Bessee, Cecilia O. (OGC) (FBI)

From: Bessee, Cecilia O. (OGC) (FBI)
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 9:45 AM
To: Schools, Scott (ODAG)
Subject: Re: Items needing follow up

Thanks Scott. (b) (5) [redacted]

-

-------- Original message --------
From: "Schools, Scott (ODAG)" <Scott.Schools@usdoj.gov>
Date: 12/19/17 11:00 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: "Bessee, Cecilia O. (OGC) (FBI)" (b) (6) [redacted]
Subject: RE: Items needing follow up

See below.

-----Original Message-----
From: Bessee, Cecilia O. (OGC) (FBI) (b) (6) [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 8:41 PM
To: Schools, Scott (ODAG) <sschools@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Items needing follow up

Hi Scott,
I do hope that all is well. I tried to catch up with you today but was unable to reach you. (b) (5) [redacted]

(b) (5)
[redacted]

Thank you.
Cecilia

Cecilia O. Bessee
Acting Deputy General Counsel
Litigation Branch
Office of the General Counsel
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Room 10140
Washington, DC 20535
Telephone: (b) (6) [redacted]
Facsilile: 202-323-2168

Daniel Friedman

From:	Daniel Friedman
Sent:	Monday, December 18, 2017 2:43 PM
To:	Prior, Ian (OPA)
Subject:	Question about Rosenstein Answer on IG consultation on Strzok texts

Ian,
I read the IG's letter, Flores statements and Rosenstein's answers on IG consultation. It seems like Rosenstein's statement to Raskin, in particular, while not clearly contradicted by Horowitz's letter, could have left the impression that he consulted with the IG about releasing the texts to the media.

Raskin's line of questioning was about release of texts to the media. Then he asked about IG rule that prohibits release of info that is part of an investigation.

Rosenstein: "When this inquiry came in from Congress, we did consult with the Inspector General and he determined that he had no objection to release of the material. If he had, I can assure you I would not have authorized the release."

So Rosenstein didn't say IG okayed release of messages to media, but it didn't exclude that.

I assume you guys will say Rosenstein didn't mean to imply IG approved release of texts to press. But is he considering sending any kind of clarification to the committee on that?

I don't know how significant this is, but I don't want to read any other stuff you guys out in Business Insider again.
I am coming around to the view that your guys knew Congress was gonna leak these anyway, so releasing them in whole could be as your first statement said, an attempt to avoid confusion/more selective leaking.

Thanks,
Dan
202.290.5424

Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:52 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject: RE: Hi

We're about to do a "TRMS law school" special on the investigation with four former US Attorneys to go over viewer legal Q's. Should be good. Not sure how and to what extent this issue will come up. But I'll take the IG statement when you get and I'll try and get ready for air ASAP.

Genuinely sorry your Friday sucks. FWIW - I second Rachel's opinion.
We also know what it's like when people accuse you of bias just because of who you are/what you represent. People who know nothing accuse us of being liberal shills who distort reality, and it's like No - we actually try to report everything straight.
We have opinions, sure but we never lie or misrepresent what we believe to be the objective truth.

It's almost the weekend.

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:33 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Hi

I can forward

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) [mailto:Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:30 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: RE: Hi

Is the IG's letter to be found anywhere except on Natasha Bertrand's twitter feed??

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:27 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Hi

I'll forward it to you when they put it out. Call or text anytime: 202.305.5808 But the short version is that he's saying that the IG never objects when the records are preexisting like they are here and then he just leaves out the part where he should have said "and so, as with the pre-exsting records here, we did not object to the release of these texts to congress after DOJ told us they had requests from Congress." And then the next part is saying 'but that the IG isn't the one who signs off on legal or ethical concerns—DOJ officials do that.' Which then I was saying if you look at my earlier statement—that's exactly what our career folks did.
https://twitter.com/SarahFloresDOJ?lang=en

https://twitter.com/SarahFloresDOJ?lang=en

Does that make sense?

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) [mailto:Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:24 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: RE: Hi

a) I have passed on your thanks. And she means it.
b) Yeah I would love an explainer. Also a headsup of where I can find the IG statement when it comes. Where do I call??

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:19 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Hi

Hey…really appreciate that tweet from Rachel. Truly. She didn't need to do that and its especially kind when it would have been so easier/popular for her to pile on. My integrity has been questioned a lot this week on an issue I tried to handle as fairly as I could to all parties involved understanding the stakes and those are the times things like this really stand out.

Back to business: Call me if you want me to explain—the IG letter is super confusing, but he is actually agreeing with me. Talked to IG earlier and expect statement from them shortly that will be in line with mine:

The letter released by the IG tonight is entirely consistent w my earlier tweets & DAG's testimony. IG had no objection to release to Congress. We then consulted senior career legal/ethics experts to determine there were no issues w releasing texts to either Congress or press.
https://twitter.com/SarahFloresDOJ/status/941833219871096832

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) [mailto:Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 3:16 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: RE: Hi

The five cmtes were the 2 intels, the 2 judiciaries and…oversight?

For the rest – thank you!

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 2:46 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Hi

Below! (Sorry I totally missed them the first time)

On Dec 15, 2017, at 1:52 PM, Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) <Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com> wrote:

> Popular, in a good, cool, high-school kind of way, right? ☺
>
> As for Q's first 3 – I'm looking for ON the record for #1-3, OFF the record, guidance only on #5-6, #4 more of a venting….

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 1:35 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Hi

Lol! So true☺

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) [mailto:Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 1:34 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Hi

You're very popular today!
466 followers in one day? Not bad!

Ok- Sorry to be a bore here, but help me re: Strzok / Page

1) When you say they were released to the congressional committees – is that just Sen & House judiciary? Or also the intel cmtes? 5 committees total
2) The committees were provided copies of 375 texts, right? 375 texts that the IG approved for release out of 10,000 that the IG examined? Appx 375. We've never provided full number.
3) Were the anti-Hillary, anti-Obama admin, anti-Bernie texts among the 375 approved for release? I'm not aware of any news reports of texts that were not among the appx 375 we provided to congress.
4) If they're floating around all over the place, why can't we just have a link where we can see them? Congress was only provided hard copies. That being said, they can scan them or upload them if they choose.
5) OTR/guidance - Which news outlet (or outlets) reported that reporters got access to texts before the committees? Was that Biz Insider? Yes. It never happened.
6) OTR/guidance – when you say the reporters who got them "outside this process" – That's referring just to NYT and their first story? Or to Fox News? Decline comment bc of nature of how I learned (ie I protect yalls confidence/rules same as you

protect mine.)

