

October 13, 2022

Marjorie Miller
Administrator, The Pulitzer Prize Board
Columbia University
709 Pulitzer Hall
2950 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Dear Ms. Miller:

On behalf of our client, President Donald J. Trump, we write to notify the Pulitzer Prize Board (the “Board”), pursuant to § 770.01, Fla. Stat., that a defamatory statement pertaining to President Trump was and remains published on the Board’s website since July 18, 2022.¹ The subject statement reads as follows:

News • July 18, 2022

A Statement from the Pulitzer Prize Board

The Pulitzer Prize Board has an established, formal process by which complaints against winning entries are carefully reviewed. In the last three years, the Pulitzer Board has received inquiries, including from former President Donald Trump, about submissions from The New York Times and The Washington Post on Russian interference in the U.S. election and its connections to the Trump campaign--submissions that jointly won the 2018 National Reporting prize.

These inquiries prompted the Pulitzer Board to commission two independent reviews of the work submitted by those organizations to our National Reporting competition. Both reviews were conducted by individuals with no connection to the institutions whose work was under examination, nor any connection to each other. The separate reviews converged in their conclusions: that no passages or headlines, contentions or assertions in any of the winning submissions were discredited by facts that emerged subsequent to the conferral of the prizes.

The 2018 Pulitzer Prizes in National Reporting stand.

(the “Defamatory Statement”).

Be advised that the Board, including its *individual members*, may be subject to suit and exposed to a judgment for damages, including punitive damages, for defamation.² This letter

¹ *Pulitzer Prize Board, A Statement from the Pulitzer Prize Board*, published July 18, 2022 (available at <https://www.pulitzer.org/news/statement-pulitzer-prize-board-2>) (last accessed October 11, 2022).

² *See Larkin v. Buranosky*, 973 So.2d 1286, 1287 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008) (individual members are the proper defendants for actions against unincorporated associations).

places the Board on notice that the Defamatory Statement must be removed from the Board's website within five (5) days of receipt of this letter, and a full and fair correction, apology, or retraction issued. Under the circumstances, rescinding the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes in National Reporting from their current recipients would necessarily be part of any full and fair attempt to right the wrong caused by the Board's conduct.

By ratifying the 2018 prizes awarded to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, the Board and its individual members are participating in and perpetuating the absurdly false and defamatory narrative contrived by the President's political opponents: that he and his campaign somehow colluded with Vladimir Putin and the Russian government to gain advantage in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and thereafter maintained some nefarious connection with Russian elements during the presidential transition and Trump administration (the "Russia Collusion Hoax").

The New York Times and *The Washington Post* were and are two of the foremost propagators of the Russia Collusion Hoax, and the specific submissions noted in the Board's conferral of the 2018 award do not exist in a vacuum—they represent a portion of the overall false narrative. According to the Board, the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes were awarded for purportedly "deeply sourced, relentlessly reported coverage in the public interest that dramatically furthered the nation's understanding" of Russian interference in the 2016 election and its alleged connections to the Trump campaign. However, the individual submissions—20 articles across two of the nation's most prominent daily periodicals—can hardly be called "relentless" reporting by themselves. Instead, it is obvious that the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes were intended to endorse the two mainstream media organizations' full, misleading body of work on the Russia Collusion Hoax. In conferring these awards, the individuals on the 2018 Board spoiled the reputation earned by their predecessors over the last century, which established the Pulitzer Prize as the pinnacle of American journalistic excellence, by endorsing one of the most shameful displays of political bias in the history of the press.

