: The FBI reveals that it has been investigating four Trump aides because of suspected Russian ties: Flynn, Manafort, Papadopoulos and Page.

• March 2017: The Washington Times reports that Trump's associate Roger Stone has exchanged messages with Russian hackers Guccifer 2.0
• March 2017: The BBC investigates Joseph Mifsud, the middleman of the London Academy of Diplomacy who originally connected the Trump campaign and Putin's
March 2017: Trump's attorney general Jeff Sessions, formerly a top Trump adviser and suspected of several meetings with Russian operatives, recuses himself from the Trump-Russia investigation, and is later replaced as the official overseeing the inquiry by his deputy attorney general, Rod Rosenstein.

March 2017: Trump fires Preet Bharara, the attorney prosecuting a money laundering case against Prevezon involving Russian officials and investigating Deutsche Bank (Trump's primary lender) for its alleged ties to such Russian money-laundering operations (see [What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?](#) for a detail of the Russian money laundering scheme), and also conducting an inquiry for corruption into Trump's HHS secretary Tom Price.

March 2017: [An investigation by Reuters](#) finds that at least 63 Russian citizens bought almost $100 million...
worth of real estate in Trump’s luxury towers.

- April 2017: The Trump administration informs Russia before striking Syria, and Russia obviously informs Syria, so that the bombing results in no Syrian casualties and no Syrian planes destroyed. (See for example this article or this article).
- May 2017: The Trump administration secretly settles the case against Prevezon. The defense attorney for the Russians is Natalia Veselnitskaya.

- May 2017: ANIA magazine discovers that Elena Baronoff, an executive working for Trump in Florida, is not only a friend of Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov but even a former Russian spy.
- May 2017: Trump fires FBI director James Comey who has refused to stop the investigation into the Russia-Trump scandal.

- May 2017: A photograph taken by a Russian photographer accidentally reveals that Trump, one day after firing Comey, met with the Russian ambassador and with the Russian foreign minister. The US media were not invited to this meeting, an odd meeting to start with (usually US presidents do not meet with a foreign minister unless the foreign minister is a good old
May 2017: A few days later the Washington Post discovers that Trump revealed highly classified Israeli information to the Russian foreign minister and the Russian ambassador.

May 2017: A few days later the New York Times discovered that Trump reported to his Russian guests that he had fired the FBI director to stop the inquiry into the Trump-Russia scandal.

May 2017: The Washington Post discovers that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner tried to set up a secret communication line with the Russian ambassador.
May 2017: Rosenstein appoints a former FBI director, Robert Mueller, as the special counsel overseeing the Russia-Trump investigation, including evidence that Trump in person may have obstructed the investigation

May 2017: Former attorney general Sally Yates testifies that she had confidentially warned Trump of Flynn's illicit activities before. Trump did not take any action at the time against Flynn but instead a few days later fired Yates.

June 2017: The FBI discovers evidence that Putin ordered Russian hackers to hack the voting machines (but this failed) in order to alter the votes in Trump's favor (testimony under oath by the director of the FBI)

June 2017: Former FBI chief Jeff Comey testifies under oath that Trump pressured him to stop the investigation. Comey also calls Trump a liar. Comey confirms that the Department of Justice is investigating Trump associates for potential collusion with Russia to influence the US elections.

June 2017: Trump's attorney general Jeff Sessions had testified under oath that he never had any contacts with lobbyists working for Russia during Trump's campaign. Unfortunately for Sessions, Richard Burt, a former US ambassador to Germany during the Reagan administration who is now a lobbyist working for Russia in Washington, confirms that he wrote a Russia-friendly foreign policy speech for Trump AND that he (a Russia lobbyist) was invited to two dinners hosted by Jeff Sessions during the Trump campaign.
June 2017: Radical right-wing commentator Newt Gingrich attacks special counsel Robert Mueller on Twitter, calling him "the tip of the deep state spear aimed at destroying or at a minimum undermining and crippling the Trump presidency." This states the conspiracy theory about a "deep state" conspiring against Trump.

June 2017: Trump, who a few weeks earlier had cordially met with the Russian ambassador and the Russian foreign minister, snubs the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko when the latter visits Washington. Trump offers absolutely zero words of support for Ukraine in its civil war against Russian-supported separatists.

June 2017: the US senate votes overwhelmingly (98 to 2) to impose sanctions on Russia as punishment for meddling into US elections. Trump himself finally admits the meddling in a tweet in which he accuses Obama of not immediately punishing Russia for it.

July 2017: The New York Times publishes the story that the Trump campaign (his son, his son-in-law and his campaign manager) met with the Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya, who worked for the Russian government just about at the same time that Russian hackers launched their attacks against Clinton. The Washington Post summarizes the story like this: "Trump aides were in the market to collect negative information
that could be used against Clinton - at the same time that Russians were collecting such data." Donald Trump's son Donald writes about this meeting with Natalia Veselnitskaya: "We primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children that was active and popular with American families years ago". (It will be later revealed that his father forced him to write that lie). Two days later Trump's son publishes "all" the emails that he exchanged about this meeting and claims to have had no knowledge that the lawyer was working for the Russian government to hurt Hillary Clinton, but minutes later the New York Times publishes omitted emails that show he knew all along the real purpose of the meeting, in fact he was well aware that the Russians were trying to get his father elected. One day later Trump's son tells Sean Hannity on Fox News that he has fully disclosed everything about the meeting. Two days later the Associated Press and the Washington Post reveal that the Russian-American lobbyist Rinat Akhmetshin attended the Trump Tower meeting, a fact omitted by Trump's son. CNN quickly discovers that, far from full disclosure, Trump's son has omitted a lot of information: in particular, eight people attended the meeting Meanwhile, Trump's lawyer Jay Sekulow tells Chris Cuomo on CNN that Donald Trump had nothing to do with his son's statement that the meeting was about adoptions (As i wrote, this would be proven to be a lie).

- July 2017: Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who had originally denied ANY meeting with Russians, has now
admitted more than 100

- July 2017: As *the Economist* magazine points out, Trump gives a speech in Poland that is largely a copy of a speech given by Putin in September 2013 in Novgorod, as if the writer was the same.

- July 2017: Ian Bremmer of the Eurasia Group reveals that during the G20 meeting Trump and Putin had a secret one-hour meeting in the presence only of Putin's interpreter (in other words, with no US witnesses of what was discussed). Later, Trump's secretary of state Rex Tillerson claimed that Trump (quote) "pressed president Putin on more than one occasion regarding Russian involvement" whereas Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov gave a completely different version of the conversation. Quote: "Trump said he's heard Putin's very clear statements that this is not true and that the Russian government didn't interfere in the elections and that he accepts these statements - that's all".

- Eurasia’s Bremmer: I broke the story about the second G-20 Trump-Putin meeting because 'nobody else' did
July 2017: A Washington Post's article presents evidence that Trump's attorney general Jeff Sessions, who had repeatedly sworn that he never had any contacts with Russians during Trump's campaign, may have done just that, and not with a remote liaison to the Russians, but with the Russian ambassador himself.

July 2017: A senate judiciary committee hearing is held for Bill Browder (see the full transcript), a businessman who uncovered a $230 million corruption scandal tied to Putin himself. The Russian lawyer who investigated it, Sergei Magnitsky, was tortured and killed in jail in 2009. Bowder explains the motive behind Putin's meddling in US elections: Putin was angry at the sanctions slapped on Russia after the Magnitsky assassination for the simple reason that Putin keeps most of his many billions of dollars in the West (the "Panama Papers" showed that Putin's close friend Sergei Roldugin stashed away $2 billion from Russian oligarchs and the Russian state, presumably on behalf of Putin) and those sanctions risk freezing and confiscating that money. Secondly, Putin promised impunity to all of his corrupt cronies, but the US sanctions de facto punish them. These cronies (who have committed crimes well beyond embezzlement, from kidnap to extortion, if not outright torture and murder) number in the thousands. They all hid their money in Western banks. Bowder testified that Natalia Veselnitskaya (the lawyer who colluded with the Trump team) was in charge of lobbying in Washington to repeal the sanctions via a fake NGO (that officially works to promote Russian adoptions).

July 2017. The US Congress overwhelmingly votes to slap new sanctions on Russia but Trump never implements them. (Eventually they will expire without ever being implemented: not a single sanction on Russia has been implemented by the Trump administration despite overwhelming bipartisan
agreement in the Congress).

- July 2017: The New York Times recovers financial records from Cyprus showing that Trump's campaign manager Paul Manafort owed money to Russian tycoon Oleg Deripaska, close to Putin's circle. See What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns? for details on Deripaska's role in laundering Russian money.

- August 2017: Several media report that US diplomats and counterintelligence officers in Cuba are sick with a mysterious disease ("Havana syndrome"). Trump expels Cuban diplomats from the USA, but the CIA suspects that Cuba is as unaware of the cause as the USA. Similar incidents are reported in other countries, all affecting US diplomats and CIA officers. The one country that has long experimented with microwave weapons is Russia.


- August 2017: Rod Wheeler, a former homicide detective, files a lawsuit alleging that the Trump team worked with Fox News and Republican donor Ed Butowsky to fabricate a conspiracy theory (about the murder of Democratic National Committee
staffer Seth Rich) in order to distract from the Trump-Russia investigation (that conspiracy theory was in fact repeatedly aired by Trump cheerleader and radical right-wing Fox News host Sean Hannity).

- September 2017: The Washington Post reveals that Paul Manafort offered to give Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska "private briefings" on the US presidential campaign.
- October 2017: Papadopoulos pleads guilty to lying to the FBI and begins cooperating with the investigation.
- October 2017: Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign manager with close ties to Russia, is indicted of money laundering and tax fraud, mostly related to business with Russia and its allies. One of his aides (Rick Gates) pleads guilty and begins cooperating with the investigation.

- October 2017: Trump announces that he will not certify Iran's compliance with the nuclear agreement even though Iran is complying. The focus on Iran is odd given that that Russia is not complying with a more important nuclear treaty: Russia has deployed nuclear-tipped cruise missiles in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty. Trump's crusade against Iran, a country that has complied with its nuclear deal, distracts the public from the fact that Russia is not complying with a more important nuclear deal (Iran cannot strike the USA, Russia can).
- October 2017: Republican senator Bob Corker, head of the Foreign Relations Committee, warns that "Trump is purposely breaking down relationships we have around the world that had been useful to our nation ... I think the debasement of our nation is what he'll be remembered most for". Note the "purposely". It implies that Trump is doing it on purpose not
because he is incompetent or ignorant. On purpose.

- October 2017: Russia’s president Vladimir Putin launches one of his most stinging critiques of the USA during the Valdai forum at Sochi, an annual conference of Western academics. Meanwhile, a state-run television network is broadcasting two special reports featuring interviews with Veselnitskaya and Russia’s prosecutor general Yury Chaika.

- October 2017: A few days after Putin’s speech at Sochi, Trump’s main propaganda channel, Fox News, launches a storm of accusations against Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama based on an old conspiracy theory of the radical right-wing media Breitbart (the same ones who argued for years that Obama was not born in the USA), a conspiracy theory widely used by the Trump campaign in 2016, based on a book by radical right-wing pundit Peter Schweizer, "Clinton Cash". According to this conspiracy theory, Hillary Clinton gave 20% of the USA’s uranium to Russia in exchange for donations to the Clinton Foundation. Whether true or false (the last thing that would surprise us in California is a case of corruption in Washington, but selling uranium to Russia is neither illegal nor a threat to the USA, so much so that in 2015 Russia supplied 13% of all uranium purchased by nuclear power plants in the USA), this doesn’t change what we know about the Trump-Russia collusion scandal. It actually reinforces the notion that Russia has been plotting to undermine the USA. It also reinforces the notion that the Trump camp is scared of the investigation and that it is looking for tactics to delay it and undermine it. This is also eerily reminiscent of the standard tactic used by Putin to discredit his accusers: whenever someone accuses Putin of wrongdoing, Putin doubles down on the accuser with fabricated accusations that end the accuser in jail. The most notorious case in the USA is the case of Sergei Magnitsky. For what it’s worth: Hillary Clinton was only one of nine members of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) that have to approve this kind of deals.
and the others were mostly nuclear experts chosen by the (Republican-dominated) Congress; the uranium was never exported to Russia (it remains under the control of a US subsidiary of the company acquired by Russia); almost all the money donated by "Russia" to the Clinton Foundation came from the original founder of the uranium firm, Frank Giustra, who was neither Russian nor involved in the deal (three years earlier he had sold the company to others); and no Russian nuclear officials have ever been found involved in the deal.