It's Friday!

Matthew

Chuck Ross

From: Chuck Ross
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 8:02 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject: Re: DOJ IG letter on Strzok texts

Thanks. I'll wait for the OIG statement

On Friday, December 15, 2017, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:

> https://twitter.com/SarahFloresDOJ/status/941833219871096832
>
> off the record: I understand IG is putting out a statement soon too. But call me if you need me to walk yuou thought thisl
>
> xxx
>
> Sarah Isgur Flores
>
> Director of Public Affairs
>
> 202.305.5808
>
> **From:** Chuck Ross [mailto:chuck@dailycaller.com]
> **Sent:** Friday, December 15, 2017 6:50 PM
> **To:** Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
> **Subject:** DOJ IG letter on Strzok texts
>
> Sarah,
>
> Do you guys have a response to the DOJ IG's letter saying they weren't consulted ahead of the release of the Strzok texts?
>
> Seeing some journos assert that your tweets from earlier were wrong, and I'm trying to figure out what's what.

Thanks for any help,

Chuck Ross

The Daily Caller

316-616-7326

Natasha Bertrand

From:	Natasha Bertrand
Sent:	Friday, December 15, 2017 6:23 PM
To:	Prior, Ian (OPA)
Cc:	Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject:	OIG response to House
Attachments:	Nadler Raskin Response Letter.pdf

Hi, does DOJ have any response to this letter sent by OIG to House Judiciary? (attached)

Thanks,
Natasha

--

Natasha Bertrand
Political Correspondent | Business Insider
631.317.8409
@NatashaBertrand

Jarrett, Laura

From: Jarrett, Laura
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 3:13 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject: FW: GUIDANCE on DOJ - release of texts to media

From: Kupperman, Tammy
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2017 2:36 PM
To: *CNN Executive Producers (b) (6) ; *DCDigitalEditor (CNN)
(b) (6)
Cc: Jarrett, Laura <Laura.Jarrett@cnn.com>
Subject: GUIDANCE on DOJ - release of texts to media

We should **not** report that DOJ says the release of the Strzok/Page tests was "not authorized." That is not true.

Spokesperson Sarah Isgur Flores has tweeted that the Department showed copies of texts to reporters working in the building **after** copies were delivered to the Hill and after some media outlets got hold of them.

> **Sarah Isgur Flores (@SarahFloresDOJ)**
>
> 12/15/17, 10:51 AM
> So timeline in short: (1) Copies delivered to Congress, (2) Some media outlets are in possession of copies of texts (3) Department shows copies of texts to reporters working in the building.

There has been some significant confusion about this due to an inaccurate Business Insider article. DOJ never said that the release was unauthorized. The press shop said that some unnamed reporters received the texts by some other means, not through DOJ. Here's the full statement, showing context:

"The Chairman and Ranking Members of each of the congressional committees were provided the opportunity to have copies of the texts delivered to their offices. This was completed before any member of the media was given access to view the same copy of the texts by the Department's Office of Public Affairs. **As we understand now, some members of the media had already received copies of the texts before that—but those disclosures were not authorized by the Department.**

As the Deputy Attorney General said in this testimony on Wednesday, when the initial inquiries came from committees and members of Congress, the Deputy Attorney General consulted with the Inspector General, and the Inspector General determined that he had no objection to the Department's providing the material to the Congressional committees that had requested it. After that consultation, senior career ethics advisors determined that there were no legal or ethical concerns, including under the Privacy Act, that prohibited the release of the information to the public either by members of congress or by the Department."

Darren Samuelsohn

From: Darren Samuelsohn
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 2:45 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA); Josh Gerstein
Subject: Re: closing the loop

Ok – done.

Thanks for sticking with me on this.

Apologies again for the delay getting back to you and the confusion.

Thank you,

Darren Samuelsohn
Senior reporter, POLITICO
Desk: 703-842-1769
Cell: (b) (6) [redacted]
Dsamuelsohn@politico.com
@dsamuelsohn

From: "Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)" <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov>
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 2:34 PM
To: Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>, Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>
Subject: RE: closing the loop

I'm ok with that being included. You've got it from me directly and not from Josh☺

***
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Darren Samuelsohn [mailto:dsamuelsohn@politico.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 2:25 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>
Subject: Re: closing the loop

That is what the Dems were complaining about and what the sentence was previously talking about.

I can also add a line to say DOJ gave the messages to lawmakers before they were shared with the media. But I want to be sure I'm playing fair with respect to reporting something I've since learned through our OTR channels and not via Josh.

Are you OK with me saying some version of this at the end of the clarification?
DOJ also delivered the text messages to lawmakers before they were released to the press.

Thank you,

Darren Samuelsohn
Senior reporter, POLITICO
Desk: 703-842-1769
Cell: (b) (6) [redacted]
Dsamuelsohn@politico.com
@dsamuelsohn

From: "Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)" <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov>
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 2:19 PM
To: Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>, Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>
Subject: RE: closing the loop

I still think its important for your readers to know that members of congress received them first—I guess im not sure why the hearing is a relevant time marker. Ie—there just as easily could have been no hearing the next day but members of congress still had them.

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Darren Samuelsohn [mailto:dsamuelsohn@politico.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 2:16 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>
Subject: closing the loop

Hi Sarah,

We're going to change the last word in the sentence you flagged from 'lawmakers' to 'hearing.' This sentence is paraphrasing the complaint that the Democrats were making during the hearing, and that was what I was trying to capture.

The sentence is being changed to say: Rosenstein also faced several questions from Democrats seeking an explanation about why reporters had gotten access to Strzok's text messages before the **hearing.**

We also added a line at the end of the story to say the following:

Clarification: This story has been updated to clarify Democrats were questioning Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein about why reporters had gotten access to FBI agent Peter Strzok's text messages before Wednesday's House Judiciary Committee hearing.

I am sorry for the confusion. As Josh noted before, I was reporting on my own about the discussion on the Hill yesterday and knew it would be inappropriate to approach Gerstein since he was bound by your OTR/embargo ground rules.