Therefore, despite the Board's assertion that the 2018 recipients performed a public service, it is clear that a large swath of Americans actually had a tremendous *misunderstanding of the truth* when the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes were conferred, which the prizes wrongfully perpetuated. Contrary to the breathless obsession that animated the *Times'* and *Post's* reporting and commentary on the Russia Collusion Hoax, Special Counsel Mueller's report found no evidence whatsoever that President Trump colluded with the Kremlin to manipulate the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. In addition to the Mueller Report, the 2019 DOJ Memorandum in Review of the Special Counsel's Report, the DOJ's Inspector General Report, the Report of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and the findings of various federal investigations, indictments, and individual testimonies have all been publicized since the Board's conferral of the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes and directly refute the key allegations and assertions advanced by the prize recipients.³ Simply put, since the 2018 prizes were awarded, the Russia Collusion Hoax has been revealed for

³ President Trump's last communication to the Board through counsel, dated July 5, 2022 (the "July Letter"), provided a detailed, without being exhaustive, list of ways the articles submitted by the *Times* and the *Post* have been debunked and are unworthy of the prestigious awards previously conferred by the Board. For ease of reference, a copy of the July Letter is enclosed as "Exhibit A" and is incorporated herein by reference.

what it always was: a false attack against President Trump to injure him personally, financially, and politically.

In the face of this irrefutable reality, the arrogance of the Board's Defamatory Statement is breathtaking. The Board simply disregards the well-publicized findings of the official investigations and claims to have relied instead on its "established, formal process" by commissioning a pair of supposedly non-biased independent investigations, that lasted little more than a week, and separately, incomprehensibly, concluded that *nothing* has emerged since the conferral of the awards—not the 22-month, \$32 million Mueller Investigation or anything that followed—to "discredit" the reporting that advanced the Russia Collusion Hoax and won the 2018 Pulitzer Prizes. The use of individual, anonymous sources whose processes and motivations are allegedly irreproachable is fitting; it mirrors the "deeply sourced" style found in many of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning submissions.

This is what makes the Defamatory Statement so pernicious: under the guise of neutrality and banking on a century of awarding prizes "for disinterested and meritorious public service rendered by an American newspaper," the Board and its members are intentionally perpetuating the wrongful illusion in the minds of readers that the Russia Collusion Hoax was real. Why? Because the Board seems to believe that preserving the Russia Collusion Hoax justifies the deeply false, ongoing, and severe attacks by it and the rest of the ideologically homogenous left-wing media against President Trump and anyone who would dare support him personally, financially, or politically. If the Board, the *Times*, and the *Post* were widely known to have been *so wrong* on such a historic issue—or worse, that certain trusted individuals or organizations were shown to have willingly and knowingly *participated in* the hoax—the impression of omnipotence and infallibility by which the Board, its individual members, and the rest of the media elite attempt to manipulate the American public might be existentially endangered. It appears that the Board has decided to instead ride the lie.

By accrediting the false and misleading reporting of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize recipients with purported independent factual support, the Board has attempted to cast a halo around the entire universe of wrongful reporting on the Russia Collusion Hoax. The Board's intent in publishing the Defamatory Statement is clear: to preserve and propagate the demonstrably false narrative that President Trump colluded with an adversarial foreign government to become President and thereafter continued that association in some capacity while in office. By publishing the Defamatory Statement, the Board and its members acted not only with reckless disregard for the truth, but with authentic animosity and malice toward President Trump and the desire to cause him true harm. As such, the members of the Board are *individually* liable for the publication of the Defamatory Statement.

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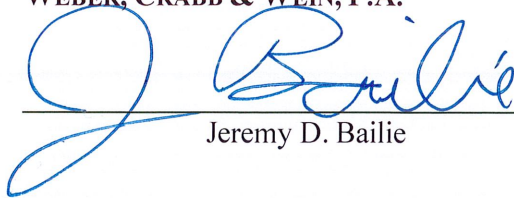
Please govern yourself accordingly.

Very truly yours,



R. Quincy Bird

WEBER, CRABB & WEIN, P.A.



Jeremy D. Bailie

Enclosure

EXHIBIT A

JRowley Law PLLC

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July 5, 2022

VIA U.S. Certified Mail

Ms. Marjorie Miller
Administrator, Pulitzer Board
Columbia University, 709 Pulitzer Hall
2950 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Re: 2018 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting

Dear Ms. Miller:

We write on behalf of our client, President Donald J. Trump, to address his concerns regarding the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting (the “Prize”) that your organization bestowed on *The New York Times*^{1/} and *The Washington Post* for articles that accused him of “colluding” with the Russian government to gain advantage in the 2016 presidential election. Although the articles have been largely debunked, the Pulitzer Board (“Pulitzer” or the “Board”) has continued to promote them on its website, as purportedly:

deeply sourced, relentlessly reported coverage in the public interest that dramatically furthered the nation’s understanding of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and its connections to the Trump campaign, the President-elect’s transition team and his eventual administration.

