



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 29, 2019

O'Donnell Retracts Loan Claim on Trump, Admits He Didn't Bother to Verify It

MSNBC talker Lawrence O'Donnell has retracted his claim that "Russian oligarchs" guaranteed loans for President Donald Trump.

O'Donnell based his claim on a single source he did not name, and he confessed that he did not attempt to verify the source's claims, a mortal sin for a journalist, particularly one of O'Donnell's repute and fame.



The left-wing host confessed his negligence in a tweet and on his program last night.

Leftist Lie?

[On Tuesday O'Donnell claimed](#) that a "single source close to Deutsche Bank," which loaned money to Trump, told him the German financial giant obtained the president's tax returns. They showed, O'Donnell averred, that "the president pays very little income tax."

But that won't be "surprising to people" or "especially politically damaging," he said, given that Trump has always admitted he pays as little income tax as possible, like most Americans with any sense.

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But what would matter is this: "This single source close to Deutsche Bank has told me that Donald Trump's loan documents there show that he has co-signers. That's how he was able to obtain those loans. And that the co-signers are Russian oligarchs."

"That would explain, it seems to me," [he continued](#), "every kind word Donald Trump has ever said about Russia and Vladimir Putin, if true — and I stress the 'if true' part of this."

Remarkably, an [MSNBC producer admitted](#) the network had no documents to prove the reckless, single-source claim, a fact that O'Donnell finally admitted after Trump's lawyers explained that he might wish to reconsider his claim.

Charles Harder, the man [who crushed](#) the [legal effort](#) to destroy the president by Stormy Daniels and her attorney, Michael Avenatti, issued the warning. "These statements are false and defamatory, and extremely damaging," [he wrote](#). "The only borrowers under these loans are Trump entities, and Mr. Trump is the only guarantor. Numerous documents for each of these loans are also recorded, publicly available and searchable online."

Then came the threat for which O'Donnell and the leftists at MSNBC weren't prepared:

Thus, actual malice can easily be proven based on your reckless disregard of the truth and unreasonable reliance on an alleged "source" who you will not even identify in your story and likely is seeking to mislead you and the public for political reasons or other ulterior motives. Demand is hereby made that Mr. O'Donnell and NBCU immediately and prominently retract, correct and apologize for the aforementioned false and defamatory statements.

Failure to retract and apologize, Harder warned, would invite a defamation lawsuit.



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That must have scared O'Donnell, [who tweeted](#) on Wednesday afternoon that he would have a word or two say about his allegations the previous night.

As promised, [O'Donnell fessed up](#):

Last night on this show I discussed information that wasn't ready for reporting

I repeated statements a single source told me about the president's finances and loan documents with Deutsche Bank.

Saying "if true" as I discussed the information was simply not good enough. I did not go through the rigorous verification and standards process here at MSNBC before repeating what I heard from my source.

Had it gone through that process, I would not have been permitted to report it. I should not have said it on air or posted it on Twitter. I was wrong to do so.

This afternoon, attorneys for the president sent us a letter asserting the story is false. They also demanded a retraction. Tonight, we are retracting the story. We don't know whether the information is inaccurate. But, the fact is, we do know it wasn't ready for broadcast, and for that, I apologize.

Of course, O'Donnell doesn't know if the information is accurate, either, and so the retraction really is not an admission of error.

As well, O'Donnell knew before the broadcast that "if true" is "simply not good enough." But he went ahead anyway.

Trump Hits Back

As is his wont, the president nailed O'Donnell this morning in three blistering tweets:

[Tweeted Trump](#):

Crazy Lawrence O'Donnell, who has been calling me wrong from even before I announced my run for the Presidency, even being previously forced by NBC to apologize, which he did while crying, for things he said about me & The Apprentice, was again forced to apologize, this time.....

...for the most ridiculous claim of all, that Russia, Russia, Russia, or Russian oligarchs, co-signed loan documents for me, a guarantee. Totally false, as is virtually everything else he, and much of the rest of the LameStream Media, has said about me for years. ALL APOLOGIZE!

[The totally inaccurate](#) reporting by Lawrence O'Donnell, for which he has been forced by NBC to apologize, is NO DIFFERENT than the horrible, corrupt and fraudulent Fake News that I (and many millions of GREAT supporters) have had to put up with for years. So bad for the USA!

Image of Lawrence O'Donnell: [Screenshot of video by MSNBC](#)



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