



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 29, 2018

FBI Uses News Stories Based on Its Leaks to Justify FISA Warrants, Says GOP

Representative Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) claims he has “hard evidence” that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) leaks information to the press and then uses the stories based on those leaks to obtain warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

The allegation that the FBI engages in this practice was first reported by the [Daily Caller](#) on the basis of an anonymous congressional source. The source told the website that FBI intelligence analyst Jonathan Moffa, in a congressional interview Friday, “more or less admitted that the FBI/DOJ have previously leaked info to the press and then used stories from the press as justifications for FISA warrants.”



Moffa’s alleged testimony jibes with the way the FBI used media coverage to justify its investigation of former Donald Trump campaign adviser Carter Page. The agency obtained four FISA warrants against Page largely on the basis of an unverified dossier compiled by former British intelligence agent Christopher Steele at the behest and expense of the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee. In the dossier, Steele alleged that Page had met secretly with Russian officials and had coordinated the Trump campaign’s supposed collusion with Moscow. In its FISA applications, the FBI cited a Yahoo! News article making some of the same claims without revealing that Steele was one of the unnamed sources for the article, making it appear that it had independent corroboration of the dossier. (Steele later admitted to having briefed reporters on the dossier, but no evidence thus far suggests that he leaked at the FBI’s direction.)

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An FBI source told the Daily Caller that the original report of Moffa’s testimony was “just not true.” However, noted the conservative outlet, the official “did not categorically deny that leaked information has never [sic] been used to obtain FISA applications.”

The source for the initial report has since modified his story, saying it was the result of internal “miscommunication.” Moffa did testify that the FBI uses news accounts in its FISA applications, the source said, but “he never explicitly said: ‘we use our own leaks.’”

“Frankly,” the source added, “he doesn’t have to” given what is known about “the FBI’s incredible culture of leaking for their own purposes.”

Whatever Moffa did or didn’t say, it seems clear that congressional Republicans are uncovering evidence to support their inferences from his testimony. On Monday evening, Meadows, chairman of the



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House Freedom Caucus, [tweeted](#): “We’ve learned NEW information suggesting our suspicions are true: FBI/DOJ have previously leaked info to the press, and then used those same press stories as a separate source to justify FISA’s. Unreal.”

“Jonathan Moffa made it clear to the committee the FBI routinely uses media reports to corroborate analytic work product,” Meadows said in a follow-up statement. “We have emails and texts plainly showing the FBI leaks to the media, raising major red flags. If FBI executives want the American people to believe they haven’t used leaks to their advantage, they are not being honest.”

On Tuesday, Meadows told Fox News Channel’s *America’s Newsroom* that Americans will be “appalled” when they learn how the FBI used leaks to further its investigation into the Trump campaign.

“We know that some people at the Department of Justice and FBI actually gave information to the media and then the stories were reported, then they used those reports to justify further investigations,” Meadows [said](#). “That’s like saying we are going to incriminate on one hand and be the jury on the other. It just doesn’t work that way.... We have some hard evidence that will be hard to refute.”

Meadows also claimed to have “have evidence that would suggest that FBI informants were told that there was no collusion [between Russia and the Trump campaign] and yet it seemed to be ignored.”

Congressional Republicans hoped to follow up on this evidence in a closed-door grilling of Justice Department official Bruce Ohr Tuesday. While Ohr’s testimony remains off-limits to the public, GOP lawmakers’ [post-testimony remarks](#) indicate that the FBI did indeed withhold exculpatory evidence from the FISA court.

Republicans are sure to keep digging into this matter. Those on the receiving end of their questions would be wise to drop their own shovels and tell the truth.



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