The idea that President Trump plotted with Vladimir Putin to skew the 2016 election in his favor was always preposterous. Since 2018, if not before, it has been clear that the articles upon which the Pulitzer Board based its Prize included numerous false statements that are defamatory to our client. We assume that in awarding the Prize, the Board was misled by frenzied media reports alleging that President Trump colluded with Russia. That was never plausible, and it has since been proven to have been a cynical invention of Hillary Clinton, her campaign, and the DNC. Nonetheless, through other counsel and directly, President Trump has asked Pulitzer on three prior

^{1/} According to the Pulitzer Board’s website, the Board moved *The New York Times* entry into contention and then jointly awarded the Prize to it and *The Washington Post*.

occasions to withdraw the Prize and remove reference to it from its website.^{2/} For some reason, at least up to now, the Board has ignored those requests.

We know that Pulitzer has withdrawn a prize it awarded under similar circumstances on at least one other occasion – and also accepted the withdrawal of an entry that turned out to be less worthy than it originally believed. In 1981, the Board rescinded the prize to *Washington Post* reporter Janet Cooke after she admitted that she had fabricated her story, “Jimmy’s World,” about an 8-year-old heroin addict in the District of Columbia. In 2020, Pulitzer’s International Reporting jury chose a *New York Times* story, “Caliphate,” as one of three finalists in the category. After Canadian authorities charged a figure profiled in the entry with perpetrating a terrorist hoax, an internal *Times* investigation concluded that the work failed that newspaper’s “standards for accuracy.” Pulitzer then accepted withdrawal of the entry. We gather from these examples that the Board rescinded these prizes to protect journalistic integrity and its own credibility. The Prize awarded for reporting the Russia Collusion Hoax as “deeply sourced” is an even more egregious instance of phony journalism than either of the examples cited above. The Board should have rescinded the Prize long ago on its own initiative. Had it done so, this letter reminding Pulitzer of its ethical and legal obligations would be unnecessary.

In response to President Trump’s concerns, your organization is quoted in an October 2021 article in *The Hill* as stating that “The Pulitzer Board has a standing process for reviewing questions about past awards, under the guidelines of which complaints are considered by an appointed committee.”^{3/} Nonetheless, the Board has refused to say if it is still reviewing the awards it granted to two of the primary corporate media outlets that were responsible for promoting the Russia Collusion Hoax.^{4/} It seems obvious that the integrity of the awards process, to say nothing of Pulitzer’s reputation, requires that it provide President Trump, and the American public generally, an explanation of why a Prize based on fallacious reporting has not been rescinded and continues to be published on Pulitzer’s website.

We do not know whether, based on their “deeply sourced [and], relentlessly reported coverage,” *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* understood when they published their articles in 2017 that they were parroting political disinformation, or whether they only came to learn of the fabrications after the subsequent federal investigations.^{5/} Either way, the *Times* and

^{2/} Letters of October 3, 2021, November 15, 2021, and May 27, 2022

^{3/} Caroline Vakil, “Trump doubles down on calling for Pulitzers to be revoked from WaPost, NYT,” *The Hill*, October 29, 2021 (<https://thehill.com/homenews/media/579110-trump-doubles-down-on-calling-for-pulitzer-award-to-be-revoked-from-wapost-nyt/>).

^{4/} Jordan Boyd, “Why Won’t The Pulitzer Board Answer Trump On Whether Its ‘Review Process’ Is Legit Enough To Revoke Prizes For Russia Hoax Propaganda?”, *The Federalist*, June 3, 2022 (<https://thefederalist.com/2022/06/03/>).

