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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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IN RE: :

INTERVIEW OF JAMES BAKER :

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July 15, 2019

Washington, D.C.

Interview of

James Baker

By the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector
General, at the Department of Justice Building, beginning
at 11:05 a.m. before:

FOR THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL:

ANN MARIE TERZAKEN, Oversight and Review Division

DON BERTHIAUME, Oversight and Review Division

FOR THE WITNESS:

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GOVERNMENT EXHIBIT

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1 campaigns, to include presidential campaigns on the
2 Democratic side. Did you generally have a sense that they
3 represented, that their political law practice had a
4 Democratic clientele?

5 MR. BAKER: Maybe I should have, but I didn't
6 really understand it at the time.

7 MS. TERZAKEN: Is that right?

8 MR. BAKER: I did not, no.

9 MS. TERZAKEN: Okay.

10 MR. BAKER: I came to understand, you know,
11 that, that Perkins-Coie was playing a role with respect to
12 the DNC hack. But the, the extensiveness of their
13 contacts with the Democratic Party, I did not, at the
14 time, have an understanding about, that I recall.

15 MS. TERZAKEN: Okay.

16 MR. BAKER: Just back up, also on Bower and the
17 other guy. Sitting here today, I don't recall having any
18 conversations with them, just to be careful. I don't
19 think I've even met either one of them in person. But, -.

20 MS. TERZAKEN: Okay. With Michael Sussman, your
21 conversations with him before the election, if you could
22 briefly describe how the conversations came about, what
23 information he provided to you.

24 MR. BAKER: So, I'll go into the Sussman stuff,
25 yeah, okay. So he came in, he, he, all of this is gone

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1 over in the transcript with the committee, so I won't,
2 I'll try to just summarize briefly.

3 My basic recollection is, in some way, shape, or
4 form, Michael reached out, and wanted to come in and meet
5 with me. And so we scheduled that. So Michael came in
6 and met with me. And he had some amount of information,
7 physical evidence, printed out, and also a thumb drive or
8 two, that he said related to strange interactions that
9 some number of people that were his clients, who were, he
10 described as I recall it, sort of cyber-security experts,
11 had found about some strange connection between some part
12 of Donald Trump's organizations and Alfa Bank, which was
13 described as being controlled by the Kremlin. And that it
14 appeared to be the case that this was a, it was, it, it
15 was surmised that this was a back-channel, what do you
16 call it, a back-channel of electronic communications.
17 That, that somehow the Trump organization and Alfa Bank
18 were using this, what looked like a, basically a
19 surreptitious channel to communicate with each other.

20 And so he presented me with this information. I
21 listened to him. I, you know, took the information from
22 him, and I think immediately called up, I believe it was
23 Priestap, and I either went down to Priestap, or he sent
24 somebody to get it, but I got it out of my hands, like,
25 you know, that afternoon or that day, whatever it was.

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1 You know, shortly after Michael had given it to me.

2 MS. TERZAKEN: Did you discuss anything else
3 with Michael at the time?

4 MR. BAKER: Yes, I mean, I'm not going to be
5 able to remember all the details. But the basic idea was,
6 yes, Michael also said that some news organizations had
7 this information, as well, and that they were getting
8 ready to publish, and it would come out, you know,
9 relatively soon. At the, in, in that conversation I did
10 not ask, and he did not volunteer, who the media
11 organizations were.

12 So at some point in time then, after Priestap
13 and his, and company had a chance to look at that
14 information, Bill came back to me and said basically like,
15 Jim, there could be something here, there might not be
16 something here. It's going to take us longer to analyze
17 this. It would be helpful, our folks are worried about
18 that communications channel dropping if there's public
19 reporting about it and we would like to try to study it,
20 or at least have it available for study, so, is there any
21 way for you, Jim, to go back to Sussman, and ask him to
22 either reveal who the media is that has this information,
23 or ask them to delay it?

24 So then I had a subsequent, I believe it was a
25 phone call, with Michael. And I said Michael, who, you