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US

FBI Lawyer Who Sent Anti-Trump 'Resistance' Text Message Interviewed George Papadopoulos



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An FBI attorney who sent anti-Trump text messages — including one calling for “resistance” against Trump — took part in at least one interview last year with George Papadopoulos, the former Trump campaign adviser who has pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

The lawyer, Kevin Clinesmith, was part of the FBI team that interviewed Papadopoulos on Feb. 16, 2017, a source familiar with the interview tells TheDCNF.

North Carolina Rep. Mark Meadows first mentioned Clinesmith's name in a congressional hearing held last week. Meadows said that Clinesmith appeared to be an FBI lawyer described as "FBI Attorney 2" in recent report from the Justice Department's office of the inspector general (OIG) about the FBI's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation. **(RELATED: Mark Meadows Drops Multiple Bombshells In Hearing About Clinton, Russia Probes)**

While Meadows, a close President Donald Trump ally, did not explicitly say that Clinesmith was FBI Attorney 2, The Daily Mail **reported** that he was.

The OIG report said FBI Attorney 2 sent numerous text messages criticizing Trump. The attorney worked on the Clinton probe and was also the FBI's lead attorney on the investigation into possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian government. He joined Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation early last year but left this February after the discovery of his anti-Trump texts.

"I am numb," the attorney wrote on Nov. 9, 2016, the day after Trump's election.

"I am so stressed about what I could have done differently," read another message that apparently referenced the Clinton email investigation.

Asked in one text message after the election if he had changed his mind about Trump, Clinesmith wrote: "Hell no. Viva le resistance."

Republicans have said that the text messages from FBI Attorney 2 and others on the Mueller team have shown that investigators were biased against Trump.

The OIG report criticized the lawyer and other FBI agents for their biased comments. The report said that five FBI employees, including FBI Attorney 2, were referred to the bureau for disciplinary action. Peter Strzok, the lead investigator on the Russia probe, was also referred for disciplinary action for anti-Trump texts.



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In one Aug. 8, 2016 message, Strzok told Page that “we’ll stop” Trump from becoming president.

Strzok was removed from special counsel Robert Mueller’s team last July after the discovery of the texts.

Like Clinesmith, Strzok interviewed a former Trump associate who has pleaded guilty in the special counsel’s investigation.

Strzok and another FBI agent interviewed then-national security advisor Michael Flynn at the White House on Jan. 24, 2017. The interview concerned Flynn’s contacts in December 2016 with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak. Flynn pleaded guilty on Dec. 1 to lying in the FBI interview. **(RELATED: ‘Viva Le Resistance’: Mueller Team Attorney Sent Anti-Trump Texts)**

Papadopoulos, a 30-year-old energy consultant, was interviewed twice last year prior to his arrest on July 27, 2017. The first interview was conducted on Jan. 26, 2017. He was interviewed again on Feb. 16, 2017. Clinesmith was not present for the first interview, TheDCNF is told.

Papadopoulos has been cooperating with Mueller’s team since his arrest. He faces sentencing in September.

Papadopoulos pleaded guilty on Oct. 5 to lying to the FBI during that first interview about the timing of his contacts with a Maltese professor named Joseph Mifsud. Papadopoulos told agents that he believed he met with Mifsud before he joined the campaign on March 21, 2016.

Papadopoulos did tell the FBI about a meeting with Mifsud on April 26, 2016 in which the professor claimed that he had learned that the Russian government had “dirt” on Hillary Clinton in the form of “thousands” of her emails.

An affidavit filed in the case says that Papadopoulos deleted his Facebook account a day after his second FBI interview. The affidavit asserts that shutting down the Facebook account obstructed the FBI’s investigation.

Papadopoulos’ wife, Simona Mangiante, has told The Daily Caller News Foundation that Papadopoulos denies taking part in any collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian government. She says that Papadopoulos did not take Mifsud’s comments about Clinton emails seriously.

Papadopoulos would serve as the catalyst for the FBI’s counterintelligence investigation, which was code named Crossfire Hurricane.

The FBI opened the investigation after receiving information from the Australian government about a May 10, 2016 meeting between Papadopoulos and Alexander Downer, the Australian High Commissioner to the U.K. Downer claimed that Papadopoulos referred to Russia having damaging information on Clinton.

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