^{5/} Insofar as we know, neither the *Times* nor the *Post* has offered to return their Prize or correct the factual record about the false and misleading information they published.

the *Post* are undeserving of your organization's prestigious award, and it is fundamentally unfair and damaging to President Trump for Pulitzer to continue promoting the Prize.

We offer the information below to assist Pulitzer's committee and its "standing process" for its review of President Trump's stated concerns about the Board's continuing publication of the Prize.

A. The Russian Collusion Hoax has been Repeatedly Debunked

The slanderous allegation that President Trump and his campaign colluded with Russian government officials to affect the outcome of the 2016 election featured prominently in the 2017 reporting that earned the Prize. It has been repeatedly discredited by the U.S. Government and other authorities, including the ones referenced in the section that follows.

1. The Mueller Report

On March 22, 2019, after a nearly two-year investigation staffed by 19 attorneys and 40 FBI agents and personnel, and which included 2,800 grand jury subpoenas, 500 search warrants, 230 court orders for communications records, nearly 50 pen register orders, and approximately 500 witness interviews, Special Counsel Robert Mueller issued his much-anticipated *Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*.^{6/}

In a letter to Congress on April 19, 2019, Attorney General William Barr summarized the results of the Mueller investigation: "the Special Counsel stated his bottom-line conclusion on the question of so-called 'collusion' as follows: '[T]he investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities.'"^{7/}

2. The DOJ's Inspector General Report

On December 9, 2019, the Office of the Inspector General for the United States Department of Justice issued a report titled *Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation* ("OIG Report").^{8/} The purpose of the OIG's review was:

^{6/} Available at <https://www.justice.gov/archives/ag/page/file/1147981/download>.

^{7/} Available at <https://www.justice.gov/archives/ag/page/file/1167086/download>; Letter from Attorney General William Barr to Congress dated April 18, 2019 (<https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/download>). Special Counsel Muller provided his Report to Attorney General William Barr on March 22, 2019. The Justice Department released a redacted version of the Report to the public on April 18, 2019.

^{8/} Available at <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2019/o20012.pdf>.

[T]o examine certain actions by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department during an FBI investigation opened on July 31, 2016, known as “Crossfire Hurricane,” into whether individuals associated with the Donald J. Trump for President Campaign were coordinating, wittingly or unwittingly, with the Russian government's efforts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

(OIG Report, Executive Summary at i).

The OIG Report “identified at least 17 significant errors or omissions” in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (“FISA”) warrant applications related to former Trump Campaign foreign policy advisor Carter Page, and “many additional errors” in the FBI's factual accuracy review procedures. The OIG Report detailed the dissemination of false information to the FBI in the form of the discredited “Steele Dossier,” the FBI's reliance on that information as the basis for its FISA applications, and the relationships between Christopher Steele and Fusion GPS, a consulting firm hired by the Hillary Clinton Campaign and/or the DNC.

The OIG Report described the dissemination of false information about a linkage between the Trump campaign and Russian Alpha Bank. The report included a summary of the interactions between a cast of characters, including Clinton Campaign attorneys; former DOJ Associate Deputy Attorney General Bruce Orr, whose wife worked for Fusion GPS; and FBI Counterintelligence Division Deputy Assistant Director Peter Strzok and Special Counsel to the FBI Deputy Director Lisa Page, who texted about the “insurance policy” they had in place to prevent the election of President Trump.

3. The Report of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court

On December 19, 2019, the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (“FISC”) issued a rare public order that referred to DOJ’s OIG Report and related disclosures concerning the reliability of the information that served as the basis for the four FISA warrant applications related to Carter Page. The FISC’s order stated that, “When FBI personnel mislead [DOJ’s National Security Division] in the ways described above, they equally mislead the FISC.”^{9/}

The FISC ordered, among other things, that the Government “inform the Court in a sworn written submission of what it has done, and plans to do, to ensure that the statement of facts in each FBI application accurately and completely reflects information possessed by the FBI that is material to any issue presented by the application.”