- October 2017: Coincidence or not, the "uranium scandal" comes out on Fox News just when the New York Times is about to publish new revelations about the meeting between Trump's son and a Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya: far from being an independent, Veselnitskaya was trained and coached by no less than Russia’s prosecutor general, Yuri Chaika, one of the most powerful men in Russia. The documents that Veselnitskaya handed to Trump's son were a rephrasing of documents that Chaika's team had already given two months earlier to US congresswoman Dana Rohrabacher. Stephen Blank, a senior fellow with the American Foreign Policy Council, argues that Veselnitskaya's actions "were coordinated from the very top." Apparently, Chaika's scheme (and therefore Veselnitskaya's) was not aimed specifically at discrediting Hillary Clinton but at hurting William Browder, a fierce Putin foe (see July 2017 above), the man behind the 2012 sanctions against Russian officials (precisely the "Magnitsky Act" named after Sergei Magnitsky).
October 2017: Trump's mouthpiece Fox News also starts demonizing Mueller, the one in charge of the Trump-Russia investigation, just when Mueller announces the first indictments in the Trump-Russia collusion investigation. At the peak of the revelations on Trump's collusion with Russia, Fox News has this to say on its website: "It was a bad week for Hillary Clinton and Democrats as revelations on their roles in the Trump dossier came to light and investigations began on the Obama-era Uranium One deal." Not one word on the fact that, according to the rest of the world, it was a really bad week for Trump, not for Clinton.

October 2017: Trump and his mouthpiece Fox News also resurrect Chris Steele's dossier after revelations that it was partially funded by the Democratic Party (it was initially funded by a Republican think tank). The dossier contains material that no major media took into consideration. The fact that Trump and Fox News try so hard to discredit it makes people like me think that maybe there is more truth in that report than we imagined.

October 2017: Just when Trump's mouthpiece Fox News is trying to distract the public with new (actually old) accusations
against Hillary Clinton, Mueller charges three members of the Trump campaign: its former manager Paul Manafort, his chief assistant Rick Gates, and George Papadopoulos, a former foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI. Manafort's crimes had nothing to do with the Trump campaign but, at the least, show bad judgement on the part of Trump in picking his team (at worst, they show that Trump surrounds himself with crooks and mostly Russian-paid crooks). Papadopoulos is a direct link between Russia and the Trump campaign because he was asked by Russia to set up high-level meetings with Trump in person and delivered those messages (without anyone in the campaign reporting that a foreign power, and the main rival to the USA, was looking for the collaboration of a presidential candidate).

**The New York Times**

*Former Trump Aides Charged as Prosecutors Reveal New Campaign Ties With Russia*

How a Federal Inquiry Says Paul Manafort Laundered $18 Million, and How He Spent It

President Trump's former campaign chairman is charged with channeling large sums of money from offshore bank accounts to pay for goods, services and real estate in the United States.

October 31, 2017

- November 2017: The investigation into the Trump-Russia collusion obtains a confession from Carter Page that he did indeed meet with Russian officials in July 2016, a fact mentioned in the Steele dossier but always denied until now by Page. Page confesses during a testimony he gives to the House Intelligence Committee. One by one all the statements in the Steele dossier are being confirmed. While we have found no evidence of the video mentioned in Steele's dossier, the chances that the video exists increase as the credibility of the dossier increases.
- November 2017: As the Wall Street Journal and other media report, one of the Russian men who helped Steele compile his Trump-Russia report was assassinated and three others were arrested (charged with treason). It sounds like Russia takes Steele's report much more seriously than the US media.
November 2017: Dmitri Alperovitch, a legendary computer security expert who has helped the USA to identify Chinese and Russian hacking attacks (in 2017 he was included in Fortune's "40 Under 40" annual ranking of the most influential young people in the world) gives a talk at the International Conference on Cyber Conflict about how Russia scientifically planned to destabilize US politics before the presidential elections.

November 2017: In one of the many amazing coincidences of this case, just one week after Jared Kushner visited Saudi Arabia and two days after Trump called for Saudi Arabia to have the state oil company go public in the USA (an IPO that is expected to be the biggest in history), Saudi Arabia arrests 11 princes, four ministers and dozens of ex-ministers, and in particular billionaire prince Alwaleed bin Talal, the man who saved Trump from bankruptcy in the 1990s and therefore knows quite a bit about Trump's turbulent past. Talal also attacked Trump in 2015 with a tweet that read "You are a disgrace not only to the GOP but to all America" to which Trump responded with a tweet promising retribution. How does this related to Russia? In November 2016 Alwaleed, furious at Russia's support for Assad in Syria, threatened: "I will finance Israel and Arab Countries to Invade Russia".

November 2017: The "Paradise Papers" leaked to the German newspaper Suddeutsche Zeitung and provided to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists reveals thousands of secret deals that went through the Bermuda law firm Appleby, including deals by Wilbur Ross, Gary Cohn (Trump's chief economic adviser and former Goldman Sachs executive), and Rex Tillerson (Trump's secretary of state and former Exxon Mobil executive). In particular, Wilbur Ross' firm Navigator in the Cayman Islands conducted business with Sibur, owned by Putin's close friend (and, famously, judo partner) Gennady Timchenko and by Putin's son-in-law Kirill Shamalov. Furthermore, Russian billionaire Yuri Milner invested in Silicon Valley social media (both Twitter and Facebook) using money from VTB, Russia's state-controlled bank, and Gazprom Investholding, Russia's government-controlled institution.
November 2017: Trump's spokeswoman dismisses Manafort's alleged crimes as being merely about money-laundering and helping Russia in Ukraine, as if it was perfectly normal that a presidential candidate hired such a man (out of 300 million US citizens) to run his campaign.

November 2017: After meeting Putin one more time, Trump stated "He said he didn't meddle - I asked him again - You can only ask so many times. I just asked him again. He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did. Every time he sees me he says, I didn't do that, and I really believe that when he tells me that, he means it. He says, I didn't do that." This is about Putin, a man widely believed everywhere in the world (including his own Russia) to be a congenital liar. On the same day Trump also escoriates the US intelligence agencies (CIA, NSA, FBI) that have proven Putin to be a liar: former national intelligence chief James Clapper, ex-CIA director John Brennan and former FBI chief James Comey. The unanimous reaction among politicians, the intelligence community and even foreign commentators is that Trump's statements are undermining the USA and posing a peril to the country (as Clapper said of Putin's activities).

November 2017: Two days after Trump pathetically defended Putin's innocence, British prime minister Theresa May accused Vladimir Putin of election meddling.

November 2017: An investigative report confirms that Trump's Panama tower was used for Russian money-laundering by one of the tenants.

November 2017: Glenn Simpson, a private investigator whose firm Fusion GPS was hired to investigate Trump's Russia connections, testifies to Congress that Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen "had a lot of connections to the former Soviet Union, and that he seemed to have associations with organized crime figures in New York and Florida - Russian organized crime figures." Simpson also testifies that "serious questions about Donald Trump's activities in Russia and the former Soviet Union went to Michael Cohen" (see the full transcript).

December 2017: Flynn pleads guilty to lying to investigators and begins cooperating with the investigation. Flynn is willing to testify about the Trump-Russia scandal only if given immunity from prosecution.

December 2017: Trump tweets: "I had to fire General Flynn because he lied to the vice-president and the FBI. He has pled guilty to those lies. It is a shame because his actions during the transition were lawful. There was nothing to hide!" If Trump knew that Flynn had lied to the FBI about his conversations with the Russian ambassador, then the president had
knowingly obstructed justice when he asked the FBI director James Comey to let "Flynn go" and then fired Comey for not doing what asked to do.

- **December 2017:** Coincidence or not, in November 2017 Russia, Turkey and Iran agree on a conference to decide the borders of postwar Syria, and in December 2017 Egypt grants Russia the right to use its airbases; two events that Trump tacitly approves and that mark the replacement of the USA with Russia as the main power broker in the Middle East. Trump also recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, so that the USA can no longer play a role in the peace process, another gift to Russia. This move has brings condemnation on the USA from all traditional allies in the region, including British prime minister Theresa May, German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Emmanuel Macron... but not from Russia's president Putin: the USA is now as isolated as Hitler's Germany was in 1939. Thomas Friedman writes: "In nearly 30 years of covering United States foreign policy, I've never seen a president give up so much to so many for so little, starting with China and Israel." And that's on top of killing the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free-trade deal, that would have created a 12-nation economic bloc controlling 40% of the world economy led by the USA. No US president has ever given Russia so many gifts. Russia comes out of Trump's first year in office as a world power with much more leverage than the USA, which is now a marginalized regional power. The dollar fell 9% in 2017. A German minister said that Germany is now more worried about the USA than North Korea...

- **January 2018:** Trump's circle has repeatedly attacked the research firm Fusion GPS that prepared the famous "Steele dossier", the dossier that details the collusion between Trump and Putin, a dossier in which so far nobody has found anything false and, in fact, many of its assertions are now proven to be true. Christopher Steele, a well-respected former British secret agent, has never discussed it with the media. Fusion GPS finally responds to Trump's attacks in a New York Times article. We learn that the FBI already knew of collusions before Fusion GPS provided them with the Steele dossier. I feel vindicated: Fusion suggests that investigators should look into "the bank records of Deutsche Bank and others that were funding Mr. Trump's businesses". See my lengthy investigation: [What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?](https://example.com) where i said the same things one year ago. Quote: "We told Congress that from Manhattan to Sunny Isles Beach, Fla., and from Toronto to Panama, we found widespread evidence that Mr. Trump and his organization had worked with a wide array of dubious Russians in arrangements that often raised questions about money laundering.". And then concludes with the obvious question that Trump never answered: "Why did Mr. Trump repeatedly seek to do deals in a notoriously corrupt police state that most serious investors shun?"

- **January 2018:** The [Wall Street Journal](https://wsj.com) publishes the story that Trump's
lawyer Michael Cohen paid a porn actress to keep her silent about Trump's affair with her. Trump and Cohen deny everything.

WSJ

Trump Lawyer Arranged $130,000 Payment for Adult-Film Star’s Silence

Updated Jan. 12, 2018 3:13 p.m. ET

- January 2018: Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, is subpoenaed by special counsel Robert Mueller to testify before a grand jury
- January 2018: Donald Trump and his mouthpiece Fox News launch a campaign of denigration, smearing and intimidation against the FBI and the department of justice, and law enforcement in general, forcing some of the most honorable civil servants in the USA to resign and threatening to fire others, something eerily reminiscent of Putin's purges in Russia.
- January 2018: The Atlantic details Paul Manafort's sinister career before he became the chairman of Trump's election campaign

- January 2018: Forbes magazine (not exactly a left-wing publication) writes: "The Trump Organization borrowed billions of dollars to finance its real estate operations but subsequently defaulted on many of its loans. Nevertheless, the Trumps were inexplicably able to continue borrowing millions more from the very banks still owed money. Around the same time, Russian entities linked to the Kremlin quietly moved $10 billion dollars from global locations into the United States using the same banks. Bank anti-money laundering teams somehow failed to identify the movement of funds and did not flag or report the transactions to the US government. Government inspectors independently uncovered the suspicious Russian transactions, known as "mirror trades" (stock purchases in overseas branches and identical immediate sales in United States). Democratic legislators have demanded banking information for identifying links; Republicans controlling Congressional committees refuse to cooperate. Has the Russian government purchased Trump's loans from the banks he was indebted to?"
Following Trump's Money Trail

- February 2018: After countless denials, Trump's attorney Michael Cohen finally admits that he did pay a huge sum to porn star Stormy Daniels who was threatening to go public about an alleged relationship with Trump. This is relevant because the Steele dossier's most controversial item is the existence of a video involving Trump and Russian prostitutes, a fact always denied by the Trump camp. It looks more likely now that we know for sure that Trump had an affair with at least one porn star. Later the story will change countless times until finally everybody will admit that the hush money came from Trump.

- February 2018: National Security Agency's director Adm Mike Rogers tells Congress that Donald Trump has never given him the authority to disrupt Russian cyberattacks.

- February 2018: Trump's chief adviser Bannon, who had refused to testify to Congress in January, is forced to testify in February, but refuses to answer
February 2018: Federal prosecutors accuse 13 Russians of stealing the identities of US citizens and launching a campaign of fake news, in favor of Trump, accusing three of them of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and five of aggravated identity theft.

February 2018: Trump shows no alarm in the fact that Russia conspired against the USA but blames the FBI's investigation of Russia for a mass shooting in Florida that could have been prevented; at no point in time this man, who is technically in charge of protecting the USA from foreign attacks, shows any concern about Russia's attacks on the USA, and in fact he keeps trying to stop anyone who tries to protect the USA from Russian attacks.

