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A Former Trump Adviser Met With A Russian Spy

Carter Page told BuzzFeed News that he had been in contact with at least one Russian spy working undercover out of Moscow's UN office in 2013.

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Ali Watkins

BuzzFeed News Reporter



Carter Page

Photo Illustration BuzzFeed News; Page: Getty Images (2)

NEW YORK — A former campaign adviser for Donald Trump met with and passed documents to a Russian intelligence operative in New York City in 2013.

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The adviser, Carter Page, met with a Russian intelligence operative named Victor Podobnyy, who was later charged by the US government alongside two others for acting as unregistered agents of a foreign government. The charges, filed in January 2015, came after federal investigators busted a Russian spy ring that was seeking information on US sanctions as well as efforts to develop alternative energy. Page is an energy consultant.

A court filing by the US government contains a transcript of a recorded conversation in which Podobnyy speaks with one of the other men busted in the spy ring, Igor Sporyshev, about trying to recruit someone identified as “Male-1.” BuzzFeed News has confirmed that “Male-1” is Page.

The revelation of Page’s connection to Russian intelligence — which occurred more than three years before his association with Trump — is the most clearly documented contact to date between Russian intelligence and someone in Trump’s orbit. It comes as federal investigators [probe](#) whether Trump’s campaign-era associates — including Page — had any inappropriate contact with Russian officials or intelligence operatives during the course of the election. Page has [volunteered](#) to help Senate investigators in their inquiry.



Carter Page, then-adviser to Donald Trump's campaign, speaks at the graduation ceremony for the New Economic School in Moscow last July

Pavel Golovkin / AP

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It remains unclear how connected Page was to the Trump campaign. He rose to prominence seemingly out of nowhere last summer, **touted** by then-candidate Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers. Page was quickly cut from the Trump team following reports that federal investigators were **probing** his ties to Russian officials. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer **said** last month that the campaign had sent Page cease and desist letters last year, demanding he stop associating himself with it.

A US intelligence official said investigators intend to question Page eventually, but that he was not considered a high priority. “There’s so many people that are more relevant,” the official said.

The court filing includes a colorful transcript of Podobnyy speaking with Sporyshev about trying to recruit Page.

“[Male-1] wrote that he is sorry, he went to Moscow and forgot to check his inbox, but he wants to meet when he gets back. I think he is an idiot and forgot who I am...He got hooked on Gazprom thinking that if they have a project, he could rise up,” Podobnyy said. “I also promised him a lot...this is intelligence method to cheat, how else to work with foreigners? You promise a favor for a favor. You get the documents from him and tell him to go fuck himself.”

Page confirmed to BuzzFeed News on Monday that he is “Male-1” in the court filing, and said he had been in contact with Podobnyy, who was working at the time at Moscow’s UN office in New York City under diplomatic cover, although he was really an SVR agent. Pressed on details of his contact with Podobnyy, Page said their interactions did not include anything sensitive.

According to the complaint, Page met Podobnyy in January 2013 at an energy conference in New York. It says that from January to June of that year, Page met with, emailed with and “provided documents to [Podobnyy] about the energy business.”



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Evgeny Buryakov, left, during sentencing on espionage charges last May
Elizabeth Williams / AP

After federal investigators were looking into the ring, focusing on Podobnyy, Sporyshev, as well as a third man, Evgeny Buryakov, Page was interviewed by FBI counterintelligence agent Gregory Monaghan and another unnamed FBI agent in June 2013, the filing reads.

Podobnyy and Sporyshev were charged in absentia — working under official cover positions, they were [afforded](#) diplomatic immunity and were [whisked](#) out of the country. Buryakov, who worked under unofficial cover as an employee of state-controlled Vnesheconombank in Manhattan, pled guilty to a charge of conspiring to act as a foreign agent. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison and was due to have been released from a federal prison in Elkton, Ohio on Saturday, and returned to Moscow.