^{9/} Available at <https://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/Misc%2019%2002%20191217.pdf>. See also declassified Order dated Dec. 5, 2019 (www.fisc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/FISC%20Dec%2005%20Redacted%20Order%20191220.pdf). See generally U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee website at <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/04/16/2020/fisa-investigation>. (<https://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/FISC%20Dec%2005%20Redacted%20Order%20191220.pdf>).

On January 7, 2020, the FISC ordered DOJ to explain how it would protect the information it had obtained through its surveillance of Carter Page that was authorized by the FISA warrants.^{10/}

On March 4, 2020, the FISC issued an order requiring detailed information about the steps taken by DOJ and the FBI to address its shortcomings and prohibiting any DOJ or FBI personnel “under disciplinary or criminal review relating to their work on FISA applications” from participating “in drafting, verifying, reviewing, or submitting such applications to the Court.”^{11/}

B. The Fallout from the Russian Collusion Hoax

The Russia Collusion Hoax inflicted untold damage on the nation and its institutions, while also interfering with President Trump’s Administration for essentially his entire term as President. The Hoax that Hillary Clinton perpetuated also spawned a series of legal actions, including:

1. Michael Sussman

On September 16, 2021, a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia indicted former Clinton campaign lawyer, Michael Sussman, on one count of making False Statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001. The charge was prosecuted by Special Counsel John Durham based on evidence that Mr. Sussman falsely represented to the FBI that he was not acting on behalf of any client when he informed the FBI of the fake connection between President Trump and Russia’s Alpha Bank. The evidence established that he in fact did so on behalf of the Clinton campaign and technology executive Rodney Joffe of Neustar, Inc., which was the source of the DNS traffic analysis purporting to show a connection between President Trump and Alpha Bank.^{12/}

The 27-page indictment^{13/} against Mr. Sussman details his efforts to disseminate the false Alpha Bank story to the news media and U.S. Government agencies.

On May 31, 2022, the trial jury acquitted Mr. Sussman, apparently crediting defense arguments that his statements to the FBI were not *materially* false, *i.e.*, that his relationship with the Clinton campaign did not affect the FBI’s decisions and actions with respect to the information he provided.

^{10/} Available at <https://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/FISC%20Declassified%20Order%2016-1182%2017-52%2017-375%2017-679%20%20200123.pdf>.

^{11/} Available at <https://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/Misc%2019%2002%20Opinion%20and%20Order%20PJ%20JEB%20200304.pdf>.

^{12/} *United States v. Sussman*, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Case No. 1:21-cr-00582 (CRC).

^{13/} Available at <https://www.justice.gov/sco/press-release/file/1433511/download>.

Despite Mr. Sussman's acquittal, the testimony elicited at the trial proved that the Russia Collusion Hoax was the brainchild of Mrs. Clinton and her top advisors. Clinton campaign lawyer, Mark Elias, confirmed that he hired opposition research firm Fusion GPS in April 2016, and that senior Clinton campaign officials were aware of that decision. Mr. Elias also confirmed that senior Clinton campaign officials knew the Alpha Bank story was fake.

Former Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook testified that Hillary Clinton authorized sharing the Alpha Bank story with former *New York Times* reporter Eric Lichtblau, whom Sussman's defense attorneys sought, but ultimately declined, to call as a witness at the trial. As of the date of the filing of this Complaint, *The New York Times's* website identifies Mr. Lichtblau as "part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 2018 for reporting on Donald Trump's advisers and their connections to Russia."^{14/}

2. Igor Danchenko

On November 2, 2021, a federal grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia indicted Igor Danchenko on five counts of making False Statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001.^{15/} Mr. Danchenko is identified in the 39-page indictment^{16/} as the primary source of the phony "Steele Dossier" that was peddled to the FBI, other federal government agencies, and the press by Fusion GPS, the Clinton campaign, and the DNC. Mr. Danchenko's trial is scheduled to begin later this year in October.

3. Kevin Clinesmith

On August 19, 2020, Kevin Clinesmith pled guilty to one count of making False Statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001.^{17/} Mr. Clinesmith, a former Assistant General Counsel in the FBI's National Security and Cyber Law Branch, provided support to the Justice Department's National Security Division to prepare the FISA warrant applications related to Carter Page. He altered language in an email to an FBI agent to falsely make it appear that Mr. Page was not a source for the CIA, which made Mr. Page's activities appear to be suspicious and bolstered the FISA warrant application.