Th[illegible]

Thank you,

Darren Samuelsohn
Senior reporter, POLITICO
Desk: 703-842-1769
Cell: (b) (6) [redacted]
Dsamuelsohn@politico.com
@dsamuelsohn

From: "Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)" <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov>
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 1:26 PM
To: Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>, Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Sharing a POLITICO link: "DOJ fuels doubts about integrity of Mueller probe"

Thanks, Josh. All reasonable points. Hopefully Darren can take my word for it that no documents were shown to any member of the press before Congress. Although I understand the texts were in distribution to reporters from another source before I showed them to anyone and I don't know how that happened.

xxx

Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Josh Gerstein [mailto:jgerstein@politico.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 1:21 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Sharing a POLITICO link: "DOJ fuels doubts about integrity of Mueller probe"

Hi Sarah:

So in order to respect the terms of the embargo and the sourcing from Tuesday night, I did my best to steer clear of this story entirely. Just seemed awkward for me to try to wade into the specifics of stuff that was supposed to be for guidance or unattributed and the timing of everything.

Now that some of that is, for better or worse, in the public domain maybe you can work out with Darren the timeline he can report. I think he was operating primarily off of what lawmakers were saying yesterday at the hearing and elsewhere on the Hill.

If there's something specific you need me to verify about what went down, I'm happy to do that, but I did not want to breach any confidences.

--Josh

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 12:59 PM
To: Josh Gerstein <jgerstein@politico.com>; Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Subject: Fwd: Sharing a POLITICO link: "DOJ fuels doubts about integrity of Mueller probe"

I haven't seen a response to this. Need correction asap.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Date: December 14, 2017 at 11:08:11 AM EST
To: Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Subject: Sharing a POLITICO link: "DOJ fuels doubts about integrity of Mueller probe"

Good morning,

Sharing my latest story published this AM in POLITICO: **"DOJ fuels doubts about integrity of Mueller probe"**

https://www.politico.com/story/2017/12/14/justice-department-mueller-investigation-295483

Please share on social media and with friends and collagues. You can tag me @dsamuelsohn on Twitter.

Be in touch,

Darren Samuelsohn
Senior reporter, POLITICO
Desk: 703-842-1769
Cell: (b) (6)
Dsamuelsohn@politico.com
@dsamuelsohn

Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com

From:	Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com
Sent:	Thursday, December 14, 2017 11:31 AM
To:	Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Cc:	Prior, Ian (OPA); John.Walcott@thomsonreuters.com
Subject:	Re: Strzok texts

I'm sorry but just saw old tweet and accept your explanation of that. As for your second point I have consulted with former officials who say they have NEVER heard of a previous release of evidence in an active investigation. So I am disturbed that you are unwilling or unable to produce any real evidence to support your case. As to advocacy, I only advocate the facts so you should judge me by what I actually publish, and accept that answering aggressive questions is part of your job. The way I read this you are trying to bully or intimidate me and that is quite inappropriate for someone in your position.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 14, 2017, at 11:23, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:

1) Please please look into these things before sending me questions like this based on a single tweet you found from over a day ago. It was answered by the DAG in the hearing when Jeffries asked about it and Shannon sent out this tweet just moments later clarifying that their producer saw the same thing that Congress saw and every other outlet: https://twitter.com/ShannonBream/status/940990591915130880
2) On your point about historical practice, I don't know who you are talking to but I sent you the names of 3 national reporters yesterday who have all confirmed past practice publicly.
3) I have no clue why the time of day is relevant—I get calls from my reporters at 3am not infrequently. We all work long hours in these jobs over here at DOJ—as is evidenced by the fact that several of the DOJ reporters were still here when I left at 11pm last night.
4) I have confirmed that some outlets had the full set of tweets before we released them to Congress or showed them to reporters here after, which makes this all seem like a silly non story.

At this point, your emails feels like badgering and a waste of time for me to argue about something you've made your mind up on. No other reporter who actually works here seems to agree with your narrative. Throughout this conversation you have had the tone of an advocate and not a reporter. So I think we're done.

***

Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com [mailto:Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 10:55 AM

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2017 10:55 AM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Prior, Ian (OPA) <IPrior@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Strzok texts

I have contacted one or two people with historical knowledge of such issues and they said they had never seen or heard of a previous case of DoJ late at night calling reporters in to look at private message-type evidence - EVIDENCE, not internal memoranda - which had been collected by DoJ or IG in what is still an active, open investigation. Also, assuming its accurate, the tweet below seems to raise a serious question as to how Fox News obtained a much larger cache of Strzok messages than was provided to Congress. So I am still seriously wondering who authorized such releases, what the legal rationale was for doing so, given the fact that the investigation is still open, and whether you can produce any valid evidence that similar such material has been released in this manner in the past by DoJ.

Natasha Bertrand Verified account @NatashaBertrand
FollowFollow @NatashaBertrand

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries now asking who authorized the DOJ to invite reporters to come view private texts between 2 DOJ employees who were subject of pending investigation. Also asked how it's possible that Fox News has 10k Strzok-Page texts when DOJ only gave Congress 375 texts.

8:50 AM - 13 Dec 2017

Many thanks for your attention to this inquiry. mh

New Byron York

From: New Byron York
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 6:13 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject: Re: strzok texts

thanks

> On Dec 13, 2017, at 6:02 PM, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:
>
> Further, prior to release, career officials determined that the text messages could be released under both ethical and legal standards.

Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com

From:	Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com
Sent:	Wednesday, December 13, 2017 4:23 PM
To:	Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Cc:	Prior, Ian (OPA)
Subject:	Re: texts from last night
Attachments:	image001.jpg; image002.jpg; image003.jpg; image004.jpg; image005.jpg

Tks. Kind of a mess and the RNC release looks like ugly politics.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 13, 2017, at 15:46, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:

> I didn't know the RNC had them until you just said so. As I think I've now made pretty clear—these texts went to the hill. After that happened, a handful of reporters who have 24/7 hard passes to DOJ here could the hard copy of them in my offices. I have my hard copy stamped and it hasn't left this hallway. A lot of other people had these texts and I don't know what the dozen plus committees and members who had them last night did with them.
>
> ***
> Sarah Isgur Flores
> Director of Public Affairs
> 202.305.5808
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com [mailto:Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com]
> **Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017 3:38 PM
> **To:** Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Prior, Ian (OPA) <IPrior@jmd.usdoj.gov>
> **Subject:** Fwd: texts from last night
>
> So who released these to RNC ? And then why the clandestine dealings with reporters ?
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>
> > **From:** Michael Ahrens - Communications/Research <Mahrens@gop.com>
> > **Date:** December 13, 2017 at 15:24:11 EST
> > **To:** Michael Ahrens - Communications/Research <Mahrens@gop.com>
> > **Subject: texts from last night**
> >
> > For several months we've been told that the special counsel's office is conducting an unbiased, independent investigation into the 2016 election. But newly-revealed text messages from at least two members of Robert Mueller's team, Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, raise questions about the impartiality of the investigation.