Speaking with BuzzFeed News, Page suggested that the complaint was written so that it was obvious he was the Gazprom-connected man Podobnyy talked about recruiting.

“In this city? Give me a break,” he said. “It is so obvious.”

In a previous conversation, when asked if he had ever met with Russian intelligence operatives, Page told BuzzFeed News in a message on the Telegram messaging app: “I’M VERY CAREFUL WHEN I SAY ‘NEVER’” BUT EVEN IF I HAD INADVERTENTLY HAD “CONTACT” SUCH AS BRIEFLY SAYING HELLO TO SOMEONE WHO MIGHT FALL UNDER THAT LABEL IN PASSING NOTHING I EVER SAID TO THEM OR ANYONE ELSE WOULD’VE EVER BROKEN ANY LAW.”

A dossier [compiled](#) by former MI6 agent Christopher Steele, used to brief then-President Obama, then-President-elect Trump and Gang of Eight congressional leaders in January, cited a Kremlin official as saying that the Kremlin had sought to a relationship with certain figures in the US, including Page, and had indirectly funded some of their visits to Russia. Page denied playing a role in the Kremlin’s attempt to undermine the US election in conversations with BuzzFeed News.

“I didn’t do anything wrong.... including meeting with any of those people I’m falsely accused of in that Dodgy Dossier,” Page told BuzzFeed News in a message last month.

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ORIGINAL

Approved:

Adam Lee / Van McGinley / Anna Skotko
 ADAM LEE VAN MCGINLEY ANNA SKOTKO
 Assistant United States Attorneys

15 MAG 0215

HEATHER SCHMIDT

Trial Attorney, Counterespionage Section

National Security Division, Department of Justice

Before: HONORABLE FRANK MAAS
 United States Magistrate Judge
 Southern District of New York



DOC # 1

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SEALED COMPLAINT

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA :

Violations of 18 U.S.C. §§
 371, 951, & 2

-v.- :

EVGENY BURYAKOV, :

COUNTY OF OFFENSE: NEW YORK

a/k/a "Zhenya," :

IGOR SPORYSHEV, and :

VICTOR PODOBNYY, :

Defendants. :

----- x

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.:

GREGORY MONAGHAN, being duly sworn, deposes and says that
 he is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI")
 and charges as follows:

COUNT ONEConspiracy to Act as an Unregistered Agent of a Foreign Government

1. From in or about 2012, up to and including the present, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, EVGENY BURYAKOV, a/k/a "Zhenya," IGOR SPORYSHEV, and VICTOR PODOBNYY, the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly, did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together and with each other to commit an offense against the United States, to wit, Title 18, United States Code, Section 951.

2. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that

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Ali Watkins is a national security correspondent for BuzzFeed News and is based in Washington, D.C. Contact Ali Watkins at ali.watkins@buzzfeed.com.

Got a confidential tip? [Submit it here](#).

57 Comments

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Carlos Lara

Trump and his cronies don't care, because after all, if the country becomes a dirty polluted lawless hole and end up in ruins, they will have enough rubles to buy a piece of paradise anywhere in the planet.

Putin knew that to destroy the USA, the way into the pocket of the greedy was shorter than the road to war.

Like · Reply · 113 · 15 hrs · Edited



Linda Baker

Yeah, the USSR wasted all that time & treasure on the cold war, when they could have just found 15-20 lowlifes like the Trump administration and saved all that, and still won. Sad!

Like · Reply · 59 · 14 hrs



Carlos Lara

Linda Baker Neither Reagan, both Bush, Clinton or Obama would have allowed Putin to even get close to the US much less to the WH.

They needed a corrupt man willing to sell his country for the right amount of rubles and I think they finally found it.

Like · Reply · 84 · 14 hrs



Desiree Valenzuela

Carlos Lara bet it was in the works for a long time.

