SSCI Briefing on Former Employee of Christopher Steele  
Draft Talking Points as of 14 February 2018

1. (U) Introduction/Caveats

- As agreed between the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and FBI Director Wray, the FBI is providing an overview briefing on Sources and Methods, with the individual who served as one of Christopher Steele’s primary sub-sources for the information that has subsequently become known as the “Steele” or “Trump” dossier.

- Consistent with the January 18th letter from the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, I will not disclose the identity. I will, however, discuss the circumstances under which the FBI identified, debriefed, Sources and Methods.

- As we have discussed on multiple occasions in the course of our briefings on Christopher Steele’s reporting, Sources and Methods, as well as the identities of his own sub-sources, remains our paramount concern with respect to the Steele dossier.

- We have successfully protected from public disclosure the overwhelming majority of the individuals who contributed source reporting to the Steele Dossier. We continue to prioritize efforts to protect the identities of these individuals based upon legitimate concerns about their safety.

- Before continuing with this briefing, I want to strongly emphasize the sensitivity of this information. Although I will not be revealing the specific identity of the Primary Subsource or his own sub-sources, what I will disclose today is extremely revealing. We want to be supportive of the Committee’s investigation, Sources and Methods.

2. How we identified the Primary Subsource

- As the Committee has been made aware through our production Documents, we assessed that Steele relied on one primary sub-source in generating the documents that ultimately comprised the dossier.

- We reached this conclusion after debriefing Steele in early-October 2016. Following that meeting, it was apparent that Steele maintained a primary sub-source Sources and Methods.
source, and that this individual collected information from a range of largely unwitting contacts, Source Identifying.

3. Background/Biography

• Steele’s sub-source—who I’ll refer to as Primary Subsource for the remainder of the briefing—Source Identifying. Consistent with his academic background—Source Identifying—which he studied at Source Identifying—his professional career Source Identifying.

4. Findings from January 2017 debriefings

A. Background/Initial Relationship with Steele
The FBI conducted a series of voluntary interviews with Source Identifying over the course of three days in late-January 2017. At the conclusion of these interviews—which were conducted by an Source Identifying.

In the course of the interviews, the Source Identifying discussed Source Identifying.

Source Identifying first met Christopher Steele Source Identifying, which was an Source Identifying. Later in Source Identifying, Steele contacted Source Identifying and offered him full-time employment.

Source Identifying claimed that his broader network of associates and acquaintances Source Identifying, but they were not aware of the Source Identifying.

Source Identifying made it clear to the FBI that he never had insight into the identities of Steele’s clients, nor did he ever see any finished Orbis intelligence reports, at least until the dossier was published by Buzzfeed.

In the course of the interviews, Source Identifying disclosed that he had developed his source network through Source Identifying.

He also described his Source Identifying, which included not communicating with Steele while Source Identifying, not compiling detailed notes from his discussions Source Identifying, and conducting oral debriefs with Steele in the Source Identifying at the conclusion of operational travel Source Identifying.

In response to multiple questions about his relationships with Source Identifying, Source Identifying initially claimed to have no interaction with individuals in Source Identifying, but later referred to Source Identifying his previous Source Identifying contacts Source Identifying. He also discussed the Source Identifying.
While we believed that [redacted] at times sought to minimize his connections to [redacted], his disclosures regarding his relationships with [redacted] were generally consistent.

B. Reporting Related to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

Prior to early 2016, [redacted] conducted research on [redacted] likely in support of clients who had hired Orbis [redacted].