Here's just a sampling of the lovers' typo-ridden anti-Trump texts:

During the Republican National Convention...

"...you're meant to protect the country from that menace" ...

Michael Ahrens
Rapid Response Director
Republican National Committee
mahrens@gop.com
@michael_ahrens

Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)

From:	Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Sent:	Wednesday, December 13, 2017 4:15 PM
To:	Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject:	RE: Sarah - Stupid Q

Ha, Ok I figured, just…. Ahem, checking.

Thanks!

Busy day? ;)

From: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) [mailto:Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 4:12 PM
To: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Sarah - Stupid Q

I don't have the real texts—so I doubt the rnc does either☺

xxx
Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Alexander, Matthew (NBCUniversal) [mailto:Matthew.Alexander@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 4:09 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Sarah - Stupid Q

Sarah,

Help - I have a stupid Q but can you clarify for me –

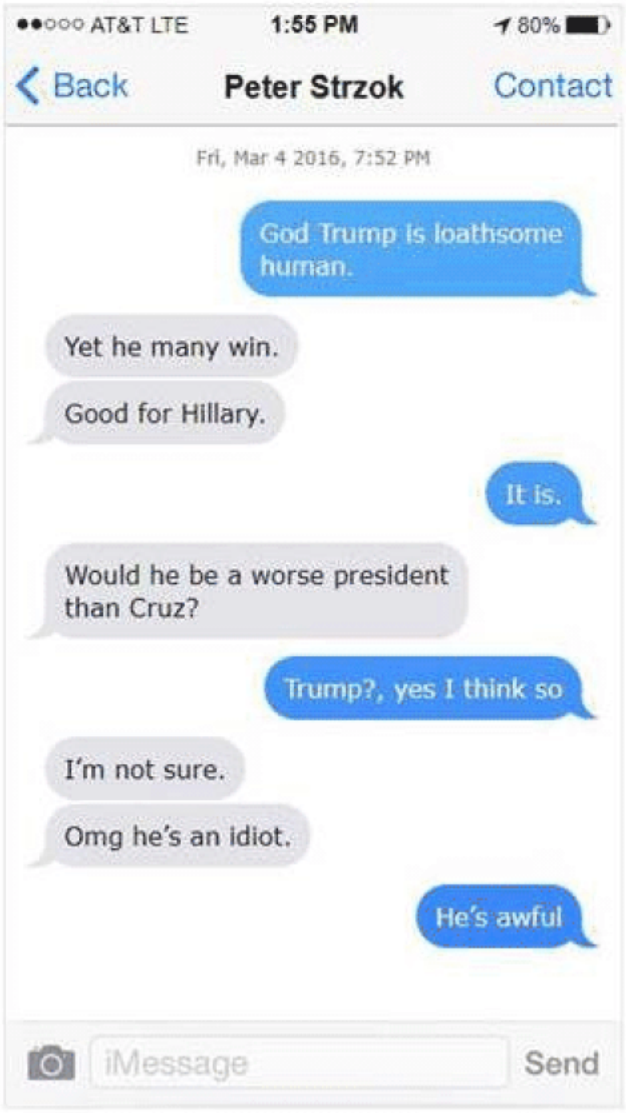
These screenshots of the Strzok texts that RNC is blasting out (below)… are those the real texts or are they the RNC marking up what they would like if sent on an iphone?

Don't judge me for being dumb!

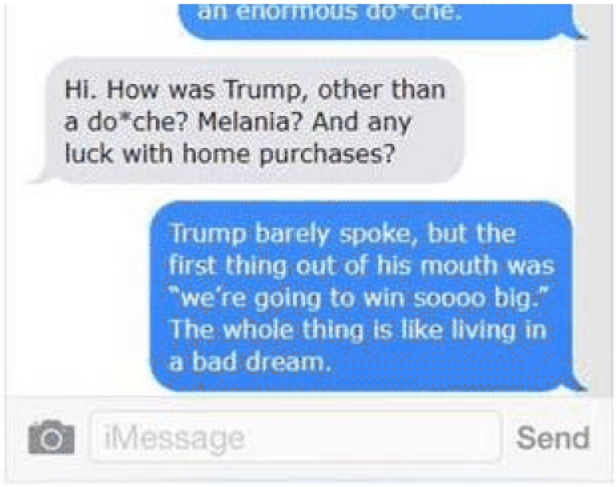
From: Michael Ahrens - Communications/Research [mailto:Mahrens@gop.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 3:24 PM
To: Michael Ahrens - Communications/Research
Subject: [EXTERNAL] texts from last night

For several months we've been told that the special counsel's office is conducting an unbiased, independent investigation into the 2016 election. But newly-revealed text messages from at least two members of Robert Mueller's team, Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, raise questions about the impartiality of the investigation.