February 2018: The White House's chief of staff John Kelly downgrades the top secret security clearance for the Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner (in other words, Kelly decided that Kushner cannot be trusted with national secrets).

February 2018: A Washington Post article reveals that at least four countries (United Arab Emirates, China, Israel and Mexico) tried to take advantage of the financial troubles of Donald Trump's senior adviser Jared Kushner to blackmail him (Kushner's business has a $1.2 billion debt that comes due in January 2019), and that Kushner never reported his contacts with these countries (Kushner repeatedly had to amend the form that he is required to file with details on his contacts with foreign persons: every time the media discover one such contact that he "forgot" to list, he has to amend the form).

March 2018: A former Cambridge Analytica employee, Christopher Wylie, reveals that in 2015 Cambridge Analytica stole the private information of millions of Facebook users and used it to manipulate political elections.

March 2018: Christopher Steele, the author of the Steele dossier, investigates the death of Putin's former adviser Lesin and writes that Lesin...
was murdered by Russian agents in a Washington hotel.

- March 2018: Vladimir Putin announces on Russian television that Russia has developed a new nuclear missile aimed at the USA. He clearly states that the target is the USA. He even shows a video simulating an attack on Florida. There follows not a single word of condemnation from Trump, a man known to tweet on just about everything.

- March 2018: The New York Times reports on a Belarussian model who is being detained in Thailand on charges of prostitution and who has offered details about the business dealings of Trump in Russia. According to a videotape secretly produced by Anastasia Vashukevich (aka Nastya Rybka) and smuggled out of prison, she has evidence of dealings between Trump and Russia via Russian tycoon Oleg Deripaska (to whom Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chairman, owed huge sums, see July 2017). This former model had previously provided valuable information to an investigation against Putin published by Russian opposition politician Aleksei Navalny, an investigation widely considered reliable by Western intelligence agencies (Navalny has repeatedly been jailed in Russia for his anti-Putin campaign). As part of that investigation Navalny used a video provided by this prostitute in which we can hear this tycoon Deripaska and a Russian politician close to Putin discussing US-Russian relations. Her detention in a country where prostitution is generally tolerated is seen by many was an attempt to silence her.

- March 2018: The Atlantic reports the strange odyssey of Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to Donald Trump, in particular the secret correspondence between Stone and Wikileaks (Stone had previously denied any such contacts). Stone also communicated in August and September of 2016 with a Twitter user known as Guccifer 2.0 who was later revealed to be a Russian spy.
March 2018: Trump fires secretary of state Rex Tillerson who backs Britain’s position on the poisoning of a Russian dissident in Britain: Britain accused Putin, and Tillerson sided with Britain. One day later Trump fires Tillerson. After being fired, Tillerson ominously warns the nation against Russia’s "troubling behavior".

March 2018: The New York Times discovers that Muller has subpoenaed the Trump Organization to obtain documents related to Trump’s business dealings with Russia.

March 2018: Obeying orders from his boss, Trump's attorney general Jeff Sessions fires former FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe, who has been investigating the Russia-Trump scandal. McCabe responds by warning that his dismissal was part of a larger effort to discredit the intelligence agencies investigating Trump. Former CIA chief John Brennan tweets: "When the full extent of your venality, moral turpitude, and political corruption becomes known, you will take your rightful place as a disgraced demagogue in the
March 2018: For two years Cambridge Analytica, the main source of "fake news" during the 2016 presidential campaign, has denied using Facebook data and has denied any contact with Russia. Trump's campaign manager Steve Bannon has been a former vice presidents of Cambridge Analytica. In March 2018 The British television channel Channel 4 send reporters disguised as prospective clients to talk with Cambridge Analytica and secretly filmed the interviews during which Cambridge Analytica admits using the unethical methods that it had always denied. The Observer published an interview with Cambridge Analytica's employee Christopher Wylie in which the described the company’s work as a "grossly unethical experiment". Facebook suspended the account of Cambridge Analytica for "misuse" of customer data and confirmed that the data used by Cambridge Analytica came from Russian-born Cambridge University scientist Aleksandr Kogan. Finally, The New York Times discovered business ties between Cambridge Analytica and Russia, and The Wall Street Journal reported that Mueller requested Cambridge Analytica's internal documents. Basically, Cambridge Analytica had always lied about these two issues.

March 2018: The media learn from Russia that Trump congratulated Putin for his re-election, but did not condemn him for rigged elections and for the poisoning of a Russian defector in Britain

March 2018: Ralph Peters, a Fox News strategic analyst, and a retired lieutenant colonel in the US Army, resignes with a letter that accused "Fox has degenerated from providing a legitimate and much-needed outlet for conservative voices to a mere propaganda machine for a destructive and ethically ruinous administration" and that accused Fox News's prime-time anchors of "dismissing facts and empirical reality to launch profoundly dishonest assaults on the F.B.I., the Justice Department, the courts, the intelligence community (in which I served) and, not least, a model public servant and genuine war hero such as Robert Mueller."

March 2018: In a television interview, former CIA chief John Brennan, an expert on Putin's Russia, speculates that Putin "may have something on Trump". Reminder: the Steele dossier that Trump and his mouthpiece Fox News continually escoriated had been proven mostly right on target except for a sex video mentioned in that report that never surfaced.

March 2018: Putin boasts on Russian television that new Russian weapons will render NATO defenses "completely useless": the Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile, the Avangard hypersonic missile system; the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM); the Poseidon underwater drone; and the Kinzhal hypersonic missile. He demonstrates a simulated missile
• March 2018: Two Russian spies poison Sergei Skripal, a former spy who escaped to Britain, with a Soviet-era nerve agent called Novichok.
• September 2018: British prime minister tells parliament that the investigation into the Skripal poisoning discovered that the two Russian spies who poisoned Skripal are active officers in Russia's intelligence agency GRU that reports directly to Putin (the same agency charged in July by US prosecutors with hacking the Democratic Party's computers during the 2016 presidential campaign). Then the Swiss newspaper Tages-Anzeiger reveals that two (different) Russian spies expelled a few days earlier by the Netherlands had been plotting cyber sabotage of the Swiss laboratory where the investigators analyzed the poison. The lab is used by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which monitors compliance with a global treaty on chemical weapons. Trump does not comment with a single word.

• March 2018: Trump picks radical right-wing politician and Fox News
contributor John Bolton as national security adviser. An article in the Guardian reveals that Bolton collaborated with Cambridge Analytica in 2014. John Bolton's organization paid Cambridge Analytica $1,152,299. Only four other campaign organizations paid Cambridge Analytica more than Bolton's before 2017: Make America Number 1, which is backed by the billionaire founder of Cambridge Analytica, Robert Mercer ($1,476,484); Cruz For President ($5,805,552); and Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. ($5,912,500).

- April 2018: The FBI raids the offices of Trump's attorney Michael Cohen and discovers that one of his other clients is Sean Hannity, Trump's main supporter on Fox News.
- April 2018: James Comey, the former FBI chief fired by Trump for refusing to end the Russian investigation, publishes his book of memoirs in which he calls Trump "unethical, untethered to truth". Based on Trump's own fear of it, Comey now believes that the video mentioned in Steele's dossier might indeed exist.
- April 2018: The New York Times reports about Trump's dubious business ties to Russia, which may have saved him when he was bankrupt and no legitimate bank was willing to loan him money. All of this was already in my old article What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?.

April 2018: After his name is disclosed during the investigation on Trump's attorney Michael Cohen, radical right-wing TV host Sean Hannity makes the mistake of publicly stating that he never paid Cohen. If Hannity did not pay Cohen, why was Cohen so desperate to hide Hannity's name? Could it be that it was Cohen who paid Hannity? Could it be that Trump has been paying Hannity all this time to keep up the pro- Trump propaganda on Fox News?
April 2018: The New York Times reveals that Veselnitskaya recanted her earlier denials of Russian government ties. During an interview on NBC News, she acknowledges that she worked for Yuri Chaika, Russia's prosecutor general. It was already known that her talking points for the Trump Tower meeting were exactly the same point of a confidential memorandum circulated by Chaika to his assistants. Obviously the Trump Tower meeting was not about adoption of children, as originally claimed, but about how Russia could help the Trump campaign.

April 2018: A Rolling Stone magazine article titled "Michael Cohen's Criminal Ties" quotes Kenneth McCallion, a former prosecutor who investigated Russian criminal money: "Trump's genius - or evil genius - was, instead of Russian criminal money being passive, incidental income, it became a central part of his business plan. It's not called 'Little Moscow' for nothing. The street signs are in Russian. But his towers there were built specifically for the Russian middle-class criminal."

May 2018: BuzzFeed details how the Trump clan actively pursued business
ties with Russia during the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump wanted to build the tallest building in Europe, the 100-story Trump World Tower Moscow, and his people were negotiating the deal at the same time that Russian agents were working to influence US public opinion in Trump's favor. This clearly contradicts what Trump repeatedly stated and tweeted, e.g.: "I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH RUSSIA - NO DEALS, NO LOANS, NO NOTHING!" (January 2017).

May 2018: Trump’s lawyer Michael Cohen is investigated for the "hush money" that he paid to porn star Stormy Daniels, but a New York Times article also reveals a shady business empire run by what many called "Trump's consigliere" (a reference to the Italian mob). Quote: "many of his associates have faced criminal charges".

May 2018: The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Republican senator Richard Burr of North Carolina, publicly declares that "there is no reason to dispute that Russia favored Trump" in the presidential elections of 2016.
May 2018: Rex Tillerson (Trump's former secretary of state) delivers a speech in which he says: "If our leaders seek to conceal the truth, or we as people become accepting of alternative realities that are no longer grounded in facts, then we as American citizens are on a pathway to relinquishing our freedom".

May 2018: Trump announces that he wants to dismantle the nuclear agreement with Iran, a fact that sends oil prices surging and therefore rescues the Russian economy (oil is the main export of Russia).

May 2018: A New York Times article reveals the August 2016 meeting between Donald Trump’s son Donald Jr and an emissary of Saudi Arabia and UAE with the purpose of planning an anti-Iranian campaign, precisely what has just happened with Trump dismantling the nuclear agreement.
May 2018: The investigation into the July 2014 crash over Ukraine of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur that killed all 298 people on board returns a verdict: Russia was directly involved in the downing of the airplane. Over the years Trump has repeatedly defended Russia and this time too he avoids any comments. Trump's mouthpiece Fox News hardly report the news that is making headlines all over the world.

May 2018: During a MSNBC interview, former deputy attorney general Sally Yates says that "Trump has taken the assault on the rule of law to a new level".

May 2018: As Donald Trump launches a smearing campaign against the FBI that is closing in on his associates, the ranking Republican senator who oversees the FBI, Trey Gowdy, states on Fox News that "the FBI did exactly what my fellow citizens would want them to do when they got the information they got".

May 2018: Trump enacts tariffs on steel imports that mostly punish NATO, Asian and Southamerican allies (the European Union, Canada, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil and Japan), coincidentally undermining all US alliances that Russia dislikes. Trump is de facto dismantling precisely the alliances that Putin has always ranted against.
June 2018: After eight months of denials, Trump's lawyers finally admit that Trump dictated his son's false statements about the meeting with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya.

April 2018: Trump hires a new personal attorney, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, an old friend of Trump with a 30-year history of quashing probes into Trump's shady business deals. In 1988 then US attorney Rudy Giuliani quashed an investigation into the financing of Trump Tower and made an alleged case of money-laundering against Trump disappear.

June 2018: Trump's new attorney Rudy Giuliani claims that "our recollections change all the time" to justify Trump's frequent contradictions, and that Trump has the right to obstruct justice because the department of justice reports to him. Trump tweets that, if indicted, he has the power to pardon himself: "I have the absolute right to pardon myself" (just like any dictator of banana republics). Giuliani laments that the investigation against Trump is led by "13 Democrats" and laments "they couldn't find anybody else?" (But the leading investigator, Robert Mueller, is a Republican and a decorated Marine, and no names have been provided for the "13 Democrats" who would be behind this investigation). Giuliani later states that legally Trump could have killed Comey, instead of just firing him, and still not be prosecuted. This is as close as it gets to admitting guilty and mounting a defense strategy.
June 2018: Before the G7 meeting with the other Western powers, Trump publicly calls for Russia to be invited to the meeting (note: Russia, not China, not India, not Brazil, not even Spain or Poland, just Russia) and blames Barack Obama (not Putin) for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

- June 2018: Robert Mueller accuses Manafort of obstruction of justice and also indicts Manafort’s long-time business partner Konstantin Kilimnik, widely considered a middleman for Ukraine’s Party of Regions (now discredited as a criminal organization) and possibly a Russian spy.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself, but why would I do that when I have done nothing wrong? In the meantime, the never ending Witch Hunt, led by 13 very Angry and Conflicted Democrats (& others) continues into the mid-terms!

