

# Ring Down the Curtain on This Fiasco

At this point, the Trump-Russia investigation is an embarrassment to America.

by Conrad Black



I have scoured the American and some international media in vain to find any recognition of what a Gordian knot of absurdity the investigative pretzel of official Washington has become. No one seems to have noticed that the Democrats are now making unctuous noises about the inviolability of a process that has disintegrated into utter nonsense. According to the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Steele dossier is the only possible evidence of Trump-Russian collusion, and we now know that it was composed of unsubstantiated allegations by unaccountable sources in and around the Kremlin, paid through intermediaries engaged by a retired British spy and paid for by the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee through the sleazy political dirty-tricks provider Fusion GPS. We also know that the

special counsel, Robert Mueller, and the deputy attorney general who engaged him, Rod Rosenstein, were, as FBI director and U.S. attorney for Maryland, the prosecutors of the Russian representatives who offered improper incentives to secure Russian acquisitions of substantial American uranium interests, but did not bother the Clintons or Clinton Foundation, which contemporaneously were generously paid by those who favored that transaction, at a time when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's approval was required under national-security legislation.

We also now know it is likely that the Steele dossier was used as the excuse for surveillance of the Trump campaign and transition activities in the Trump Tower in New York by the Obama administration, which had appointed Mr. Mueller and Mr. Rosenstein to their former FBI and Justice Department positions. And, despite an energetic effort by Mueller to prevent FBI personnel from testifying before congressional committees about the FBI's role in the Steele dossier, we now know that his protégé and successor at the FBI, James Comey, caused the appointment of his friend Mueller by Rosenstein (who had recommended that Comey be fired), by leaking to the *New York Times* a memo to himself (Comey) of contested accuracy and ownership (it might belong to the government), about Trump's views of former national-security adviser General Michael Flynn (an issue that has noiselessly died, though Comey hyped it for a brief time as a possible obstruction of justice by the president). And finally, in this Alice in Wonderland sequence, Comey confirmed to the Senate Intelligence Committee that he had assured President Trump three times, starting on January 27, ten weeks after the FBI took over the Steele dossier from the failed Clinton campaign, that Mr. Trump was not a suspect of any wrongdoing.

The burning question is why this unutterable nonsense continues, and the Trumpophobic media respectabilize the (Hillary) Clinton view that paying for the Steele dossier was

just a normal attempt to get “campaign information.” This was something that she had denied knowledge of for months and that neither she, nor her campaign manager, nor the ousted national-committee chairperson, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, remembered doing, though it cost \$9 or \$10 million. The Resistance (Democrats) and Never Trumpers (Republicans) seem to accept the assertion of the egregious ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff (Calif.), faithfully representing the collective imbecility of his Hollywood constituents, that “it doesn’t matter who paid for the Steele dossier.” Yes, it does.

If this all sounds like the Hound of the Baskervilles chasing its tail, that is because it is that and more: The hound has caught its own tail and devoured itself from behind to the point that it has become a deformed biped. In résumé, original Obama appointees Mueller and Rosenstein (the latter of whom named Mueller to his present post as special counsel – at the improper behest of Mueller’s friend and protégé Comey, after Comey leaked an improperly removed and self-addressed document – and recommended Comey’s firing as FBI director) are examining whether Trump-Russian collusion occurred, based on allegations in a dossier that Comey has testified did not implicate Trump, and that was composed and paid for by the Clinton campaign. Reduced to its simplest terms, the Trump-haters who control the media are asking the nation and the world to believe that the continuation in office of the constitutionally chosen president of the United States depends on a file prepared by unanswerable Kremlin sources incentivized to defame the president who were retained and paid by the president’s election opponent – a file that the person Trump fired as head of the FBI (Comey) on the recommendation of the sidekick of the special counsel in not investigating the Clinton side of the uranium controversy in 2014 has testified does not implicate the president now being investigated by Comey’s mentor Mueller. Even the paid propaganda alleged by Kremlin riffraff who were paid up to \$10

million by the Democratic National Committee (itself a subsidiary of the Clinton campaign, according to its former chair, Donna Brazile) doesn't generate enough on Trump to make him a suspect of anything illegal, in the sworn opinion of someone (still Comey) whom Trump has just fired, partly on the advice of Mueller's friend Rosenstein, who then engaged Mueller to investigate Trump.

Even the most febrile conspiracy theorist could not make up such a convoluted story. It is bunk, rubbish, a Babylonian ziggurat of pompous and officious suppositions and confessions that, when it is explained in its correct sequence as above and as simply as possible, no sane person could take seriously. One candidate paid for a smear job by a group of foreigners on her opponent, lost the election, and now screams of collusion by the foreigners she has been paying to defame her opponent; the FBI chief who saved her candidacy by not prosecuting her for serious offenses, when fired, after leaking an unprobative and self-serving memo, secures the appointment of a special counsel to investigate her opponent's relations with the country with which she has collaborated, and that investigation is conducted by the very same mentor of the fired FBI chief who whitewashed her in her latest and greatest controversy (emails), after he and the person who appointed him had whitewashed the losing candidate in the greatest previous controversy of her career (Uranium One). (This leaves out of contention for that distinction the latest allegations that Mrs. Clinton arranged her selection as Democratic nominee by violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act in rigged primaries, as claimed by a former party chairman: the imposing but unfeasible Donna Brazile, who had been such a fervent supporter that – while acting in a journalistic capacity – she passed Mrs. Clinton questions in advance of a presidential debate.)

I wish at this point to proclaim my admiration of the Clintons. He was an above-average president; she has been

adequate in the roles she has filled. They are a couple of astounding success and considerable talent, risen from obscure socioeconomic backgrounds, and have surpassed the Bushes and Barack Obama as the leading political force in the United States between Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump. More than that, they have been the great story politically for a whole generation, the last 25 years. It has not been a story like George Washington and the cherry tree, or Abe Lincoln splitting rails or seeing the evils of slavery as he went down the Mississippi in his youth, but they have held the principal attention of the nation and the world for a quarter-century, despite their jejune and squalid foibles. And, like most very successful politicians, they are interesting and pleasant people, from my limited acquaintance with him.

But the national interest must prevail; this ludicrous farce must end. It is like the blasting of a flying pest with insecticide: It must die, but it is briefly frenetically active before dropping down dead. After all the revelations of Trump-Russian collusion as the ultimate nothingburger, it is time for the curtain on this fatuous charade that his enemies pretend is a sword of Damocles looming over Donald Trump's distinctly coiffed head. Many will miss it, but Great Powers do not prolong such indignities. This is the most demeaning self-inflicted embarrassment a Great Power has had since Lin Biao, the second-ranking Chinese leader under Mao Tse-tung, cleared his drugged-out mind by inhaling motorcycle fumes, commandeered an aircraft to flee after a failed coup attempt, and was shot down over Mongolia by Mao's loyal air force in 1971. The present American national spectacle is bloodless and no one seems to be inhaling anything improper, but it is a disgrace. The Trump-haters are damaging only themselves by keeping this buffoonery going, and they can't do it much longer, whatever the dispositions of Mueller and others who live off it. Donald Trump might succeed or not as a president, but his only offense so far has been winning the election.

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