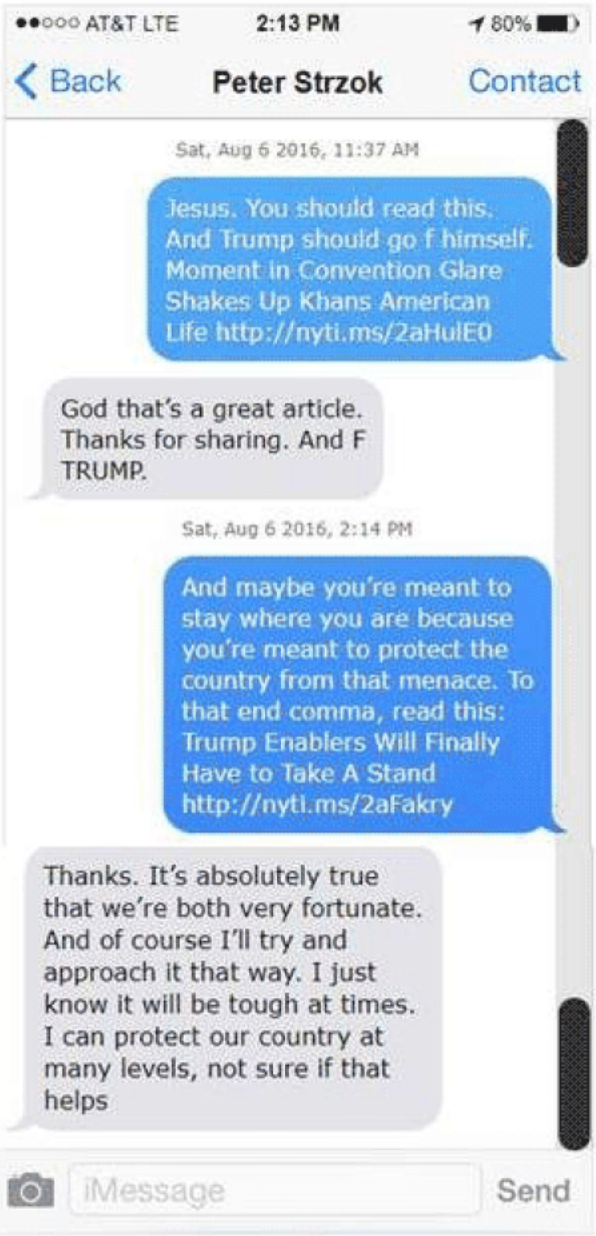
Here's just a sampling of the lovers' typo-ridden anti-Trump texts:

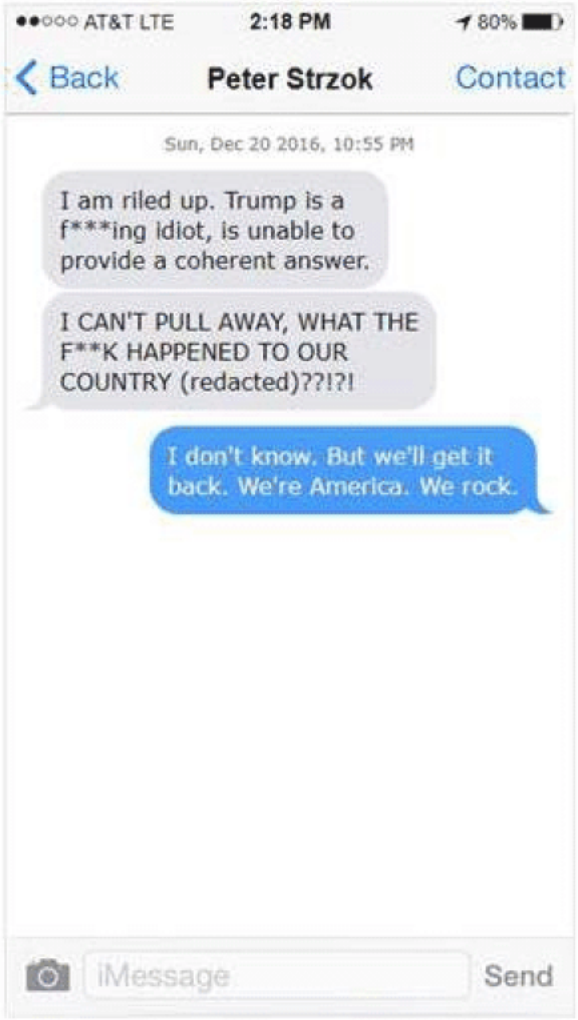


During the Republican National Convention...



"...you're meant to protect the country from that menace" ...





Michael Ahrens
Rapid Response Director
Republican National Committee
mahrens@gop.com
@michael_ahrens

Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com

From: Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 3:20 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Cc: Prior, Ian (OPA)
Subject: Re: A couple of Strzok questions

Copy of letter please. Tks mh

Sent from my iPhone

> On Dec 13, 2017, at 15:06, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:
>
> Yes, these are the pertinent texts as determined by the IG as our letter to congress addresses this. Ian can send you a copy.
>
> We sent you a statement that career officials approved the release on legal and ethical grounds that included the release to both congress and the media.
>
>> On Dec 13, 2017, at 2:53 PM, "Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com" <Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com> wrote:
>>
>> Colleagues tell me There are clearly SMSs omitted from the message chains in these documents. Who made the decision to omit them, the IG or DOJ? Secondly as I understand it career officials authorized release of messages to Congress but not to Media. Who explicitly authorized media release ? Tks mh
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone

Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com

From: Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 3:13 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Cc: Prior, Ian (OPA)
Subject: Re: A couple of Strzok questions

Ok this clarifies remaining issues. Tks

Sent from my iPhone

> On Dec 13, 2017, at 15:06, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:
>
> Yes, these are the pertinent texts as determined by the IG as our letter to congress addresses this. Ian can send you a copy.
>
> We sent you a statement that career officials approved the release on legal and ethical grounds that included the release to both congress and the media.
>
>> On Dec 13, 2017, at 2:53 PM, "Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com" <Mark.Hosenball@thomsonreuters.com> wrote:
>>
>> Colleagues tell me There are clearly SMSs omitted from the message chains in these documents. Who made the decision to omit them, the IG or DOJ? Secondly as I understand it career officials authorized release of messages to Congress but not to Media. Who explicitly authorized media release ? Tks mh
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone

Natasha Bertrand

From: Natasha Bertrand
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 11:30 AM
To: Prior, Ian (OPA)
Subject: Re: FW: DOJ invited reporters over to DOJ to view Strzok/Page texts

Can you disclose who invited the reporters to view the texts? Was it an initiative by the AG's office?

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 10:41 AM, Natasha Bertrand <nbertrand@businessinsider.com> wrote:

Ok. Thanks.

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 10:38 AM, Prior, Ian (OPA) <Ian.Prior@usdoj.gov> wrote:

Statement stands

Ian D. Prior

Principal Deputy Director of Public Affairs

Department of Justice

Office: 202.616.0911

Cell: (b) (6) [redacted]

For information on office hours, access to media events, and standard ground rules for interviews, please click here.