6:35 AM - Jun 4, 2018

30.1K people are talking about this
- June 2018: Clearly worried about what might surface about his involvement in the Russia Collusion scandal, Fox commentator Sean Hannity publicly urges Trump associates to destroy the evidence of their contacts with Russia.

- June 2018: The World Cup opens in Russia, another personal political victory for Vladimir Putin.
- July 2018: After a 16-month investigation, the Senate Intelligence Committee (mostly Republican senators) agree with the FBI, NSA and CIA that Russia helped Trump in the 2016 elections.

- July 2018: The NATO meeting ends with precisely the result desired by Putin: Trump insults the allies and sows discord. Notably, Trump singles out Angela Merkel, who is widely considered Putin's most disliked politician of the ones still in power. This comes just one week before Trump meets Putin, showing strong differences between allies.
July 2018: The Department of Justice charges 12 Russians (mostly working for the Russian military intelligence agency GRU) with hacking the servers of the Democratic Party to sabotage Hillary Clinton's campaign. It also reveals that the hacking of the Democratic Party server happened on the very same day that Donald Trump said live on television "I will tell you this, Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing". The 29-page indictment details multiple Russian operations to including the theft of data about half a million voters. (Note: the Fox News website does not report the event that is making headlines all over the world). Trump's reaction to the indictment of 12 Russian agents was to criticize Obama, not Russia. Quote: "These Russian individuals did their work during the Obama years. Why didn't Obama do something about it?" (For the record, this is not true: as punishment for Russia's interference in US elections, Obama imposed sanctions on Russian individuals, expelled 35 Russian diplomats and closed two Russian buildings in the USA).

July 2018: A few days after having insulted European leaders from Britain to France, Trump meets with Russia's president Putin in Finland and speaks with open admiration of Putin. During an explosive news conference, Trump attacks the FBI, CIA and NSA and defends Russia, absolving Russia not only of interference in the US elections but also of its annexation of Crimea, of its invasion of eastern Ukraine, of its support for the Assad regime in Syria, of its assassination of exiled dissidents, and of its violations of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Former CIA's chief John Brennan tweets "Not only were Trump’s comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin." Republican senator John McCain tweets: "No prior president has ever abased himself more abjectly before a tyrant". Former FBI Director James Comey, a lifelong Republican, tweets: "Patriots need to stand up and reject..."
the behavior of this president". Former director of national intelligence James Clapper (who served under Republican presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush) tells an interviewer that "I really do wonder if the Russians have something on him." Republican representative Will Hurd writes in the New York Times: "Over the course of my career as an undercover officer in the C.I.A., I saw Russian intelligence manipulate many people, I never thought I would see the day when an American president would be one of them." Steve Hall, a former CIA operative in Russia, tells an interviewer: "Before the Helsinki summit I was not prepared to go to the darkest corner in the room and say there is compromising information on Donald Trump." Former CIA chief Leon Panetta: "I have never in my lifetime seen an administration that is presenting such a confused message when it comes to a national security threat".

**Trump sides with Russia against FBI at Helsinki summit**

![Image of Trump and Putin at Helsinki summit](image1)

**Putin eats Trump's lunch in Helsinki -- This is no way to win against Russia**

![Image of Putin and Trump](image2)

**Trump's day of infamy**

![Image of Trump and Putin](image3)
Colbert says Trump's meeting with Putin should count as 'treason'

Trump Shows the World
He's Putin's Lackey
Maybe the president is exactly as compromised as he looks.

'Bizarre' and 'shameful': Republicans lead responses to Trump news conference with Putin

The moment called for Trump to stand up for America. He chose to bow
July 2018: Trump's view of history is simple: "Our relationship with Russia has NEVER been worse thanks to many years of U.S. foolishness and stupidity". Leftists and anti-Americans all over the world rejoice: that's what they had been claiming for 70 years.
July 2018: Tapes that Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen secretly produced prove that Trump knew and approved Cohen's payment to model Karen McDougal to cover up their extramarital affair (Trump originally denied even knowing of the payment, let alone approving it). Not directly relevant to the Russia investigation, but it proves that Trump is a shameless liar. Trump's reaction is to threaten both the FBI and Cohen.

July 2018: A Gallup poll finds that the percentage of Republicans who perceive Russia as a friend has doubled since 2014 from 22% to 40%, a major win for Russia.

July 2018: Michael Cohen testifies that Donald Trump knew beforehand of
the meeting between his son and Russian agent Natalia Veselnitskaya (unlike what Trump always claimed).

- July 2018: After stonewalling for two years that there was no collusion with Russia, both Trump (in a tweet) and his lawyer Giuliani (on television) claim that collusion is not a crime.

- August 2018: After stonewalling for one year that the Trump Tower meeting with Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya was not about Russia's intention to smear Hillary Clinton, Trump finally tweets that it was precisely that and claims that there is nothing wrong with it.

- August 2018: Trump terminates ex-CIA head John Brennan's security access (a highly unusual act), despite the fact that Brennan has never been faulted with any security breach (ironically citing Brennan's "erratic conduct and behaviour", which is precisely what Trump is known for). This happens on the very same day that the world media report remarks made in Switzerland by US diplomat Yleem Poblete about a new mysterious Russian satellite orbiting
the Earth and apparently able to damage US satellites.

- August 2018: Paul Manafort's begins amid an atmosphere more typical of mafia trials: both the judge and the jurors receive death threats. (So did I, by the way).

- August 2018: Microsoft announces that it has foiled a covert operation by Russian hackers (the same "Fancy Bear" group that hacked the Democratic National Committee's website in 2016) intent on hacking websites of some senators and think tanks that have advocated sanctions against Russia. The think tanks include the Hudson Institute (that runs the Kleptocracy Initiative) and the International Republican Institute (that promotes democracy around the world). Both are conservative groups much closer to the Republican Party than the Democratic Party.

- August 2018: Two simultaneous legal developments. Trump's ex-campaign manager Paul Manafort is found guilty of fraud, and Trump's ex-attorney Michael Cohen admits that Trump asked him to arrange secret payments to a porn star and to a model to hide extramarital affairs. Manafort's crimes were
committed before he started working for Trump, and only show Trump’s poor judgment and his tendency to hire pro-Russian advisors. Cohen’s confession is more serious because, according to US law, the payments amount to breaking campaign finance law. In 2011 a federal grand jury indicted a presidential candidate, John Edwards, for the exact same reason: paying "hush money" to cover up an extramarital affair. For the record, Cohen pleaded guilty to five counts of tax evasion, one count of making false statements to a financial institution, one count of willfully causing an unlawful corporate contribution, one count of making an excessive campaign contribution at the request of a candidate or campaign. Manafort was found guilty on eight charges of tax fraud, bank fraud and failing to disclose foreign banks accounts (he using 31 foreign bank accounts in three different countries to evade taxes on millions of dollars).

August 2018: Craig Unger's book "House of Trump, House of Putin" details 59 Trump links to the Russian mafia

August 2018: Alen Weisselberg, the CEO of the Trump Organization (the
man who knows exactly what money comes in and goes out), is granted immunity to testify in the Michael Cohen case.

August 2018: Washington lobbyist Samuel Patten pleads guilty to acting as an unregistered foreign lobbyist, and admits funneling an unnamed pro-Russian Ukrainian oligarch’s money to Donald Trump’s presidential inaugural committee, funneling the money secretly through a Cypriot bank account. Patten also admitted working for Kilimnik, the Russian associated of Paul Manafort with ties to the Russian military intelligence. (It is no secret that several Russian oligarchs donated to the Trump campaign and inauguration, but there is no clear reason why).

September 2018: A Gallup poll shows that 68% of the US electorate regard Trump as less ethical than Ronald Reagan, 58% as less ethical than Barack Obama, 52% as less ethical than Bill Clinton, and 43% as less ethical than Richard Nixon.

September 2018: The New York Times publishes an article by an anonymous official of the Trump government reveals how Trump’s collaborators conspire to protect the country from Trump’s "worst inclinations". Quotes: "The root of the problem is the president's amorality... Trump's impulses are generally anti-trade and anti-democratic... Trump shows a preference for autocrats and dictators, such as President Vladimir Putin of Russia and North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un." It also reveals that some in the Trump government would like to invoke the 25th amendment of the constitution that allows the vice-president and a majority of the government's secretaries to remove a president who is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office". This comes one day after Bob Woodward's new book on the Trump government ("Fear: Trump in the White
House") quotes top officials as conspiring in an "administrative coup d'etat" to protect the nation from Trump. As usual, Trump's response is to deny everything.

- October 2018: Russian spies are accused of a series of cyber-plots across the globe. The Netherlands accused four Russians of targeting the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which has been probing the chemical attack in Britain, and accused other Russians of targeting the investigation into the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014 by a Russian missile. Britain government accused the Russian secret services of targeting the US Democratic Party. The US justice department accused seven Russian agents of targeting, among other things, the nuclear energy company Westinghouse. Trump's reaction is to say absolutely nothing and instead to launch a smearing campaign against China, accusing China, not Russia, of election meddling (See Why Trump Slapped Sanctions on China). Trump addressing the United Nations Security Council: "They do not want me or us to win because I am the first president to ever challenge China on trade". His vice-president Mike Pence in a speech to the Hudson Institute a few days later: China "has initiated an unprecedented effort to influence American public opinion, the 2018 elections and the environment leading into the 2020 presidential elections." They
provided no evidence, of course.

October 2018: The New York Times reveals that in 2016 a member of the Trump campaign, Rick Gates, approached the Israeli firm Psy-Group, which is staffed by former Israeli intelligence operatives, to launch a broad effort, codenamed “Project Rome”, of fake news about Republican primary opponents of Trump for the purpose of swaying the votes of the 5,000 delegates to the 2016 Republican National Convention. While this is unrelated to the Russian investigation, it shows that the Trump campaign was interested in precisely what Russia delivered to them.

October 2018: The US department of justice accuses Elena Khusyaynova of waging "information warfare against the United States." Since 2014 she has been the chief accountant for Project Lakhta, an operation based in Russia and funded by Russian oligarch Evgeny Viktorovich Prigozhin, a friend of Vladimir Putin (nicknamed “Putin’s cook” because he became a billionaire with food-catering companies). Project Lakhta was behind the social-media
campaign to disparage Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential campaign. After Trump's election, Project Lakhta has pushed fake news that praise Trump (for example praising the president for "wiping away $22 billion in regulations in his first five months") and disparage also Trump's opponents within the Republican Party such as John McCain ("an old geezer who has lost it and who long ago belonged in a home for the elderly"), themes that were then routinely amplified on Fox News. Project Lakhta is now attempting to influence the forthcoming November elections in favor of pro-Trump right-wing candidates.

November 2018: Trump fires his attorney general Jeff Sessions, whom Trump often held responsible for not stopping the investigation into the Russia- Trump collusion scandal. Trump replaces him with Matt Whitaker whom he calls “a very respected man” while Forbes (hardly a left-wing magazine) reports that said Whitaker served on the board of World Patent Marketing, a Florida-based “scam that has bilked thousands of consumers out of millions of dollars,” according to a complaint filed by the Federal Trade Commission, and that said Whitaker threatened at least one victim who complained. In August 2017 a federal court shut down the company due to its fraudulent activities (quote: “The record supports a preliminary finding that Defendants devised a fraudulent scheme to use consumer funds to enrich themselves”). His qualifications are therefore dubious at best but he has been a critic of the investigation into the Russia-Trump collusion from the beginning.
November 2018: British general Mark Carleton-Smith, the chief of Britain's army, declares that Russia presents "indisputably far greater threat" to Britain's national security than Islamic terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and IS.
November 2018: **German police raid Deutsche Bank** based on information in the Panama Papers that the bank may have been involved in money laundering via a subsidiary in the British Virgin Islands. Deutsche Bank was the only bank in the world willing to lend money to Trump when he was virtually bankrupt at about the same time that these dubious transactions were going on. The bank was fined in 2017 as part of a Russian money-laundering scheme that involved its Moscow and New York branches. Deutsche Bank has always refused to disclose documents requested by Democratic lawmakers related to its relationship with Trump.

November 2018: Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen **admits lying to Congress** about Trump's efforts in 2016 to build a Trump Tower in Moscow, just at the time when Russia started sabotaging Hillary Clinton's campaign. This confirms what was written in the Steele dossier: “the Kremlin’s cultivation operation” of the candidate included offers of “various lucrative
real estate development deals in Russia... Trump’s previous efforts had included exploring the real estate sector in St Petersburg as well as Moscow.”