^{14/} "Eric Lichtblau", *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/by/eric-lichtblau>).

^{15/} *United States v. Danchenko*, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia Case No. 1:21-cr-00245 (AJT).

^{16/} Available at <https://www.justice.gov/sco/press-release/file/1446386/download>.

^{17/} *United States v. Clinesmith*, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Case No. 1:20-cr-00165 (JEB).

4. Michael Flynn

On December 1, 2017, former Lieutenant General and National Security Advisor Michael Flynn pled guilty to one count of making False Statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001, for his statements to the FBI about his communications with the Russian Ambassador in December 2016.^{18/}

On January 14, 2020, after the revelations contained in the Mueller and DOJ OIG Reports, General Flynn moved to withdraw his guilty plea prior to sentencing, followed by a motion to dismiss the case “for Egregious Government Misconduct and in the Interest of Justice” on January 29, 2020.

On May 7, 2020, the Justice Department filed a Motion to Dismiss the case against General Flynn, explaining that his statements were not material to the FBI where the interview during which he made them “was untethered to, and unjustified by, the FBI’s counterintelligence investigation into Mr. Flynn – a no longer justifiably predicated investigation that the FBI had, in its own words, prepared to close because it had yielded ‘an *absence* of *any* derogatory information.’”

After the federal judge assigned to the case, in a highly unusual action, appointed an “amicus curiae” to present arguments to the court against the Government’s Motion to Dismiss the case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit declined to direct the District Court judge to dismiss the case.^{19/} To rectify the injustice, President Trump pardoned General Flynn on November 25, 2020, forcing the District Court to dismiss the case as moot five days later.

5. Carter Page

On November 27, 2020, Mr. Page filed a civil Complaint in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia alleging a series of causes of action against the DOJ, the FBI, James Comey, Andrew McCabe, Kevin Clinesmith, Peter Strzok, Lisa Page, and others related to the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. That case is pending as of the date of this letter.^{20/}

C. Faulty Reporting and the Pulitzer Prize

Much of the American media, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, eagerly participated in promoting the false Russia Collusion Hoax by reporting story after story purporting to tie President Trump and his associates to the Russian government.

^{18/} *United States v. Flynn*, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Case No. 1:17-cr-00232 (EGS).

^{19/} *In re Flynn*, United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit case No. 20-5143.

^{20/} *Page v. Comey, et al.*, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Case No. 1:20-cv-03460 (DLF).

On or about April 16, 2018, the Pulitzer Prize Board announced its awards for 2017, including those to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* in the category of National Reporting.^{21/} Pulitzer's webpage lists 20 articles, ten from each news organization, which had been published between February 9, 2017, and December 30, 2017. Far from being "deeply sourced, relentlessly reported coverage," the articles regurgitated information from the Clinton campaign's promotion of the false narrative that the Trump Campaign colluded with the Russian government to influence the 2016 election. Indeed, upon information and belief, former *New York Times* reporter and Pulitzer honoree, Eric Lichtblau, was one of the conduits for the false information about Alpha Bank and the Steele Dossier.

The articles in question are replete with references to the "collusion" between the Trump Campaign and Russian officials. For example:

- "[Former Deputy Attorney General and Acting Attorney General Sally] Yates and other officials were aware of an FBI investigation looking at possible contacts between Trump associates and Russia"^{22/}
- President Trump "faces legal and political pressure on multiple Russia-related fronts. Last week, he fired FBI Director James B. Comey in the midst of a bureau investigation into possible links between the Trump campaign and Moscow."^{23/}
- The FBI, as well as the Senate Intelligence Committee, is investigating Russian interference in the election and alleged contacts between Trump's associates and the Kremlin."^{24/}
- Omissions in Jared Kushner's security clearance forms were "particularly sensitive given the congressional and FBI investigations into contacts between Russian officials and Trump associates."^{25/}
- *The New York Times* repeatedly cited congressional testimony by former Acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe confirming "the existence of a 'highly significant'

^{21/} Available at <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/staffs-new-york-times-and-washington-post>.