From: Natasha Bertrand [mailto:nbertrand@businessinsider.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:38 AM
To: Prior, Ian (OPA) <IPrior@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Re: FW: DOJ invited reporters over to DOJ to view Strzok/Page texts

Even amid an ongoing OIG investigation?

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 10:35 AM, Prior, Ian (OPA) <Ian.Prior@usdoj.gov> wrote:

From DOJ official:

We often provide information we give to Congressional committees to avoid any confusion.

Ian D. Prior

Principal Deputy Director of Public Affairs

Department of Justice

Office: 202.616.0911

Cell: (b) (6)

For information on office hours, access to media events, and standard ground rules for interviews, please click here.

From: Press
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:34 AM
To: Prior, Ian (OPA) <IPrior@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Cc: Pettit, Mark T. (OPA) <mtpettit@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: FW: DOJ invited reporters over to DOJ to view Strzok/Page texts

Thank you-KJ

From: Natasha Bertrand [mailto:nbertrand@businessinsider.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:26 AM
To: Press <Press@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: DOJ invited reporters over to DOJ to view Strzok/Page texts

Hi there,

I'm wondering what the DOJ's rationale was for inviting reporters over to view Strzok/Page texts on Tuesday amid the ongoing OIG investigaton.

Thank you,

Natasha

--

Natasha Bertrand

Political Correspondent | Business Insider

631.317.8409

@NatashaBertrand

--

Natasha Bertrand

Political Correspondent | Business Insider

631.317.8409

@NatashaBertrand

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Natasha Bertrand
Political Correspondent | Business Insider
631.317.8409
@NatashaBertrand

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Natasha Bertrand
Political Correspondent | Business Insider
631.317.8409
@NatashaBertrand

dlasseter@jmd.usdoj.gov

From:	dlasseter@jmd.usdoj.gov
Sent:	Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:23 AM
To:	Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep)
Cc:	Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep)
Subject:	Re: DOJ document review

Problem is we have the DAG before HJC right now. I know we are working on getting this over to y'all asap. The document production was atypical and thus necessitated hand delivery. We did this for each committee that requested this information.

David F. Lasseter

On Dec 13, 2017, at 10:17, Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) <Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov> wrote:

> I'm happy to deal with any of he other folks who I CC'd. Sounds like you are tending to more important things.
>
> On Dec 13, 2017, at 10:08 AM, Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <David.F.Lasseter@usdoj.gov> wrote:
>
> Jason—good morning. (b) (6) [redacted] We will fix this.
>
> David F. Lasseter
>
> On Dec 13, 2017, at 09:19, Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) <Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov> wrote:
>
> > I just tried your number. No answer. We still don't have the production that you have apparently provided to everyone else. The Chairman deserves an explanation for the delay, and we need to see what you've provided everyone else ASAP. From press reports, it appears to be just a few hundred text messages. There should be no technical reason not to follow our normal protocol of electronic delivery. Why didn't you? If you are going to deviate from the normal electronic delivery protocol, OLA should be communicating that and the reason for doing so to the Chairman's designated O&I staff. Please call to discuss further. Thanks.
> >
> > Cordially,
> > Jason Foster
> > Chief Investigative Counsel
> > Committee on the Judiciary
> >
> > United States Senate

224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Direct: (b) (6)

From: Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep)
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 9:04 PM
To: Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <David.F.Lasseter@usdoj.gov>
Cc: Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6)
Stephen E. Boyd (OLA) (b) (6)
Mary.Blanche.Hankey2@usdoj.gov; Parker, Daniel (Judiciary-Rep)
(b) (6)
Subject: Re: DOJ document review

Ok. Our front office got a call from a Ms. Hildebrand at 202-305-7851 trying to arrange for doc delivery tonight?

We have press inquiries asking us to confirm the Strzok texts are being delivered to us tonight. That's the first I've heard of that potential timing. Unless delivery is via email, we cannot receive docs tonight. And we always request electronic delivery to our correspondence email address: CEG@judiciary-rep.senate.gov whenever technically possible.

Please make sure Dan, Patrick, and I are CC'd and contacted directly about document delivery arrangements. And please talk to the Committee directly first rather than previewing doc productions to the press, if that has happened for some reason. Thanks.

Cordially,
Jason

On Dec 12, 2017, at 6:47 PM, Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <David.F.Lasseter@usdoj.gov> wrote:

We can chat tomorrow. I just want to work out the details to get your Boss and yourselves a view of the docs next week.

From: Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) [mailto:Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 6:19 PM
To: Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <dlasseter@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Cc: Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6)
Subject: Re: DOJ document review

Sorry I missed your call. We can touch base in the morning if you are free then or tonight via my cell if it is urgent.

On Dec 12, 2017, at 3:55 PM, Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <David.F.Lasseter@usdoj.gov> wrote:

Just tried you, call when you are able

Just tried you...call when you are able.

David F. Lasseter
202-514-1260

From: Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) [mailto:Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 12:24 PM
To: Lasseter, David F. (OLA) <dlasseter@jmd.usdoj.gov>; Flynn-Brown, Josh (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6) Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6) Parker, Daniel (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6) Sawyer, Heather (Judiciary-Dem) (b) (6) Breitenbach, Ryan (b) (6) Congressional Email; Parmiter, Robert (b) (6) Congressional Email; Hiller, Aaron (b) (6) Congressional Email; Davis, Kolan (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6)
Cc: Boyd, Stephen E. (OLA) (b) (6) Johnson, Joanne E. (OLA) <jojohnson@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: RE: DOJ document review

Thanks. Wed would likely work better for SJC Majority staff.

When will you make them available on the Hill for the Chairman and Ranking Member to personally review? That was the procedure followed with previous documents such as the Comey memos and a subset of this set.

Cordially,
Jason Foster
Chief Investigative Counsel
Committee on the Judiciary

United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Direct: (b) (6)

From: Lasseter, David F. (OLA) [mailto:David.F.Lasseter@usdoj.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 12:10 PM
To: Flynn-Brown, Josh (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6); Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) <Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>; Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6); Parker, Daniel (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6); Sawyer, Heather (Judiciary-Dem) (b) (6); Breitenbach, Ryan (b) (6) Congressional Email; Parmiter, Robert (b) (6) Congressional Email; Hiller, Aaron (b) (6) Congressional Email
Cc: Boyd, Stephen E. (OLA) (b) (6); Johnson, Joanne E. (OLA) <Joanne.E.Johnson@usdoj.gov>
Subject: RE: DOJ document review

All—good afternoon. To ensure clarity, this document review will occur at Main

Justice during the below time slots. Please let me know who will attend.