December 2018: Former FBI chief James Comey asks in vain to testify in public and only reluctantly the Republicans grants him a closed-door but transcribed interview (they wanted to keep his testimony secret). The full transcript is later released. Comey repeats under oath his accusations against Trump and also states that the investigation into Donald Trump was kept secret during the 2016 presidential campaign (unlike the investigation into Hillary Clinton) because the Republican leaders Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan instructed him that way.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
JOINT WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: JAMES COMEY

Friday, December 7, 2018
• December 2018: Robert Mueller tells a judge that Michael Flynn has provided "substantial" help to his investigation into Russia election interference in 2016. and that Flynn should serve no jail time for his crimes.

• December 2018: Robert Mueller asks a judge for clemency towards Michael Cohen and his memo states that "the Moscow Project was a lucrative business opportunity that sought, and likely required, the assistance of the Russian government" and that "it occurred at a time of sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the U.S. presidential election."

• December 2018: Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen is sentenced to three years in prison for campaign-finance violations, tax fraud and lying to Congress about a proposed Trump Tower in Moscow. Trump dismisses Michael Cohen as a "weak person". Cohen responded (in court): "Recently, the president tweeted a statement calling me weak, and he was correct, but for a much different reason than he was implying - it was because time and
time again I felt it was my duty to cover up his dirty deeds rather than to listen to my own inner voice and my moral compass."

- December 2018: Maria Butina pleads guilty of infiltrating the NRA and the Republican Party on behalf of Russia.

- December 2018: So far the investigations found that at least 16 Trump associates had contacts with Russians during the election year 2016 and that Trump in person was trying to get a contract to build a skyscraper in Moscow. In February 2017 Trump had said: "I have nothing to do with Russia. To the best of my knowledge no person that I deal with does".

- December 2018: The Senate Intelligence Committee, dominated by Republicans, issues two reports that detail the Russian operations during the 2016 campaign. Both reports show, yet again, that Russia aimed to sway public opinion towards Trump (or, equivalently, against Hillary Clinton). One report was compiled by Texas cybersecurity firm New Knowledge in collaboration with Columbia University and Canfield Research; the other one by Oxford University and big-data firm Graphika. The Russian project was run by the St Petersburg firm Internet Research Agency, which is owned by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close ally of Vladimir Putin.

- December 2018: Trump orders the withdrawal of the USA from Syria, sparking the resignations defense secretary Jim Mattis and other officials. The USA's withdrawal is precisely what Russia wants. Senator Chris Coons
called Trump’s decision “a great big Christmas gift” to the leaders of Russia and Iran.

January 2019: A New York Times report reveals that in May 2017, after Trump fired FBI’s director James Comey, the FBI’s counterintelligence division opened an investigation on whether Trump was a national security threat, deliberately working for Russia or unwittingly fallen under Russia’s influence. FBI’s general counsel James Baker was concerned that firing Comey constituted both obstruction of justice and cover for Russia’s espionage. Quote: "Not only would it be an issue of obstructing an investigation, but the obstruction itself would hurt our ability to figure out what the Russians had done, and that is what would be the threat to national security”.

January 2019: A Washington Post investigation reveals that Trump went “to extraordinary lengths to conceal details of his conversations with Vladimir Putin”. And: "US officials said there is no detailed record, even in classified files, of Trump’s face-to-face interactions with the Russian leader at five locations over the past two years."

January 2019: The New York Times reports that Trump discussed pulling the USA out of NATO several times with his staff. There is hardly anything that Putin desires more than the dissolution of NATO.
January 2019: Belarusian model Anastasia Vashukevich, who claimed to have evidence of Russia-Trump collusion, is deported by Thailand to Russia and is immediately arrested upon her arrival in Moscow. She is released after she turns all her material over to Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska, a close ally of Putin.

January 2019: Political strategist Roger Stone, a long-time ally of Donald Trump, is arrested on charges of obstruction of justice, false statements and witness-tampering related to the Russian hack into the server of the Democratic Party. Stone is the 34th person to be charged by the Mueller investigation: 12 Russian military officers, 13 other Russian nationals, 3 Russian organizations (notably the Internet Research Agency) and six members of Trump's inner circle (Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort, Michael Cohen, George Papadopoulos, Richard Pinedo and now Roger Stone). But Stone is the first US citizen arrested for crimes directly related to pro-Trump Russian hacking.

January 2019: During the annual "Worldwide Threat Assessment" report to the Senate, Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence, commented on the 42-page threat report: ISIS has NOT been defeated (ISIS "still commands thousands of fighters in Iraq and Syria" and maintains branches around the world), contrary to what Trump claimed ("we have won against ISIS, we've beaten them, and we've beaten them badly"); Trump’s trade policies and
unilateralism have strained traditional alliances and sent allies to seek new alliances (basically, a gift to Russia); North Korea is not surrendering its capability to strike the USA with nuclear weapons ("North Korea will seek to retain its W.M.D. capability and is unlikely to completely give up its nuclear weapons and production capability"), contrary to what Trump claimed ("there is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea"); while, instead, Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons ("We do not believe Iran is currently undertaking the key activities we judge necessary to produce a nuclear device"), contrary to what Trump claimed (Iran is "on the cusp of acquiring the world's most dangerous weapons"); and never mentioned the Mexican border as a threat to the security of the USA, contrary to what Trump keeps repeating (he wants to build a wall along that border). Gina Haspel, the CIA director, testifies to the Senate that North Korea "is committed to developing a long-range nuclear-armed missile that would pose a direct threat to the United States", and that Iran has so far complied with the 2015 nuclear agreement (that Trump scrapped).

- January 2019: Trump defends the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 ("The reason Russia was in Afghanistan was because terrorists were going into Russia... They were right to be there"). No other US president ever endorsed any Soviet invasion, and Trump's fanciful version of history drew widespread mockery from Soviet experts.

- February 2019: Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen testifies in Congress that "He is a racist. He is a conman. He is a cheat." Cohen testifies that Trump instructed him to lie about his dealings with Russia. Cohen also provides evidence that Trump threatened his high school and colleges not to release his grades. Cohen testifies that Trump "knew of and directed the Trump Moscow negotiations throughout the campaign and lied about it" (Trump knew about efforts to build a Trump Tower in Russia at the time when
Trump was denying any contact with Russia). He testifies: "I never heard Mr. Trump say anything in private that led me to believe he loved our nation or wanted to make it better. In fact, he did the opposite." Cohen also testifies that convicted Russian mobster Felix Sater (whom Trump claimed not to remember) had an office near Trump's office in Trump Tower and was not asked to pay rent. However, Cohen testifies that he has no direct evidence of Russian collusion. Quote: "I do not. I want to be clear. But, I have my suspicions."

- March 2019: Paul Manafort is sentenced to 47 months in prison
- March 2019: The New York Times publishes details of Trump's dealings with Deutsche Bank, a bank that has a history of laundering criminal Russian money. I already wrote most of this in 2016. See my old article What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?

- March 2019: Robert Mueller delivers his investigation to attorney general Barr, appointed by Donald Trump. Barr falsely summarizes Mueller's conclusions as: neither Donald Trump nor any of his aides conspired or coordinated with the Russian government's 2016 election interference. Barr promises to publish the full report. Reports immediately surface that members of the Mueller team are upset by Barr's "summary" (de facto, a distortion of the truth). Paul Rosenzweig, law professor at George Washington University, writes: "the excerpts of the report contained in Barr's original summary letter are at best a favorable spin on the report and at worst a rather transparent effort to mislead the public in advance of the report's release." Weeks later, a letter by Robert Mueller to William Barr is made public in which Mueller accuses Barr of creating "public confusion about critical aspects of the results of our investigation" and that Barr's summary
"did not fully capture the context, nature and substance of this office’s work and conclusions". In other words, Mueller accused Barr of distorting the facts.

- March 2019: Russia sends military advisers to Venezuela and Trump, who had been so far very vocal about Venezuela, stops calling for Venezuela’s dictator Maduro to step down.
April 2019: When Democrats use a little-known rule to demand that the IRS disclose Trump's tax return, Trump's lawyer William Consovoy writes a lengthy note to the Treasury Department to stop the proceeding. Not only is Trump the first president or presidential candidate in memory to refuse to disclose his tax returns, but he still goes to an incredible extent to make sure that the IRS doesn't release them (See What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?)

April 2019: The Mueller report is published (although about 10% is omitted) and concludes that "The Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion. And, yet, Trump does not condemn Russia, does not say a single word against Putin, does not advocate any measure to punish Russia, and does not demand a plan to prevent that this happens again in the next elections. The Mueller report documents more than 140 suspicious contacts between Trump's campaign and Russians. The Mueller report also documents a systematic pattern of lying by Trump, and of asking others to lie for him (not the behavior of someone who has nothing to hide). The Mueller report also documents how Trump systematically weakened the US democracy (Russia's ultimate goal) and in particular all of the US law enforcement agencies, basically making it easier for Russia to continue its anti-American operations. No Russia spy could have done a better job for Putin. Mueller explicitly states "that the Russian government perceived it would benefit from a Trump presidency and worked to secure that outcome, and that the Campaign expected it would benefit electorally from information stolen and released through Russian efforts." This is no more and no less than what this website and many other websites have been writing from the beginning, and what Trump and the
radical right-wing media have been calling "fake news" and "witch hunt".

Trump's attorney general William Barr lied when he wrote that the Mueller report does not show collusion. It does not prove it "beyond any reasonable doubt" (the standard chosen by Mueller in the preface) but it does show plenty of it. The Mueller report de facto encourages Congress to impeach Trump and, while admitting that a sitting president cannot be indicted, encourages the law to prosecute him after he leaves office. In fact, the Mueller report is structured as a collection of evidence to be used against Trump after he leaves office, when he will be liable to be indicted, tried and sentenced for his crimes. Jed Handelsman Shugerman, law professor at Fordham, writes: "The key points are that the report should not be interpreted as disproving the core Russian allegations. The opposite appears true, even with the redactions: it shows illegal coordination and conspiracy by a preponderance of the evidence. And this evidence is relevant for further subpoenas, for an impeachment inquiry based on the Russian campaign and for proving obstruction with corrupt intent beyond a reasonable doubt." David Cole writes: "Robert Mueller’s report lays out in meticulous detail both a blatantly illegal effort by Russia to throw the 2016 presidential election to Donald Trump and repeated efforts by President Trump to end, limit, or impede Mueller’s investigation of Russian interference... The report dispassionately lays out the facts, which are an indictment in all but name... The results are devastating for Trump. The report portrays a consistent pattern of deception and repeated efforts to impede the Mueller investigation."

April 2019: Following the publication of part of Mueller’s report, that show widespread corruption and lying in Trump’s entourage, and revealed the scope of the Russian operation to help Trump during the 2016 election and detailed his attempts to obstruct the investigation, Trump unleashes a flurry of moves to block multiple congressional investigations and even forbids the former White House counsel Donald F. McGahn II from testifying. Besides not being the behavior of someone who has nothing to lose, this tactic also protects Russia from further revelations about the Russian coup to install a Russian operative as president of the USA.
April 2019: Donald Trump and his family sue Deutsche Bank and Capital One to stop them from handing over his financial records to the Congress of the USA. Deutsche Bank is the subject of multiple investigations into laundering of "dirty" Russian money, and is the only bank that was willing to lend money to Trump when Trump was basically bankrupt. See "What's in Trump's Tax Returns".

May 2019: Within a few days, Trump's allies unleash a series of measures aimed at stopping any further discussion of the Trump-Russia collusion scandal. Trump's attorneys instruct former White House counsel Donald McGahn not to deliver documents subpoenaed by the House of Representatives to investigate Trump's business, and later Trump orders McGahn to refuse to testify before Congress (McGahn is cited more than any other witness in the Mueller report). At the same time, Trump's treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin denies a request for Trump's tax records from Richard Neal, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. At the same time, Trump blocks the publication of the full "unredacted" (i.e. uncensored) Mueller report.
May 2019: A New York times investigation reveals that Trump lost more than one billion dollars between 1985 and 1994. His casinos and hotels lost money every single year. Other documents show that in 1995 Trump lost $915.7 million. The question, of course, is how could someone become so rich after losing so much money for such a long time.

May 2019: After Barr's testimony to the senate, which is widely viewed as a cover-up for the collusion scandal, Robert Mueller is summoned to testify in Congress and Trump tries to stop him from testifying.
May 2019: Unopposed by the USA, that has never taken action against Russia's meddling in elections since Trump became president, Russia is targeting Europe's 2019 elections just like it did in previous ones. For example, The New York Times reports that "a constellation of websites and social media accounts linked to Russia or far-right groups is spreading disinformation, encouraging discord and amplifying distrust in the centrist parties that have governed for decades." While widely reported and investigated in Europe, this massive Russian campaign of interference in Europe's politics is minimized by the radical right-wing media affiliated with Trump.