^{22/} Adam Entous, *et al.*, "Justice Department warned White House that Flynn could be vulnerable to Russian blackmail, officials say," *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2017.

^{23/} Greg Miller, *et al.*, "Trump revealed highly classified information to Russian foreign minister and ambassador," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2017.

^{24/} Tom Hamburger, *et al.*, "FBI once planned to pay former British spy who authored controversial Trump dossier," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 2017.

^{25/} Jo Becker, *et al.*, "Kushner Omitted Meeting with Russians on Security Clearance Forms," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2017.

investigation into possible collusion between Mr. Trump's associates and Russian operatives to sway the presidential election."^{26/}

The list goes on ...

With respect to the Steele Dossier, *The Washington Post* reported on February 28, 2017, that "[w]hile Trump has derided the dossier as 'fake news' compiled by his political opponents, the FBI's [payment] arrangement with Steele shows that the bureau considered him credible and found his information, while unproven, to be worthy of further investigation."^{27/}

In a lengthy article about former FBI Director James Comey's actions before the 2016 election, *The New York Times* recounted that Carter Page "had previously been under FBI scrutiny years earlier, as he was believed to have been marked for recruitment by Russian spies. And now he was a foreign policy adviser to Mr. Trump."^{28/} The article recounts Mr. Comey being briefed on the Steele Dossier:

... [A] provocative set of documents about purported dealings between shadowy Russian figures and Mr. Trump's campaign. One report, filled with references to secret meetings, spoke ominously of Mr. Trump's "compromising relationship with the Kremlin" and threats of "blackmail."

The article also quotes a public letter from former Senate Democrat leader Harry Reid to James Comey stating that "it has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government – a foreign interest openly hostile to the United States." Recounting the false Alpha Bank conspiracy story that Michael Sussman peddled on behalf of the Clinton campaign, the article holds out hope that it might be true: "Agents concluded that the computer activity, while odd, probably did not represent a covert channel."

Other articles breathlessly reported on President Trump's interactions with and ultimate firing of former FBI Director James Comey, as well as his interactions with intelligence officials, suggesting that President Trump obstructed or otherwise unlawfully interfered in the Government's investigation of bogus ties between the Trump Campaign and the Russian government. *The New York Times* reported on President Trump's statements to then-Director

^{26/} Matthew Rosenberg, *et al.*, "Trump Team Knew Flynn Was Under Investigation Before He Came to White House," *The New York Times*, May 17, 2017; Trump Shifts Rationale for Firing Comey, Calling Him a "Showboat," *The New York Times*, May 11, 2017.

^{27/} Tom Hamburger, *et al.*, "FBI once planned to pay former British spy who authored controversial Trump dossier," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 2017.

^{28/} Matt Apuzzo, "Comey Tried to Shield the F.B.I. From Politics. Then He Shaped an Election," *The New York Times*, April 22, 2017.

Comey about the Flynn investigation as “the clearest evidence that the president has tried to directly influence the Justice Department and FBI investigation into links between Mr. Trump’s associates and Russia.”^{29/}

A few days later, *The New York Times* reported President Trump’s statements to Russian officials about firing Mr. Comey, asserting that the conversation “reinforces the notion that the president dismissed [Mr. Comey] primarily because of the Bureau’s investigation into possible collusion between Mr. Trump’s campaign and Russian operatives.”^{30/} Not to be outdone, *The Washington Post* reported that “President Trump asked two of the nation’s top intelligence officials in March to help him push back against an FBI investigation into possible coordination between his campaign and the Russian government...,”^{31/} and the widening of Special Counsel Mueller’s probe “that now includes an examination of whether President Trump attempted to obstruct justice....”^{32/}

Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* also reported a non-story about a meeting between Donald Trump, Jr., and “Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer” Natalia Veselnitskaya, who apparently lured the President’s son to a meeting by offering derogatory information about Hillary Clinton, and then used the meeting to lobby against the 2012 Magnitsky Act that provides sanctions for international government officials who violate human rights.^{33/} Astonishingly, given that the Clinton campaign was actively peddling the Steel Dossier and false claims of ties with Alpha Bank, the *Times* and the *Post* instead obsessed about Donald Trump, Jr.’s alleged interest in hearing derogatory information about Hillary Clinton.

