

It Turns Out A Russian Oligarch Paid The Man Hired By Hillary Clinton To Claim Trump Colluded With Russia

By **Ashe Schow**

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The more we learn about the origins of the investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to steal the 2016 election, the more Russian connections link back to Hillary Clinton's campaign.

During an interview with The Hill's John Solomon, Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska acknowledged that he paid Christopher Steele (who was hired through an intermediary by the Clinton campaign to compile the infamous and discredited "Steele Dossier" alleging Team Trump colluded with Russia in 2016) for a research project.

"It was a research project to support one of the cases against me in London," Deripaska told Solomon. "But my understanding was that lawyers trust him for some reason and he was for quite a time on retainer."

Steele was hired initially by Deripaska in 2012, but the oligarch was unaware he had been working for the FBI. It should be noted that the Trump administration levied sanctions against Deripaska and he is engaged in a legal battle with the State Department over them and his inability to get a visa to come to the U.S.

The suggestion that Deripaska had paid Steele has been around for more than a year. In February 2018, Lee Smith published [an article](#) at Tablet Magazine that included a letter from then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) asking questions regarding Steele's own connections to Russian officials.

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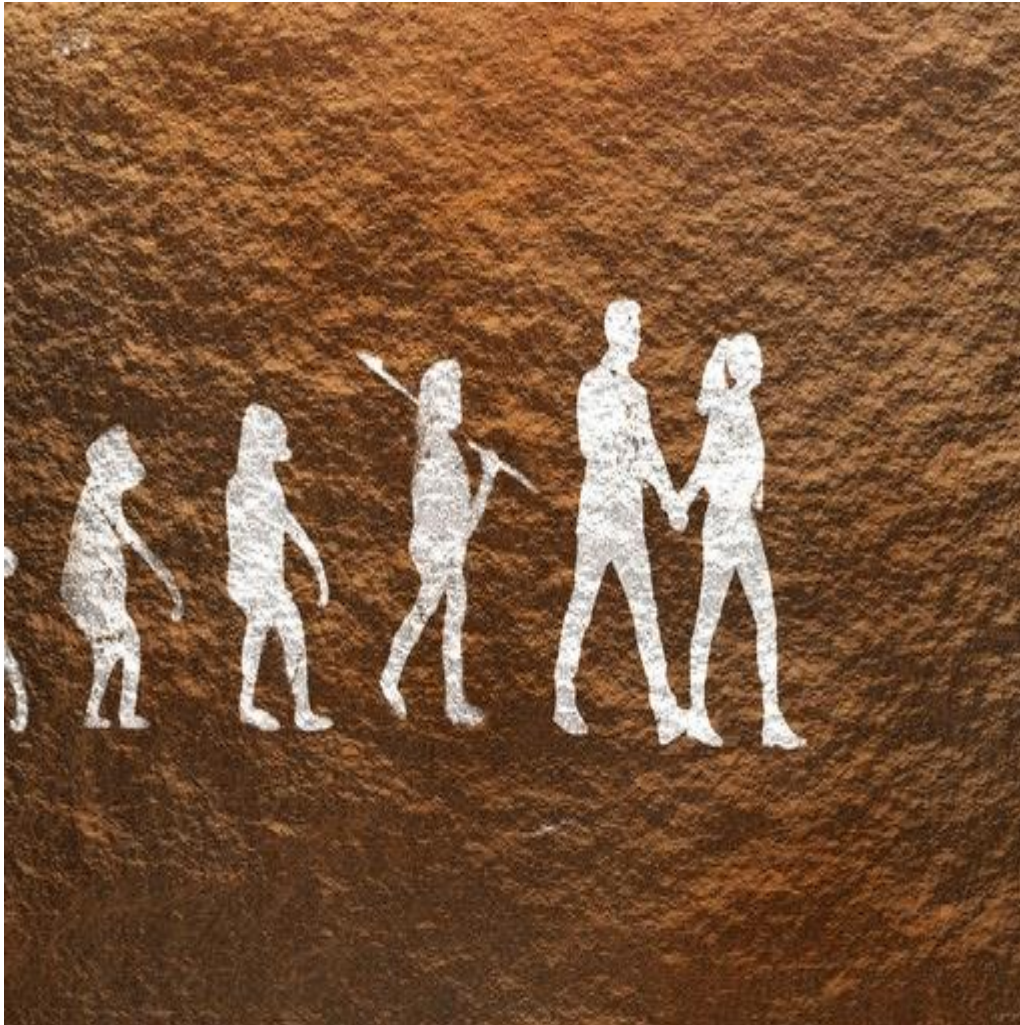
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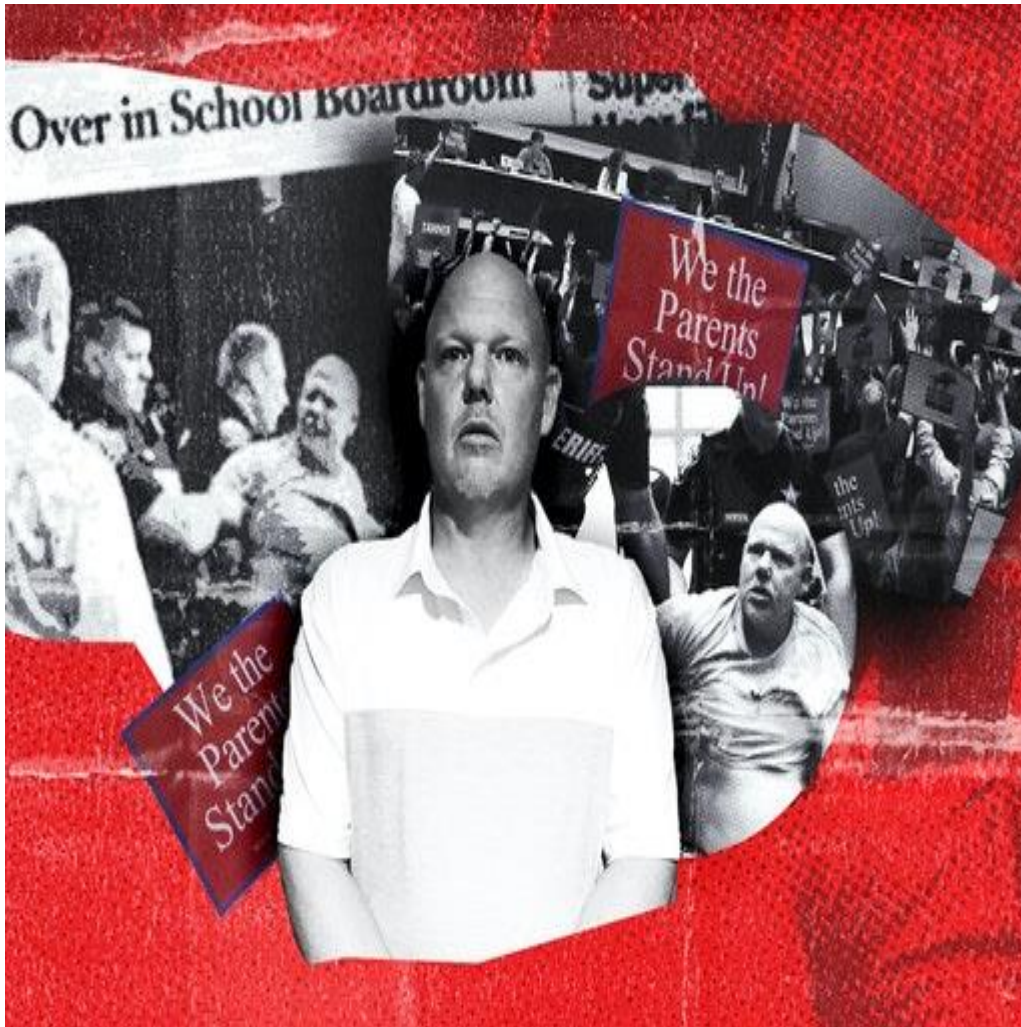
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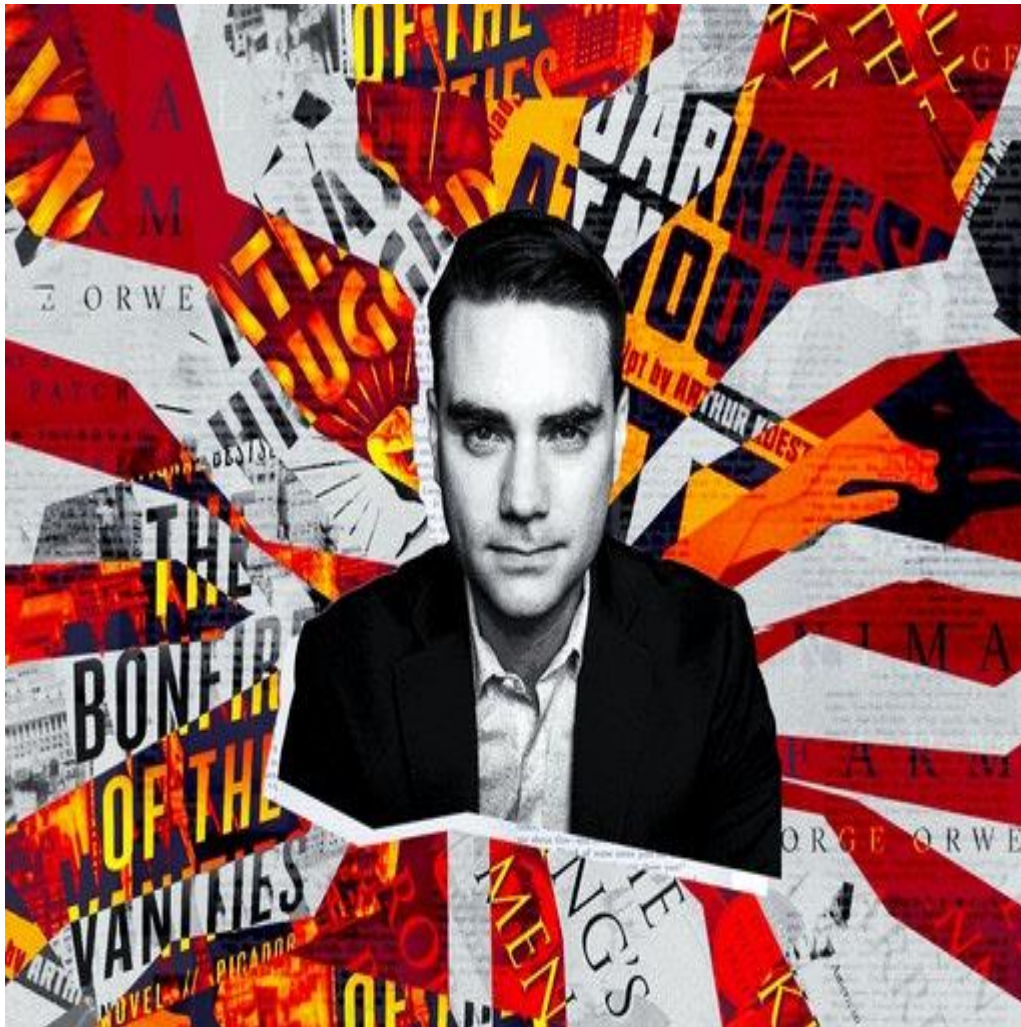
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In his [follow-up article](#) to the interview, Solomon wrote that Deripaska also confirmed a story he had heard a year earlier from law enforcement sources — that the FBI reached out to him in September 2016 for a “fishing” expedition to get dirt on the Trump campaign. Deripaska was sought because he had previously worked with former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort. From Solomon:

“I told them straightforward, ‘Look, I am not a friend with him [Manafort]. Apparently not, because I started a court case [against him] six or nine months before But since I’m Russian I would be very surprised that anyone from Russia would try to approach him for any reason, and wouldn’t come and ask me my opinion,’ ” he said, recounting exactly what he says he told the FBI agents that day.

“I told them straightforward, I just don’t believe that he would represent any Russian interest. And knowing what he’s doing on Ukraine for the last, what, seven or eight years.”

Solomon noted that Deripaska’s FBI interview was reportedly never given to Manafort’s attorneys. Manafort’s defense attorney, Kevin Downing, said the interview, which would be exculpatory evidence, was not handed over.

“Recent revelations by The Hill prove that the Office of Special Counsel’s (OSC) claim that they had a legitimate basis to include Paul Manafort in an investigation of potential collusion between the Trump presidential campaign and the Russian government is false,” Downing told Solomon. “The failure to disclose this information to Manafort, the courts, or the public reaffirms that the OSC did not have a legitimate basis to investigate Manafort, and may prove that the OSC had no legitimate basis to investigate potential collusion between the Trump presidential campaign and the Russian government.”

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