The New York Times

May 12, 2019

Russia Is Targeting Europe's Elections. So Are Far-Right Copycats.

May 2019: After viewing the evidence in Mueller's report, Republican representative Justin Amash becomes the first Republican politician to call for Trump's impeachment, stating: "1. Attorney General Barr has deliberately misrepresented Mueller's report. 2. President Trump has engaged in impeachable conduct. 3. Partisanship has eroded our system of checks and balances. 4. Few members of Congress have read the report."
May 2019: A New York Times investigation reveals that in 2016 and 2017 the unit of anti-money laundering specialists at Deutsche Bank detected suspicious transactions with Russia involving Trump as well as others involving Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, which resulted in multiple reports by the Special Investigations Unit, but the bank's management blocked the internal investigations, fired at least one of the specialists, and refused to disclose the findings to US authorities. Deutsche Bank has been punished in Europe and the USA for its role in laundering dirty Russian money. Deutsche Bank is also the only bank that loaned money to the Trump family when Trump was de facto bankrupt. Trump's lawyers have sued Deutsche Bank to block it from disclosing Trump's transactions.

May 2019: Trump grants his attorney general William Barr “full and complete authority” to declassify top-secret CIA information related to the investigations of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. This would expose the Russian informants who have helped the USA spy on Putin, so that Putin can dispose of them.

May 2019: Trump fires Marie Yovanovitch as US ambassador in Ukraine. She had been known for fighting against Ukrainian corruption. She not only loses her post, but she also becomes the victim of a smear campaign by Trump's new personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

May 2019: Federal judge Dabney Freidrich, trying the case of Concord Management and Consulting (the firm controlled by a Russian oligarch Yevgeniy Prigozhin and accused by Robert Mueller of conspiring against the USA), rebukes Mueller for failing to prove that the Russia government was behind the Russian troll farm known as the Internet Research Agency.

May 2019: Robert Mueller finally speaks to the public. He clearly states that Russia plotted to damage Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign (which has
always been the starting point of this webpage of mine). Mueller said: "There was insufficient evidence to charge a broader conspiracy". His "insufficient evidence" is hardly the "total exoneration" that Trump claimed. The instructions given to Mueller were specifically NOT to indict the president. Quote: "Charging the president with a crime was therefore not an option we could consider". And he hinted that only Congress has the authority to formally charge a sitting president. But then he felt he had to add: "If we had confidence that the President did not commit a crime, we would have said so."

**Mueller, in First Comments on Russia Inquiry, Declines to Clear Trump**

FOX NEWS ANCHOR SAYS MUELLER REMARKS DISPUTE 'NO COLLUSION, NO OBSTRUCTION' TRUMP CLAIMS

Mueller: ‘If We Had Confidence That the President Did Not Commit a Crime, We Would Have Said So’

- July 2019: As right-wing radical Boris Johnson becomes the (unelected) prime minister of Britain, Donald Trump pressures him to leave the European Union without any deal, the same outcome favored by Russia.
- July 2019: Meanwhile, after Putin sent soldiers to Venezuela, Trump has completely stopped talking about Venezuela’s crisis and de facto accepted the Russian-supported government.
- July 2019: Meanwhile, Trump has threatened Iran with obliteration, thereby stoking the oil market, thereby boosting Russia’s economy which relies massively on the price of oil.
- July 2019: Democrats organize a Congressional hearing to discuss Trump’s obstruction of justice during the Mueller investigation. Somehow nobody seems to care that the Mueller investigation did not disclose Trump's tax returns (and whatever secret is buried in it), that Trump refused to be interviewed (presumably for fear of committing perjury), and that Trump and his team lied over and over again in public. Democrats mainly focus on the fact that Trump tried everything to stop the Mueller investigation, including intimidation (obstruction of justice is an impeachable offence). Mueller confirms that Trump's past or continuing business dealings with Russia, and whether Russians laundered money through Trump businesses, were outside the scope of his investigation (see What’s in "Vladimir" Trump’s tax returns?). However, the most powerful moment of Mueller's testimony is possibly the statement that: "Over the course of my career I have seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's effort to interfere in our election is among the most serious". The fact that Putin
wanted Hillary Clinton to lose the elections, and why, is not discussed at all. (Reminder: my investigation and this whole webpage are about Putin's desperate attempts to keep Hillary Clinton from becoming president).

**Trump was not exonerated by my report, Robert Mueller tells Congress**

- July 2019: To be fair, the best critique of the whole "Russiagate" is written by Aaron Mate in the Nation.
- July 2019: An audio tape released by Buzzfeed, in which the Lega party of Italy's nationalist leader Matteo Salvini negotiates a deal with Putin emissaries in October 2018, provides the first evidence of Russia's clandestine campaign to fund European nationalist parties.
- July 2019: Trump fires intelligence chief Dan Coats who refused to modify the report on Russia's interference in the 2020 elections, the N.I.E. (see for example this article).
- August 2019: Several experts note how the only country that truly benefits from Trump's trade wars is Russia. See for example *Trump’s Trade War With China Makes Russia Great Again* written by Benn Steil and Benjamin Della Rocca for the Council on Foreign Relations (not exactly a left-wing publication) and Tom O'Connor's analysis of how *Trump’s trade war is bringing Russia and China together* in Newsweek.
- August 2019: Trump again publicly calls for Russia to be invited to G7 meetings despite the fact that Russia's economy is much smaller than China's, India's, Brazil's (none of these countries is part of the G7), and in fact even smaller than Texas' economy; and despite the fact that Russia has not withdrawn from Crimea and eastern Ukraine (it was expelled as punishment for the invasion); and despite the fact that this proposal causes friction with the USA's allies. The European media are unanimous in portraying Trump as simply Putin's puppet.
August 2019: The Washington Times discovers that an official in the intelligence community has filed a formal whistleblower complaint with the inspector general of the intelligence community about a "promise" that Trump made to a foreign leader. Michael Atkinson, who is Intelligence Community Inspector General, determines that the complaint is a matter of "urgent concern". That is a legal threshold that should trigger notification to the House Intelligence Committee. The House Intelligence Committee demands to see the complaint but the Trump-appointed Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire refuses to turn over the complaint.

September 2019: Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton resigns, just one week after Russia criticized his trip to Eastern Europe in which he delivered blistering anti-Russian speeches. Russia's state TV channel Rossiya 1 praises the "firing" of John Bolton and so do several Russian officials close to Putin.

September 2019: Corey Lewandowski, the former Trump campaign manager, declines to answer most questions to Congress in the inquiry about whether the president obstructed justice in Robert Mueller's Russia probe.

September 2019: Impeachment proceedings begin against Donald Trump after it emerges that he urged Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky to revive discredited corruption allegations against his potential election rival Joe Biden (exactly what he did with Russia to hurt Hillary Clinton in 2016)

October 2019: Trump orders the withdrawal of US troops from Syria against the opinion of virtually every US politicians and military strategist. Russia's president Putin and Turkey's president Erdogan meet to split the area surrendered by the USA, and within days, Russian troops replace US troops. More than 11,000 Kurds died fighting alongside the US against ISIS, and Kurds we also the most reliable allies of the USA in the Iraqi war. Since August 2019 the USA had convinced the Kurds to dismantle their defenses and withdraw in a more vulnerable location, promising to protect them according to a "security mechanism" framework. This made it much easier for Turkey to strike them when Trump ordered the US troops to leave. This betrayal of a close ally seems to fulfil Putin's mission to demonstrate to the world that the USA is an unreliable partner. Which ally of the USA will ever trust again that the USA will stand by the alliance treaties it has signed? Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the third-ranking Republican in the House, tweeted: "Turkish troops preparing to invade Syria from the north, Russian-backed forces from the south, ISIS fighters attacking Raqqa. Impossible to understand why Trump is leaving America's allies to be slaughtered and enabling the return of ISIS." Lindsey Graham, a senator who has mostly
 sided with Trump: “This invasion will ensure the resurgence of ISIS in Syria, embolden America’s enemies including Al Qaeda, Iran, and Russia, and launch yet another endless conflict in what had been, until today, one of the most safe and stable areas of Syria and a region experimenting with the best model of local governance currently available in that war-torn country.”

- October 2019: The New York Times reports that Western intelligence agencies discover a unit called Unit 29155, commanded by Andrei Averyanov, a hero of the Chechen wars, of the Russian military intelligence agency G.R.U. that is responsible for the poisoning of Sergei Skripal in Britain in 2018, a destabilization campaign in Moldova in 2016, the poisoning of the arms dealer Emilian Gebrev in Bulgaria in 2015, and a thwarted coup in Montenegro in 2016. This is not the same unit involved in getting Trump elected in 2016 (that was Unit 74455) and not the same unit involved in the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (that was Unit 99450).

- October 2019: Just when Trump has launched a massive smear campaign against Democratic rival Joe Biden, a social media investigations company hired by Facebook (Graphika) discovers that Russian “trolls” funded by the Russian military intelligence agency G.R.U. (the same one involved in the disruption of the 2016 presidential elections) have launched a smear campaign on Facebook against the same Joe Biden.
October 2019: The Intelligence and Security Committee of the British Parliament delivers a report on Russia's interference in British elections prepared by intelligence services such as GCHQ, MI5 and MI6. It shows Russia’s influence during the campaign for the "Brexit" referendum in 2016 (Trump too started promoting Brexit in 2016).

October 2019: Soviet-born Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman are detained because they planned to funnel huge amounts of money in illegal campaign contributions from foreign donors to US government officials and political
action committees. They are close associates of Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani. The duo invested in a marijuana business and donated the maximum amount allowed by the law to the political campaigns Adam Laxalt and Wesley Duncan (both Republicans): Laxalt was the state's attorney general running for governor, while Duncan was running to succeed Laxalt. Apparently, the purpose of the donations was to help win marijuana retail licenses in Nevada. Giuliani was their consultant.

2 Giuliani Associates Arrested With One-Way Tickets at U.S. Airport

Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, associates of President Trump's personal lawyer, were part of the pressure campaign on Ukraine to investigate Democrats.

- November 2019: It emerges that Parnas paid a huge sum to Giuliani and that Parnas received the money from Dmytro Firtash, an Ukrainian energy tycoon close to Putin who is wanted by the USA on charges of bribery and is suspected by the FBI of working with the Russian mob. Giuliani offered to help Firtash avoid extradition to the USA in exchange for helping Trump in the next presidential election. Another Ukrainian tycoon, Ihor Kolomoisk, tells the press that he was pressured by Giuliani's team to cooperate in Giuliani's scheme in exchange for help in his legal battles in the USA (implying that Trump-appointed Barr was in the loop). It also emerges that, when Parnas and Fruman were arrested at the airport, they were about to fly to Austria, where they had arranged an interview by Fox News' host Sean Hannity with Ukraine's top prosecutor Viktor Shokin (Hannity's name keeps popping up in the Russia collusion story). See for example this New York Times article.

- November 2019: While not directly related to the Trump-Russia collusion case, an impeachment procedure against Trump is triggered by a phone call
that he made to the Ukrainian president, trying to bribe him into smearing Joe Biden. At the center of this new scandal is Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, whom several witnesses describe as intent in a sinister campaign of deception, notably at the expense of an ambassador hostile to Russia (in other words, Giuliani was helping Russia in Ukraine). Yet another amazing coincidence is that Trump is repeating a propaganda theme launched by Putin at a press conference of February 2017 that Ukraine is the one that interfered in US elections (Note: Ukraine is fighting a war against Russia that has invaded eastern Ukraine and annexed the Crimean peninsula). This fact also stands out in the testimony by a Russian expert who served under Trump, Fiona Hill, who confirms that Trump has been repeating a "conspiracy theory" invented by the Russian secret services (that Ukraine tried to influence the 2016 elections).

**Charges of Ukrainian Meddling? A Russian Operation, U.S. Intelligence Says**

Moscow has run a yearslong operation to blame Ukraine for its own 2016 election interference. Republicans have used similar talking points to defend President Trump in impeachment proceedings.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has been pushing false theories of Ukrainian interference since early 2017, according to American officials.

Nov. 22, 2019

Live updates: State Department official says Giuliani was engaged in a campaign ‘full of lies and incorrect information’ about former ambassador; Mulvaney subpoenaed

- November 2019: Donald Trump asks the Supreme Court to bar his accounting firm from turning over eight years of his tax returns to Manhattan prosecutors.