The Washington Post also published a “Hacking Democracy” series that included articles titled “Obama’s secret struggle to punish Russia for Putin’s election assault”^{34/} and “Doubting the

^{29/} Michael Schmidt, “Comey Memo Says Trump Asked Him to End Flynn Investigation,” *The New York Times*, May 16, 2017.

^{30/} Matt Apuzzo, “Trump Told Russians That Firing ‘Nut Job’ Comey Eased Pressure From Investigation,” *The New York Times*, May 19, 2017.

^{31/} Adam Entous, *et al.*, “Trump asked intelligence chiefs to push back against FBI collusion probe after Comey revealed its existence,” *The Washington Post*, May 22, 2017.

^{32/} Devlin Barrett, *et al.*, “Special counsel is investigating Trump for possible obstruction of justice, officials say,” *The Washington Post*, June 14, 2017.

^{33/} Jo Becker, *et al.*, “Russian Dirt on Clinton? ‘I Love It,’ Donald Trump Jr. Said,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 2017; Matt Apuzzo, *et al.*, “Trump Jr. Was Told in Email of Russian Effort to Aid Campaign,” *The New York Times*, July 10, 2017; Ashley Parker, *et al.*, “Trump dictated son’s misleading statement on meeting with Russian lawyer,” *The Washington Post*, July 31, 2017.

^{34/} Greg Miller, *et al.*, “Obama’s secret struggle to punish Russia for Putin’s election assault,” *The Washington Post*, June 23, 2017.

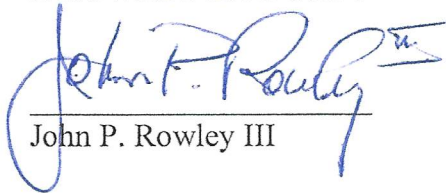
intelligence, Trump pursues Putin and leaves a Russian threat unchecked.”^{35/} Complete with graphics depicting President Obama staring down Russian President Putin, on the one hand, and President Trump shaking hands with President Putin, on the other, the lengthy articles recount the Obama Administration’s reaction to the Steele Dossier, likening Cabinet-level national security meetings to the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Pakistan. The articles also falsely insinuate a *quid pro quo*, in which President Trump did Putin’s bidding by criticizing NATO, in exchange for his supposed efforts to influence the outcome of the 2016 election.

In conclusion, we hope that this information is helpful to the Pulitzer committee’s consideration of President Trump’s objections to the continuing publication of the Prize awarded to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The Pulitzer Board should not have its imprimatur on a story line that has been shown to be a political smear by Hillary Clinton, her campaign, and the DNC, and which is injurious to our client. Surely, the findings of multiple investigations, the trial testimony of former Clinton campaign officials, and other revelations since 2017 have made it clear that the articles upon which the Prize is based are unworthy of that honor.

We request the opportunity to speak with the Pulitzer committee so that we may offer any further assistance it needs to correct the record and promote journalistic fairness and integrity. We also ask that the Board respond to this letter as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, July 15, 2022.

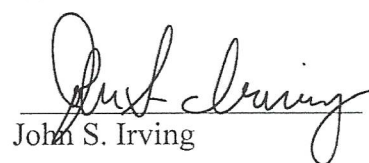
Very truly yours,

JPROWLEY LAW PLLC



John P. Rowley III

E&W LAW LLC



John S. Irving

cc: Katherine Boo, Gail Collins and John Daniszewski
Pulitzer Board Co-Chairs
VIA U.S. Certified Mail

^{35/} Greg Miller, *et al.*, “Doubting the intelligence, Trump pursues Putin and leaves a Russian threat unchecked,” *The Washington Post*, December 14, 2017.