Like · Reply · 13 · 14 hrs

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Shane Shepherd

Trump's so-called presidency should be put on hold until all these entanglements get sorted out. He sure as hell shouldn't be given any highly classified intel that pertains to Putin either.

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**Donna Valenzuela**

That would make way too much sense.

Like · Reply · 35 · 15 hrs

**Jennifer Verner** · Works at Self-EmployedThe Russian Fairy tale is just a ruse to hide the fact that Obama was spying on Trump.
#dirtyrice #worse than watergate.

Like · Reply · 8 · 14 hrs

**Freida Peeples** · Miskatonic University, Arkham, Massachusetts

the Intelligence Agencies have no access to the man. Our Commander-In-Tweet gets his daily briefings from Fox And Friends.

Like · Reply · 30 · 14 hrs

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)**Ryan Hall** · Animator at Off Base Productions

Trump could be on video tape and his supporters would still call it fake news because Buzzfeed released it. Such a deep state of denial can't be reached, so let's just carry out justice and take care of this treason while their heads are in the sand. Thing about Trump hiring people similar to himself is they'll throw everyone else under the bus once their feet are to the fire. A room full of guilty men pointing at each other to save their own skin. You saw it already with Flynn and that's just the beginning, it's a race to the bottom for this crew.

Like · Reply · 40 · 14 hrs · Edited

**Brandon Redford**

BF is a terrible outlet to get actual news from. It's the leftists version of Brietbart

Like · Reply · 5 · 13 hrs

**Chris Thoms**

Brandon Redford It was confirmed by the man himself. Regardless of the consistency of the new's source to produce, ya' know, actual news, this really happened. Be objective, Carter Page literally agreed to this and those documents are a part of the public registry.

Like · Reply · 18 · 11 hrs

**Brandon Redford**

Chris Thoms I was commenting on how shitty BF is as a credible news source...cause it is.

My comment wasn't referencing the claims in the article, just the 1st half of the OPs statement

Like · Reply · 11 hrs

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)**Paul V. Vitagliano** · Donor Advisor at Center Theatre Group

All these #RussiaGate details are like if I walked up to someone and said: "Hey, there is a nose on your face" - and they wouldn't need to go look in the mirror to verify what is so obviously true. Even if the entire GOP and all The Donald's voters/supporters want to write ALL OF THIS off as some kind

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Like · Reply · 20 · 14 hrs

**Desiree Valenzuela**

What! A nose on my face!?!
FAKE NEWS!!!

Like · Reply · 20 · 14 hrs

**Eric Winter**

I'm a middle class, middle aged nobody, and I'm two degrees separation from Putin. Yes, I worked for a company that teamed up with a Russian company, whose owner had met Putin. Also, let me just throw out there that I'm not a spy. So, "he knew a guy that knew a Russian, who turned out to be a spy" is something less than nose-on-your-face certitude of wrongdoing. Try really hard to imagine that Hillary is president, and Republicans are playing the same Putin Truther game, and tell me what of substance they've found.

Like · Reply · 7 · 13 hrs

**Joseph Gillis** · Frostburg State University

Jim Halliley is a pathological liar.

Like · Reply · 2 · 13 hrs

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)**Desiree Valenzuela**

So he volunteered to help with the Senate investigation. Cool.
Now get his ass on the stand, and put him under oath.

Like · Reply · 26 · 15 hrs

**Bucky James Dio**

Yeah, but does the oath even mean anything to these people? Everything's conditional anymore. Truth from a certain point of view is the best we can hope for.

Like · Reply · 19 · 14 hrs

**Desiree Valenzuela**

Bucky James Dio probably not...but without it, his testimony is worth as much as my crazy aunt Sally's would be. And committing perjury is still a Very Bad Thing. One that can land you in prison. Even a nice cushy country club prison is still a prison...and prisoners sometimes meet with, um, "mishaps" while the guards are busy elsewhere.

Like · Reply · 9 · 14 hrs

**Timothy Counts**


It's not like anyone is going to do anything about it.
The Trumps are not going to follow any of the rules and no one is holding any of them accountable.