Thanks,
David

From: Lasseter, David F. (OLA)
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2017 5:49 PM
To: 'Flynn-Brown, Josh (Judiciary-Rep)' (b) (6) ; Foster, Jason (Judiciary-Rep) <Jason_Foster@judiciary-rep.senate.gov>; Davis, Patrick (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6) ; Parker, Daniel (Judiciary-Rep) (b) (6) ; Sawyer, Heather (Judiciary-Dem) (b) (6) ; 'Breitenbach, Ryan' (b) (6) Congressional Email ; 'Parmiter, Robert' (b) (6) Congressional Email ; Hiller, Aaron (b) (6) Congressional Email
Cc: Boyd, Stephen E. (OLA) (b) (6)
Subject: DOJ document review

All—good afternoon. The Department has agreed to accommodate a document review for the Chairman and Ranking Member, with two staffers each, of both SJC and HJC. These documents are related to previously received production requests and inquiries related to Mr. Steele. The times offered are listed below. Please let me know which times would work.

Monday 18 Dec 2-5pm
Wednesday 20 Dec 2-5pm

Thanks,
David

David F. Lasseter
Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Justice
(202) 514-1260

Zoe Tillman

From: Zoe Tillman
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:15 AM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Cc: Prior, Ian (OPA); Pettit, Mark T. (OPA)
Subject: Re: Strzok texts

My colleague Emma Loop will be going over to look at the docs, I've given her Mark's information and she'll be reaching out shortly.

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 10:02 AM, Zoe Tillman <zoe.tillman@buzzfeed.com> wrote:

> Thanks, can you explain what you mean in saying we couldn't source them to DOJ? Several reports said the texts were "released" by DOJ.
>
> On Dec 13, 2017 9:56 AM, "Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)" <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:
>
> > We have a hard copy you can review at the office. You can't take them with you, take pictures, or source them (to doj or otherwise).
> >
> > Mark will be the one to work with on that.
> >
> > On Dec 13, 2017, at 9:53 AM, Zoe Tillman <zoe.tillman@buzzfeed.com> wrote:
> >
> > > Good morning - are you providing the Strzok texts, or do I need to ask someone else?
> > >
> > > Thanks,
> > > Zoe
> > >
> > > --
> > > **Zoe Tillman** | **BuzzFeed News** | Reporter
> > > O: 202-602-1705 | M: (b) (6) | @zoetillman
> > > 1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20009

--
Zoe Tillman | **BuzzFeed News** | Reporter
O: 202-602-1705 | M: (b) (6) | @zoetillman
1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, 7th Floor, Washington, DC 20009

Chuck Ross

From: Chuck Ross
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 10:04 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Subject: Re: Strzok texts

Thanks. I'll try to track 'em down.

On Tue, Dec 12, 2017 at 8:59 PM, Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov> wrote:

> We provided to 5 committees on the hill. I don't have an electronic copy.
>
> > On Dec 12, 2017, at 9:59 PM, Chuck Ross <chuck@dailycaller.com> wrote:
> >
> > Hi Sarah,
> >
> > I'm trying to track down the Strzok text messages. I guess we were about the only outlet not to receive the release. I'm seeing it was through Rosenstein's office but wasn't sure if this was a public release or a mass leak of some sort.
> >
> > Do you have any guidance?
> >
> > Thank you,
> > Chuck Ross
> > The Daily Caller

Grace Wyler

From: Grace Wyler
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 10:21 PM
To: Press; O'Malley, Devin (OPA)
Subject: Strzok/Page Texts?

Hi all -

Can you please send over any documents DOJ has released containing text messages between Peter Strzok and Lisa Page?

Thanks so much!

Grace

--

--
Grace Wyler | BuzzFeed News | News Editor | 310-804-7785 | @grace_lightning
6824 Lexington Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038

Emma Loop

From: Emma Loop
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:38 AM
To: Pettit, Mark T. (OPA)
Subject: RE: Text messages

Will do, Thanks!

Emma Loop | BuzzFeed | Capitol Hill Reporter, Washington | @LoopEmma
c: (b) (6)

On Dec 13, 2017 10:30 AM, "Pettit, Mark T. (OPA)" <Mark.T.Pettit@usdoj.gov> wrote:

> Perfect, and correct! Our visitor entrance is on the south side of the building (Constitution Street). Give me a call on my cell when you are heading in and I will meet you up front.
>
> **Mark T. Pettit**
>
> Confidential Assistant
>
> Office of Public Affairs
>
> U.S. Department of Justice
>
> Office: 202.514.1449
>
> Cell: (b) (6)
>
> **From:** Emma Loop [mailto:emma.loop@buzzfeed.com]
> **Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:25 AM
> **To:** Pettit, Mark T. (OPA) <mtpettit@jmd.usdoj.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: Text messages
>
> I have a hard pass for the Hill, but I'm guessing the one you're talking about is different.

Full name on ID is (b) (6) . I'll probably be there in about 45 minutes. You're at 950 Pennsylvania, right?

Thanks again,

Emma

Emma Loop | BuzzFeed News | Capitol Hill Reporter, Washington | c: (b) (6) (on Signal) | d: 202-602-1706 | PGP: http://bit.ly/2pCPtjT | Twitter: @LoopEmma | buzzfeed.com/emmaloop

Got a confidential tip? Here's how to send it to us: tips.buzzfeed.com

On Wed, Dec 13, 2017 at 10:19 AM, Pettit, Mark T. (OPA) <Mark.T.Pettit@usdoj.gov> wrote:

> Hey Emma,
>
> I am assuming you don't have a hard pass (if you do let me know). I will need your full name as it appears on your ID and let me know what time you plan on coming in and I can get you cleared.
>
> -Mark
>
> **Mark T. Pettit**
>
> Confidential Assistant
>
> Office of Public Affairs
>
> U.S. Department of Justice
>
> Office: 202.514.1449
>
> Cell: (b) (6)
>
> **From:** Emma Loop [mailto:emma.loop@buzzfeed.com]

Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 10:18 AM
To: Pettit, Mark T. (OPA) <mtpettit@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Text messages

Good morning Mark,

My colleague Zoe Tillman has been in touch with you about viewing the Strzok texts. She's in a hearing and mentioned we need to view them in person at DOJ. Can you let me know how to go about doing that?

