



Russiagaters Caught: In Flagrate Delicto!

December 29, 2018—On December 17, 2018, the Senate Intelligence Committee, led by the ever reliable Russiagate pawns, Senator Mark Warner and Senator Richard Burr, released what Warner described as “bombshell reports” on Russian social media efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections. The reports were by the Oxford Computational Propaganda Research Project of Oxford University and New Knowledge, a U.S. company featuring two recent vintage “disinformation experts,” to wit: experts who became such during their service in the Obama Administration. The Senate reports were designed to reignite Russia! Russia! Russia! hysteria about the amateurish and small bore social media escapades of the Internet Research Agency. The St. Petersburg company has been indicted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller and has been painted as a major villain in the fictional novel Robert Mueller is writing concerning Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election. Predictably, all sorts of media hysteria about black voter suppression, Russian support of Jill Stein, and other ridiculous memes followed release of these “reports” to the corporate news media.

But, this propaganda parade was rudely interrupted on December 19th, when someone from New Knowledge leaked internal company documents to the New York Times showing that the firm engaged in an elaborate “false flag” operation to undermine Roy Moore’s 2017 campaign for U.S. Senate in Alabama. According to the definitive account of this actual election meddling, written by Dan Cohen at the Grayzone Project, among the tactics used was manufacturing “a link between Roy Moore’s campaign and the Kremlin by claiming thousands of Roy Moore’s twitter followers were Russian bots.” The Internal Report cited by the Times contained the admission,

“We orchestrated an elaborate ‘false flag’ operation that planted the idea that the Moore campaign was amplified on social media by a Russian botnet.”

Dan Cohen obviously believes that New Knowledge purchased the bot accounts, although the Internal Report does not admit this.

“The accounts’ flagrant use of Cyrillic language and profile pictures of famous singers including Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Avril Lavigne strongly suggest that whoever bought them went to extreme lengths to leave the appearance of a Russian hand,” Cohen writes.

The other tactic employed by the firm in the Alabama U.S. Senate race was running a Facebook page boosting an obscure write-in candidate, Mac Watson, to draw votes away from Moore. Their social media tactic was to inflame the sexual assault allegations directed at Moore to “enrage and energize Democrats” and “depress turnout” among Republicans. Local media were deployed extensively to cover the alleged Russia/Roy Moore linkage and national coverage was provided by the Russiagate conspirators at Mother Jones magazine. According to Cohen’s account, the

Alabama disinformation campaign, received \$100,000 from Reid Hoffman, the founder of LinkedIn. The money was “pipelined” through Mickey Dickerson’s American Engagement Technologies. Dickerson was a founder of the United States Digital Service, a signature Barack Obama initiative. The entire episode is now under investigation by the Alabama Attorney General.

One of the New Knowledge “experts” is Jonathan Morgan, once a special advisor to the Obama White House and State Department and a contractor for DARPA. Post-election he was a favored media source for the Obama/Clinton trope that Hillary Clinton’s loss was the product of Russian disinformation. As cited by Cohen, Morgan told television viewers in Austin, Texas, that, “feelings of discontent were telltale signs that they had been duped by Russian disinformation. . . . If it makes you feel too angry or really provokes that type of almost tribal response, then it may be designed to manipulate you People should be concerned about things that encourage them to change their behavior.”

His partner in the actual disinformation operations conducted by New Knowledge is Ryan Fox who spent 15 years at the NSA and was also a computer analyst for JSOC, the Joint Special Operations Command. Since receiving \$11 million in funding from Silicon Valley’s GGV capital, New Knowledge is positioning itself as a major player in Anglo-American propaganda psyops. Morgan helped develop the Hamilton 68 dashboard, a completely phony tool for spotting Russian propaganda, which is funded by the German Marshall Fund’s Alliance for Securing Democracy. The Alliance, staffed by the most reliable Washington neo-con and neo-liberal lackies of the British Empire, has played a key role in propagating the Russiagate hysteria.

Now that they have this egg all over their faces, it is useful to return to the idiotic claims by Senator Warner and Senator Burr about the nefarious Internet Research Agency. Aaron Mate, Max Blumenthal and others have studied these claims and others made by Mueller and his fawning Senatorial clowns. They demonstrate that the budget for this alleged interference was only thousands of dollars a month and most of the alleged troll farm’s posts were not even about the election. A solid 56% of the IRA’s posts occurred after the election and 25% of them were seen by no one. Compare this to the billions spent by candidates Clinton and Trump. As we have emphasized, this amateurish Russian operation did not influence the election one whit, but it did set off enormous Anglo-American counteroperations aimed at censoring all political views in the United States and in Britain itself. It is not accidental that the recent report by the British House of Lords titled “UK Foreign Policy in a Shifting World Order” cites citizens’ access to information as the biggest danger faced by the Empire. Clearly, in their view, this access is what produced Brexit and Donald Trump’s U.S. presidency, a result which must never be repeated.