Like · Reply · 9 · 14 hrs

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 water...watch.

Like · Reply · 24 · 15 hrs

**Courtney Henley** · CEO & Founder at Social Done Right

This whole thing gets more ridiculous every day! How much more info does the FBI and all these Intel committees need to impeach this obvious Russian backed man and his cronies??

Like · Reply · 9 · 12 hrs

**Jennifer Verner** · Works at Self-Employed

And what evidence do they have genius? None. But we do now know Obama spied on Trump
#worse than watergate

Like · Reply · 1 · 7 hrs

**Michelle Borges**

Jennifer Verner It took nearly 2 yrs. to nail Nixon. When their investigation is complete, only then will we know the truth whether he was or was not colluding with the Russians. Really, do you expect the FBI to come out with a daily or weekly report on what their investigation has uncovered so far?

Now, give me your proof that Obama spied on Trump other than Trump says so.

Like · Reply · 4 · 5 hrs

**Brian Amberg**

Jennifer Verner There are mountains of evidence. You have access to the internet. Also, Obama did not spy on Trump. The FBI was investigating Russian meddling in our election and the meddlers just so happened to be doing their meddling *with* Trump at Trump Tower.

Like · Reply · 4 · 5 hrs

[Show 4 more replies in this thread](#)**Mark Petersen** · Works at Self-Employed

Trump's total legacy as President will come down to the mess he embroiled himself and the country in with the Russians and the manipulation of the media with lies and deception. He might last 4 years but that is looking less likely by the day. Impeachment is looking like a very real possibility.

Like · Reply · 7 · 14 hrs

**Jennifer Verner** · Works at Self-Employed

Em, I read this piece, and the headline is very misleading. Have you ever done business internationally? How would he know they were agents? And what exactly are you accusing him of passing along?? It is not a crime if he gets approached by a Russian agent, and then does nothing wrong. This is a total witch hunt. I hope he sues you, but I guess he'll have to get in line.

Like · Reply · 8 · 14 hrs

**Pat Seaborg** · San Diego State University

He was asked if he had contact with a Russian spy. He said no. When confronted with the facts, he then admits it but says it was nothing important. When someone lies that is evidence that they are not a truthful person. That is not a witch hunt. It's being caught red handed in a lie.

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**Karl Chase**

if my kid hung out with one drug user, I might not worry too much and believe him/her if they said they were just friends and not a user, too. If my kid had dozens of friends that all did drugs I'd conclude I was being lied to by my kid.

Just how many Russian ties do you need to see regarding trump before the light goes on for you?

Like · Reply · 23 · 14 hrs

**Jennifer Verner** · Works at Self-Employed

Pat Seaborg How did he know he was a Russian spy? He did most of his business in Russia. I'm sure he talked to lots of Russian spies without knowing it. Have you ever been out of the United States? You sound like you are pretty ilinformed about the way the world works.

Like · Reply · 2 · 14 hrs

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)**Fred Goodwin**

So, BuzzFeed's big scoop is that a former Trump aide had contact with a Russian spy back in 2013, three years before the election.

The Trump campaign fired him as soon as it learned of the Russia connection. How this is relevant to the current controversy the article doesn't say.

I have evidence that Trump checked out a library book in 1998 and that it is overdue. That story is about as relevant as this one. [#FakeNews](#)

Like · Reply · 6 · 13 hrs

**Linda Reynolds**

Yeah , nice try Fred. A shot out for your leader. You wanna Sig Heii?

Like · Reply · 6 · 11 hrs

**Brandon Redford**

Well I mean this is the same group of people who tuned into an hour long special for a 10 year old tax return...

Like · Reply · 1 · 9 hrs

**Desiree Valenzuela**

No effing way has 45 ever in his life so much as read a book, much less checked one out from the library.

Like · Reply · 1 · 1 hr

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