- November 2019: A federal court finds long-time Trump adviser Roger Stone
guilty of obstructing the congressional investigation on Trump-Russia collusion, lying to investigators under oath and intimidating witnesses. He is the sixth former Trump aide to be convicted in cases stemming from the investigation on the Trump-Russia collusion scandal. Stone appeals to Trump for a presidential pardon on the fascist conspiracy website Infowars.

- November 2019: Glenn Simpson and Peter Fritsch, the co-founders of Fusion GPS, the Washington firm that hired the former British spy Christopher Steele to research Trump’s ties to Russia, publish the book "Crime in Progress - Inside the Steele Dossier and the Fusion GPS Investigation of Donald Trump", a catalog of Trump's dealings with corrupt foreign players, particularly those from the former Soviet Union. (See for example The New Yorker's review of the book)

- January 2020: A BBC investigation unveils that the founder and leader of the neo-Nazi radical white Christian terrorist group The Base, Rinaldo Nazzaro, is based in Russia. In fact, Nazzaro and his Russian wife purchased a home in St Petersburg in July 2018, the same month to which the FBI dates the creation of The Base, which means that it was, from the beginning, a Russian-based operation.

- February 2020: Radio Sputnik, a channel of Russian propaganda, goes on the air in Kansas, promoting pro-Trump conspiracies.

- February 2020: The lawyer for Wikileaks' founder Julian Assange reveals that Trump offered to pardon Assange if Assange publicly stated that Russia was not behind the dump of Democratic Party documents that hurt Hillary
Clinton’s campaign in 2016.

- February 2020: Russia’s president Vladimir Putin spreads false information about covid-19, downplaying the health alarms, and Trump simply repeats his statements.
- February 2020: After the spy agencies of the USA reports that Russia was trying to help Trump win the 2020 election, Trump removes Joseph Maguire from head of national intelligence and appointed Richard Grenell, who has repeatedly tried to discredit Russia's accusers, and who immediately begings "overhauling" the US spy agencies, i.e. a Russian-style purge. Note that Grenell worked in the past on behalf of Iran and China. This is not a conspiracy theory: it was posted on his website, which he now removed but can still be seen on the Internet Archive: click here. Grenell also published a series of articles on www.foxnews.com praising the Eastern European oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc who is now a blacklisted fugitive facing jail for corruption. Ironically, one of those articles was titled (quote) "Russia meddles in our elections". As of February 2020, the article is still visible (Fox News seems to be removing the old articles published by Grenell).
February 2020: Trump is informed that Russia has been paying bounties to Taliban for killing US soldiers in Afghanistan.

February 2020: Trump fires acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire

March 2020: Trump directs his secretary of state Mike Pompeo to finalize an agreement with the Taliban for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, precisely what Russia wants.

March 2020: Lea Gabrielle, head of the State Department's Global Engagement Center, which is charged with fighting disinformation, tells a Senate hearing (March 5) that Russia is exploiting the covid-19 epidemic to sow division in the USA, precisely what Trump is doing with his tweets and accusations that the epidemic is a conspiracy by the Democratic Party.

April 2020: Trump accuses China over the covid-19 epidemic while the Department of Homeland Security warns that Russian spies are exploiting the epidemic to collect data on US supply lines and on the same day (April 15) that Russia tests its direct-ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT) missile system, which is designed to destroy satellites in low Earth orbit, following Russia’s satellites Cosmos2542 and Cosmos2543 that "exhibited characteristics of a space weapon" (quote from the US Space Force).

May 2020: German authorities charge Dmitriy Badin for the 2015 hack of the German Bundestag (parliament). Badin is a member of Unit 26165 of Russia’s Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), the military intelligence agency of Russia's armed forces. He is the same hacker charged in the USA in 2018 for hacking the Democratic National Committee to help the Trump campaign.

May 2020: Facebook detects disinformation networks from Russia that promote disinformation about covid-19 including one with known links to the Russian government.

May 2020: Trump again announces that he wants Russia to join the G7 group, despite the fact that Russia has a tiny economy compared with China and many other countries.

May 2020: Trump's attorney general Barr takes advantage of the pandemic to quietly withdraw charges against Michael Flynn, who can therefore walk free.

June 2020: Interviewed by ABC News, Trump's former National Security Advisor John Bolton says of Trump: "I think Putin thinks he can play him like a fiddle.".
president Xi to help with his reelection and that "obstruction of justice" is a way a life in Trump's White House; precisely the pattern seen with the Russian collusion.

- June 2020: Trump installs a new CEO to run the US Agency for Global Media and this CEO, Michael Pack, proceeds to dismantle Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, which for years have been the main counterweights to Russian propaganda
- June 2020: The New York Times discovers that Trump has been hiding for months a report that Russia secretly offered bounties to Afghan militants for killing US troops (New York Times article and NBC News report). Days later it surfaces that the alarm was raised as early as January. And Associated Press discovered that Trump was told of these Russian bounties on US soldiers as far back as March 2019. It was kept secret by Trump's administration that US secret services tracked down the middleman, Rahmatullah Azizi, who got rich by dispatching money from Russia's military agency G.R.U. Unit 29155 to the Taliban. In early 2020, Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, arrested several businessmen who were implicated in the bounty scheme, and the USA was certainly informed. Trump's reaction to the revelations, as usual, is to demand the name of the informant, so that he can be silenced. Interviewed on the FoxNews channel, Trump says "I think it's a hoax invented by the Democratic Party".
Spies and Commandos Warned Months Ago of Russian Bounties on U.S. Troops

The recovery of large amounts of American cash at a Taliban outpost in Afghanistan helped tip off U.S. officials. It is believed that at least one U.S. troop death was the result of the bounties.

AP sources: White House aware of Russian bounties in 2019
June 2020: A report by Carl Bernstein, based on sources close to former Trump secretaries of state and defense, national security advisers and chiefs of staff, reveals that his own staff view Trump as "posing a danger to the national security of the United States" and particularly troubling was "Trump's deference to Putin".

June 2020: The last chapter of Catherine Belton's book "Putin's People - How the KGB Took Back Russia and Then Took On the West" documents the activities of the shady Russians with links to the Russian security services and/or the Russian mob who have befriended Trump for 30 years, including Felix Sater, black marketeer Shalva Tchigirinsky, and Dmitry Rybolovlev, who purchased Trump's Palm Beach mansion in 2008 for $95 million.

July 2020: Douglas London, former CIA's chief for counterterrorism in south and southwest Asia, overseeing operations and intelligence in Afghanistan, writes in the New York Times that Trump knew of Russia's bounties on US soldiers in Afghanistan: "Yes, he was most certainly aware of Russian assistance to the Taliban. Despite that knowledge, he chose to do nothing."

July 2020: Ex-Trump lawyer Michael Cohen sues Trump's attorney general William Barr after, as a condition of his prison release, he is asked to sign a gag order prohibiting him from publishing a book on Trump. Cohen refuses and is re-arrested. The Manhattan judge examining the lawsuit comments that in his career he has never seen such a provision for a prisoner. Quote: "How can I take any other inference but that it was retaliatory?"

July 2020: A joint report by Britain's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the Canadian Communication Security Establishment (CSE), the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the USA and the National Security Agency (NSA) of the USA warns that Russian hackers, "part of Russian intelligence services", are targeting biotech centers in Britain, the USA and Canada that are working on the covid-19 vaccine. Trump neither comments not takes any action. Britain's Intelligence and Security Committee
publishes a report on extensive Russian interference in British politics. Trump neither comments nor takes action.

- July 2020: Trump orders the USA to withdraw 12,000 troops from Germany in a move that is widely seen as a gift to Putin's Russia.

**Trump orders large withdrawal of US forces from Germany**

US president stuns NATO allies, including Germany, with unilateral move seen as benefit to Russia.

**Trump's 'dangerous' plan to withdraw troops from Germany will play into Putin's hands, warn UK Conservatives**

- August 2020: Germany accuses Russia of the assassination of former Chechen rebel Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, carried out in Germany one year earlier, but Trump does not comment, just like Trump still has ignored the bounties paid by Russia to Taliban who kill US soldiers.
- August 2020: A 1,000-page report by a Republican-controlled Senate panel that spent three years investigating Russia's interference in the 2016 elections confirms Robert Muller's findings of extensive contacts between the Trump campaign and the Russian government and concludes that it
"represented a grave counterintelligence threat".

Four years later, Republican senators admit, "yes, Trump conspired with the Russians"

The Trump-Putin election scheming is laid out in the Republican-led Intelligence Committee’s 1,000-page report

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

G.O.P.-Led Senate Panel Details Ties Between 2016 Trump Campaign and Russian Interference

A nearly 1,000-page report confirmed the special counsel’s findings at a moment when President Trump’s allies have sought to undermine that inquiry.
September 2020: Another amazing coincidence between Trump's speeches and Russia's propaganda: US intelligence agencies warn that Russia is stirring up conspiracy theories about mail-in voting.

September 2020: Russia tries to assassinate its most famous dissident, Alexei Navalny. All Western countries condemn Russia. Only Trump refuses to condemn Russia.

Alexei Navalny: Trump refuses to condemn Russia over poisoning

Trump looks alone on the world stage as international leaders line up to condemn the poisoning of Russian dissident Alexey Navalny

Nato says there is "proof beyond doubt" that Mr Navalny was attacked with a nerve agent

Alexei Navalny poisoning: Boris Johnson condemns ‘outrageous’ attack on Russian opposition politician and demands an

Alexei Navalny: Germany urges EU action over Novichok poisoning

September 2020: Peter Strzok, the fired former FBI agent who oversaw the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections, interviewed by the Atlantic, explains that the investigation on the Trump-Russia collusion was never completed, and we may never know the full truth despite the
overwhelming evidence of close contacts between Russia and Trump before
the 2016 elections. Quote: "a president who had lied to the public, cozied up
to Russia, and, once he became aware of them, attempted to block our
investigation at every turn".

September 2020: Brian Murphy, an analyst at the US Department of
Homeland Security, files a whistleblower complaint in which he claims that,
between March 2018 and August 2020, there was a "repeated pattern of ...
attempted censorship of intelligence analysis and improper administration of
an intelligence program related to Russian efforts to influence and undermine
US interests". In May 2020 he was instructed by Trump's secretary for
Homeland Security (Chad Wolf) to "cease providing intelligence assessments
on the threat of Russian interference... and instead start reporting on
interference activities by China and Iran". These instructions came directly
from Trump's national security adviser Robert O'Brien. In July 2020 his report
on Russian interference was blocked by the White House, and Murphy was
never asked to attend any more meetings. Murphy refused to comply "as
doing so would put the country in substantial and specific danger".
September 2020: Andrii Derkach, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament who worked with Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, is revealed to be a Russian agent by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control. See the official announcement. Andrii Derkach (quote) "has been an active Russian agent for over a decade, maintaining close connections with the Russian Intelligence Services".

September 2020: The New York Times is provided data about the taxes paid by Trump over the years and these data show that Trump almost never paid taxes because his businesses mostly lost money. He lied all the time about his wealth. His golf courses, casinos and hotels almost always lost money. In many years he probably lost more money than any other tax payer. The tax
records also show that Trump has accumulated more than $400 million in loans that he must pay back or file bankruptcy.

- September 2020: Bob Woodward's book "Rage" reports that Dan Coats, Donald Trump's first director of national intelligence, always suspected that Trump was working for Vladimir Putin.

- September 2020: Peter Strzok, FBI's former chief of counterespionage, states to Anne Applebaum that Trump had discouraged the FBI from investigating Andriy Derkach's actions, even though the FBI knew well that Derkach was a Russian operative (see the full interview).

- October 2020: The financial data published by the New York Times show that Trump owes $400 million and most of that debt is held by Deutsche Bank, a bank that was repeatedly involved in scandals of Russian money laundering (see this dossier). The exact nature of the deal between Deutsche Bank and Donald Trump remains a secret because Trump's lawyers have spent the whole year fighting against congressional subpoenas for the bank's records.
October 2020: Marc Polymeropoulos, a former CIA operative, tells GQ that: "No one's going to brief anything on Russia to the president. They're terrified of doing that. I know that from the Briefers. Because he'll explode and the whole thing will get derailed, because he has this weird affinity for [Russian President Vladimir] Putin." Polymeropoulos was the victim of a microwave attack while in Russia in 2017 and Trump never did anything about it. (Read the whole story here).

October 2020: In one of his last actions as president, Donald Trump appoints a special counsel, John Durham, to investigate the origins of the Trump-Russia "hoax".