Thank you,

Emma

Emma Loop | **BuzzFeed News** | Capitol Hill Reporter, Washington | c: (b) (6) (on Signal) | d: 202-602-1706 | PGP: http://bit.ly/2pCPtjT | Twitter: @LoopEmma | buzzfeed.com/emmaloop

Got a confidential tip? Here's how to send it to us: tips.buzzfeed.com

From: "Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)" <Sarah.Isgur.Flores@usdoj.gov>
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 9:24 PM
To: Darren Samuelsohn <dsamuelsohn@politico.com>
Subject: RE: Seeking comment on criticism today DOJ is undermining the overall Mueller probe?

1. The Department ensures that its release of information from the Department to members of Congress or to the media is consistent with law, including the Privacy Act. As the Department's letter to Congress last night makes clear, this information was provided in response to requests from several Congressional committees for access to this information that was not subject to withholding exceptions. Notice and delivery of this information was made to the lawyers for the parties and the relevant congressional committees in advance of public release. Further, prior to release, career officials determined that the text messages could be released under both ethical and legal standards.
2. We followed past practice by including the attributable number in Note 3. I don't know where you heard that wasn't the case, but your information is incorrect.

Off the record:

1. Huh?! I'm a comms expert and can tell you the absolute worst way to sensationalize these tweets was to dump them all at once the night before a hearing. Truly. I could have let people say "Oh, I've read them and their ***really*** bad and then let R members have them just a little bit before the Ds and leaked out one at a time as we refused to release them and every cable news show would wonder when the next tweet was coming and cover it constantly. But instead I gave it to a dozen reporters all at once with the same embargo time because I thought it was the most fair way to treat

everyone involved in a difficult story. And, frankly, I find it offensive that anyone would think my motives were otherwise—I take my job and my responsibilities here seriously and hope you ask some of the beat reporters here who work with me every day.

2. Mueller's team made the call on not releasing his ethics form despite me telling them why we should—which should be obvious because if they wanted to release it, they are in possession of it and could do a voluntary release at any time (as we did with the AG's sf86 if you remember when that was subject to FOIA exemption but we did a voluntary release). So perhaps you should ask them to do that and see whether they give it to you. Otherwise, this theory will be particularly hilarious when its in your story to the SCO team that fought me on it.
3. I haven't even heard whatever youre talking about leaking to CNN? Do people actually think this? I watch a lot of tv and haven't seen it.
4. So what was RR thinking when he said he was satisfied with the job Mueller was doing? When he's constantly defended his hiring choices today and said employees were entitled to their political opinions? I mean, theres an equal opposite version of this story from the other side that would have just as much evidence that we're helping Democrats cement the Mueller probe.
5. This is a funny story to me only because republicans are hitting us CONSTANTLY for not providing them information like why Stroyk was removed from SCO in August when they asked back in October and covering up for the FBI, Mueller, etc. But I guess I should thank you for writing it since it might help us fend off those constant attacks…

S

xxx

Sarah Isgur Flores
Director of Public Affairs
202.305.5808

From: Darren Samuelsohn [mailto:dsamuelsohn@politico.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 8:51 PM
To: Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA) <siflores@jmd.usdoj.gov>
Subject: Seeking comment on criticism today DOJ is undermining the overall Mueller probe?

Hi Sarah,

Writing a piece for tomorrow AM that raises the question that came out of today's hearing that DOJ is quietly helping Republicans put pressure on the Mueller probe. I know the DAG was asked about this several different ways today about this, in light of last night's news release on the Strozk-Page text messages.

We're also raising in this story several other subtle events that have given Mueller critics a chance to criticize the probe, including the addition of the $3.5 million in costs added to the overall Mueller budget probe for DOJ components that the report itself noted were not required to be included by law or past precedent; the DAG's unusual and vague media statement in June; DOJ refusing to

disclose details on the process that led up to the special counsel being granted an ethics waiver to serve as special counsel; DOJ not coming to Mueller's defense amid criticism that his office leaked the news to CNN on the first indictments in late October.

Does DOJ want to comment in any way beyond the DAG's remarks today, which I'm pulling from extensively in my story. You can get back to me until 11:30 pm this evening.

Thank you,

Darren Samuelsohn
Senior reporter, POLITICO
Desk: 703-842-1769
Cell (b) (6)
Dsamuelsohn@politico.com
@dsamuelsohn

Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)

From:	Flores, Sarah Isgur (OPA)
Sent:	Monday, December 18, 2017 10:09 AM
To:	Natasha Bertrand
Subject:	Re: Dems statement
Attachments:	Screen Shot 2017-12-18 at 10.03.31 AM.png

Refer you to my earlier statements on twitter and the IGs statement on Friday night that I sent you.

On Dec 18, 2017, at 9:06 AM, Natasha Bertrand <nbertrand@businessinsider.com> wrote:

> Hi there,
>
> Wondering if DOJ plans to respond to this statement put out by the Dems late Friday night:
>
> <Screen Shot 2017-12-18 at 10.03.31 AM.png>
>
> Natasha
>
> --
> Natasha Bertrand
> Political Correspondent | Business Insider
> 631.317.8409
> @NatashaBertrand

"We are disappointed and alarmed that some within the Justice Department would mislead us about whether or not officials had obtained the approval of the Inspector General before releasing the text messages of Department employees to Congress and the press. This baffling breach of procedure raises the question of whether these messages should have been released at this time and in this manner in the middle of an ongoing IG investigation. It also invites questions about whether any responsible DOJ officials are going out of their way, not only to disparage the reputations of their colleagues, but to actively try to undermine confidence in Special Counsel Robert Mueller and the investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 election in an attempt to appease or directly serve the interests of President Trump. This is a very serious matter, and we expect a full and complete explanation for these misstatements and the underlying suspicious actions by the Department of Justice, including by the Public Affairs Officer, in the coming days."