In March 2016, Steele asked [redacted] to begin researching whether Paul Manafort had engaged in corrupt business practices in Ukraine or elsewhere in Russia or Eurasia. [redacted] described the request as strange, since Steele had never asked him to research anything related to U.S. domestic issues. [redacted] told us that he did not feel well-postured to respond to this tasking, as he was not familiar with Manafort.

advised us that he received a subsequent tasking from Steele in late-May 2016 to seek [redacted] related to the U.S. Presidential election, to include compromising materials on Donald Trump.

could not recall if he had been tasked to research both candidates Trump and Clinton, however his attorney advised that [redacted] had previously stated that Steele tasked [redacted] to pursue compromising material on both candidates.

advised that Steele placed no higher priority on the election-related research compared to other ongoing projects, and that he was focused on a separate project [redacted]. [redacted] advised that the election-related work continued to be a “side project” until approximately July-August 2016.

received two subsequent taskings from Steele. The first was to investigate Sergey Ivanov’s potential role in the U.S. Presidential election. The second was to collect information on Carter Page, Michael Cohen, Paul Manafort, and one or two additional individuals [redacted] could not recall.

relied upon [redacted] to collect the reporting that he contributed to the dossier. [redacted]. Overall, it appears
that reporting was integrated into at least ten of the Orbis reports that comprise the dossier.

C. Lines of Election Reporting

• I’ll now turn to a description of the various contacts who provided him information that eventually contributed to the dossier.

• Source Identifying

• Source Identifying

• The Primary Subsource initially received the information about Trump’s alleged sexual activities at the Ritz Carlton from a Source Identifying with a wide social circle. This individual told The Primary Subsource that it was a “well known story” and recommended the Primary Subsource to corroborate the story through hotel employees. The Primary Subsource claimed that none of the hotel employees with whom he spoke denied the story. The Primary Subsource gave Steele the names of the staffers with whom he spoke, and reported the story to Steele as unconfirmed rumor and speculation.

• The Primary Subsource provided Steele with information that reportedly originated from a former Source Identifying official. The Primary Subsource claimed that the former Source Identifying

• The Primary Subsource claimed to have spoken directly with an individual he believed was individual. Two U.S.-based Source Identifying had suggested The Primary Subsource contact individual. Individual subsequently had a 10-15 minute telephone call with an individual who did not identify himself, but who, from the context and timing of the call,
believed was individual. Primary Subsource's source was the source for reporting on Paul Manafort's use of Carter Page and others as intermediaries with Russian government leadership, and the reporting about an ongoing exchange of information between the Trump team and the Kremlin.

D. Perspective on the Dossier, Relationship with Steele, and Additional Disclosures

- As mentioned, Steele's finished reports were not made available to prior the publication of the dossier in Buzzfeed. Since the FBI interview with took place after the dossier was publicly available, we were able to discuss with him whether he believed his information was accurately characterized in Steele's reports.

- advised that several reports appeared to be derived from multiple sources, to include the information he provided to Steele as well as information that he had not collected. He did not cite any significant concerns with the way his reporting was characterized in the dossier to the extent he could identify it.

- described the structure of his debriefings with Steele, which were conducted one-on-one in Orbis offices. advised that he distinguished between what his sources had told him and his assessment of the information. Steele often pressed multiple times to ensure he was confident in how he characterized certain reporting. Steele also often urged to follow-up with his contacts.

- claimed he resisted reaching out to his contacts with follow-up questions on the election issue due to the sensitivity of the topic, as well as concerns that his efforts would become known.

5. Sources and Methods

- Sources and Methods

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6. Potential SSCI Staff Q&A

- Does still maintain a relationship with Steele and/or Orbis International?
  - was an employee of Orbis prior to the publication of the dossier. He does still maintain a relationship with Orbis and is in periodic contact with Steele. Steele had repeatedly signaled directly and indirectly to the FBI—through debriefings when he was a CHS and via Bruce Ohr—that he was extremely concerned about well-being. It is only natural and logical that Steele maintains contact with given his role in compiling the dossier.
  - We believe Steele knows that we have identified , and that he has surmised that we’ve spoken with him at least once.

- How have discussions with affected the FBI’s understanding of or confidence in the Steele dossier?
  - At minimum, our discussions with confirm that the dossier was not fabricated by Steele. Our discussions with confirmed
that he operates within high level academic and government circles, maintains trusted relationships with individuals who are capable of reporting on the material he collected for Steele, and that Steele and utilized reasonably sound intelligence tradecraft.