November 2020: Two weeks after the US elections that elected Joe Biden, only two countries have not recognize Biden as the new president: North Korea and Russia

November 2020: Despite losing the election by 7 million votes, Trump refuses to concede, causing the USA to be derided all over the world as a banana republic with a little Mussolini at the helm. By delegitimizing the US democracy, Trump indirectly

December 2020: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine publishes the results of its investigation into the 2016 microwave attacks against US personnel (mainly diplomats and CIA officers) in Cuba and other countries, and points at Russia as the most likely culprit. Russia has a long history of experimenting with this technology. Trump does not mention it at all. Both GQ Magazine and the New York Times reports that victims of the attacks have been silenced by the Trump administration.

December 2020: The top cybersecurity firm of the USA, FireEye, reveals that Russian hackers have stolen software used to investigate cyber-attacks from its own systems, one of the worst cyber-attacks against the USA of all times. Thomas Bossert writes: "The Russians have had access to a considerable number of important and sensitive networks for six to nine months. The Russian S.V.R. will surely have used its access to further exploit and gain administrative control over the networks it considered priority targets. For those targets, the hackers will have long ago moved past their entry point, covered their tracks and gained what experts call "persistent access," meaning the ability to infiltrate and control networks in a way that is hard to detect or remove." President-elect Biden and many Republicans threaten
punishment on Russia, but there is only silence from Trump, who also threatens to veto a military bill containing provisions to strengthen cyberdefenses against such attacks. When he finally mentions it in a tweet, Trump defends Russia and downplays the significance of the hack. The rest of the world thinks it is one of the biggest cyber-attacks of all times. Erica Borghard, of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University, and Jacquelyn Schneider, of Stanford's Center for International Security and Arms Control, write: "The fact that a purportedly nation-state actor (likely Russia) was able to compromise a third party (SolarWinds) to gain access to an as-yet-unknown number of US government networks and exfiltrate data is a significant espionage achievement." Apparently, not for Trump. Not a single cyber-expert doubts that Russia's hackers did it. Not a single cyber-expert has found any evidence that China may have done it.

- December 2020: Rosemary Vrablic, the banker at Deutsche Bank, who
(starting in 1998) authorized lending of hundreds of millions of dollars to a bankrupt Donald Trump at the time when no US bank would lend him a penny, abruptly resigns. Deutsche Bank has been investigated for laundering Russian crime money (see *What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?*) and an internal investigation was opened in August about a 2013 real estate transaction between Vrablic and a company in which Jared Kushner is a major investor (Kushner too was virtually bankrupt at the time), a transaction that looks like a bribe to anyone who looked into it. Three years later she authorized a big loan to Kushner's business. Dominic Scalzi, who oversaw that transaction, also resigns.

March 2021: The new president, Biden, declassifies a report by the National Intelligence Council that was prepared under Trump but kept secret by Trump in which Trump's own agencies assessed that Russian president Putin had authorized operations to hurt Biden's candidacy and help Trump's, whereas China had not (the exact opposite of what Trump claimed at the time). Clearly Trump had tried to protect Russian efforts to get him elected and created a distraction by accusing China of doing what in fact Russia was doing. The NIC report relates how Trump and his closest allies promoted Russia's 2020 conspiracy theories against Biden and met with Russian-linked officials who were part of the effort (notably Konstantin Kilimnik). The NIC, in particular, relates how Andriy Derkach, a Russian agent born in Ukraina, used Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani to spread disinformation about Joe Biden and his family.
April 2021: More details emerge from the intelligence agencies about the collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian agents during the 2016 election. In 2016 the Trump campaign provided information to Russian operative Konstantin Kilimnik who relayed it to the Russian intelligence services, which was then used by Russia for its election interference efforts. Robert Mueller’s report had already shown that Trump campaign’s chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates repeatedly provided information to Kilimnik throughout 2016, but the Mueller report could not prove a direct link between Kilimnik and the Russian agencies that interfered in the 2016 election to help Trump. These new revelations provide the direct link between the Trump campaign and the Russian agencies. Mueller stated that he (quote) “did not identify evidence of a connection between Manafort’s sharing polling data and Russia’s interference in the election”. That evidence has now been revealed.

September 2021: Trump-appointed special counsel John Durham indicts Michael Sussmann, who in 2016 had investigated (on behalf of Hillary Clinton) Trump’s claims he had no interactions with Russian financial institutions. Sussmann had found traces of a possible covert communications channel between the Trump Organization and Alfa Bank, a Russian financial institution linked to Putin, and related it to the FBI but without mentioning that he was working for the Clinton campaign. Durham arrested him not for lying about the data but for hiding from the FBI that he was paid by the Clinton campaign. The Robert Mueller report never mentioned Sussmann’s evidence because Sussmann never proved that it was what he suspected it was, but, involuntarily, it is Durham who proved it: Durham tried to prove that the data were false but couldn’t. Sussmann was working for the Clinton campaign but the mysterious Internet communications between Trump and Alfa were studied by other people: David Dagon and Manos Antonakakis, two Georgia Institute of Technology data scientists, Rodney Joffe, who (among other cases) in 2013 cracked a famous cybercrime case, and April Lorenzen, chief data scientist at Zetalytics; four people who have devoted their career at fighting cyberterrorism. At the time, Sussmann’s accusations remained in the realm of “word of mouth”. But now Durham has involuntarily given them more credibility: Durham indirectly proved that the fact really happened and that it was discovered by credible scientists. The nature of the messages exchanged by Trump’s server and Alfa’s server remains a mystery. See this
summary of the data related to the Trump-Alpha communications (Alpha Bank's Internet servers logged the Internet address of the Trump Organization server 2,820 times between May and September 2016). And this is what the New Yorker wrote about it in 2018. What is not a mystery is that the Putin-affiliated Alpha Bank has aggressively tried to kill the investigation on those messages, basically working in parallel with the Trump-appointed Durham. Alfa Bank is Russia's largest private bank and is owned by oligarch Mikhail Fridman. Ironically, it was Trump's own Treasury Department that in 2018 listed Fridman among the oligarchs with close ties to Putin (see the list here or here or here). The bipartisan 2020 Senate Intelligence Committee report specifically mentioned the Trump-Alfa mystery: "the Committee could not positively determine an intent or purpose that would explain the unusual activity".

- November 2021: Trump-appointed special counsel John Durham arrests Igor Danchenko, accusing him of lying to both Steele (who used his lies for his dossier) and to the FBI. The Robert Mueller report never mentioned Danchenko's evidence, nor did I.
- January 2022: British secret services claim that Russia is plotting to overthrow the government of Ukraine and install a puppet president, Yevgeniy Murayev. They name four other Ukrainians involved in the coup, Vladimir Sivkovich and other three. When Ukraine was ruled by Russian-backed president Viktor Yanukovych, these four men held senior positions in his government and worked closely with Trump's campaign manager Paul Manafort. They fled to Russia when Yanukovych was overthrown by a popular insurrection in 2014.

Conclusions

Trump's reaction after every revelation of his dealings with Russia is to deny them categorically and to call them "fake news", followed a few days later (when confronted with overwhelming evidence) by an admission that they were true with an explanation of why they were perfectly appropriate. Then he goes after the
people who leaked the "fake news" to the media. His interest is clearly to hide his Russian connections: deny that they exist, and persecute those who expose them (who are often FBI, CIA and NSA agents, who get fired, a fact which leaves the USA ever more vulnerable to foreign interference and terrorist attacks).

Ion Mihai Pacepa, a former Cold War spy who defected to the West and is still living undercover, wrote a book about the Russian disinformation campaigns that went largely unnoticed at the time it came out, "Disinformation - Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism" (2013), but that sheds a lot of light on what happened in 2016.

The gathering of "kompromat", compromising material (either sexual or financial in nature), intended for political blackmail is a well-known tactic in Russia. All Russian citizens know that this happens routinely. After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many agents of the Russian secret services found themselves jobless. They launched independent careers as domestic spies, ready to prepare dossiers on demand about just about any celebrity. This is a highly lucrative business in Russia, as political blackmail and character assassination are the norm in Russia. There is no doubt that the FSB has dossiers on any foreign businessman and any foreign politician who ever set foot in Russia. Many of them have joined forces with the young generation of high-tech cyber-hackers. If Russia did not have a dossier on Trump, Trump would be pretty much the only Westerner who did business in Russia about whom Russia doesn't have a dossier.

In fact, that's precisely how Putin's political career was launched. In 1999 Russia's prosecutor-general Yuri Skuratov was investigating a big corruption scandal involving president Yeltsin's family and associates when a videotape surfaced of him having sex with two prostitutes. The videotape appeared in April just before the parliamentary debate to impeach Yeltsin was set to begin. Putin was in charge of the Federal Security Agency (FSB) and nobody in Russia doubts that the FSB was responsible for making and leaking the videotape. Skuratov was fired and Yeltsin appointed Putin as his successor. You can read Skuratov's story in this 1999 article.

Good introductions to "kompromat" and the way Russia's secret services are known to operate: in the New Statesman, in the Washington Post, in the CNN website.

This is nothing new: kompromat was routinely employed during the Cold War by the Soviet KGB to blackmail Westerners. John Vassall's case was one of the famous traitors of the Cold War: Vassall, a homosexual, was videotaped by Russia while
having sex with multiple men at the same wild party, and then blackmailed for seven years. Britain finally found out that he was working for the Russians only after Soviet secret-service agent Anatoli Golitsyn defected to the USA in late 1961. Vassall was arrested in September 1962. You can read John Vassall's story in the British National Archives. Maybe we will finally find out what is in Trump's tax returns and we will see the video of Trump sleeping with Russian prostitutes only when someone from Russia defects to the West. (See this San Francisco Chronicle article for an example of how Putin may have "bought" Trump).

Trump cheated on his wives countless times and divorced twice. Trump filed for multiple bankruptcies which cost his workers millions of dollars in retirement savings. Based on overwhelming evidence, there is little doubt in my mind that Trump is betraying his country the same way that he betrayed his wives and his workers. Note that former Trump mistresses and even a former Trump doorman have taken lie-detector tests to prove that they are not lying, but Trump has never accepted a lie-detector test on himself.

And, just to be very clear: I don't know whether Russia's interference changed the results of the election (I personally think that the FBI investigation into Clinton's email server had a much bigger impact and that Trump was just lucky, since he became president after losing by three million votes). This is about the intention, not the results (which are impossible to determine). And I am fully aware that many other countries interfere in US elections (notably allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, which I don't particularly like any better than Russia). And I am fully aware that the USA has interfered and interferes regularly in the democratic elections of other countries, including Russia itself (and even overthrows their governments). We can argue forever when a country is right to do so (was the USA right to fight Hitler? Japan? Saddam Hussein? the Taliban? ISIS? to interfere in the Soviet Union?) I have discussed and often criticized these facts in many other articles since I started writing about history and politics (see for example The USA is a banana republic).

Dear "Vladimir" Trump, there is an easy way to prove us wrong: release your tax returns.

See also my lengthy investigation: What's in "Vladimir" Trump's tax returns?

Recommended books on Putin's Russia (mostly written before Trump colluded with Russia):
Ivan Kurilla: "Frenemies"
Heather Conley: "The Kremlin Playbook"
Karen Dawisha: "Putin's Kleptocracy"
Timothy Snyder: "The Road to Unfreedom"
Mark Galeotti: "The Vory - Russia's Super Mafia"

A recommended book on Russia's cyberwarfare:
Andy Greenberg: "Sandworm" (written by a Wired magazine's investigative reporter who has followed Russian cyber-attacks over the years)

A brief timeline of Putin's career (extracted from my timeline of Russia):
1985: Vladimir Putin joins the Soviet Union's secret services (KGB) in East Germany
Jul 1998: Former KGB operative Vladimir Putin is appointed head of the FSB, the Russian secret services
Aug 1999: Yeltsin appoints Vladimir Putin as prime minister
Sep 1999: Chechen separatists are blamed for terrorist attacks on Buynaksk, Moscow and Volgodonsk that kill nearly 300 people, although rumors surface that the attacks were work of Putin's FSB, especially after similar unexploded bombs are found at Ryazan and they are traced back to the Russian military
Oct 1999: Russia removes Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov and begins a second invasion of Chechnya, an operation orchestrated by Putin in response to a fabricated incident
Mar 2000: Putin is elected president of Russia
2003: The Putin government acquires all national tv stations
2007: Vladimir Putin's party wins more than 60% of the vote in parliamentary elections
Dec 2011: The biggest anti-Putin demonstration ever takes place in Moscow and Putin blames Hillary Clinton for them
2012: Valery Gerasimov, head of the Russian Army, enacts a new doctrine of war that emphasizes public messaging as a means of stirring foreign dissent
2012: Anonymous trolls in St Petersburg, financed by oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to spread "fake news" in the USA
2016: Putin orders a covert campaign in the US presidential elections against his nemesis Hillary Clinton and to help Donald Trump, about whom the Russian secret services have accumulated compromising material

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