

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
Department of Justice

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Director Patel:

In April 2023, we requested unredacted transcripts connected to the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General's (OIG) report, "Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation."¹ In response to our request, the OIG said, "many of the redactions in those transcripts were made by the Justice Department, the Department of State, or other United States government agencies. Thus, in addition to the OIG concerns described above, the OIG does not have the authority to release information that those agencies have indicated is exempt from disclosure."²

We understand that during its review the OIG interviewed more than 170 individuals and of those, 165 were transcribed.³ The OIG never produced those transcripts to us. We request that your offices take immediate action to remove all redactions from the transcripts and work with the OIG to produce them to our offices. Please inform us as soon as your offices have completed their review and cleared the OIG to release those unredacted transcripts.

¹ Letter from Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations, and Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Comm. on the Budget, to Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Dep't of Justice, Apr. 25, 2023; U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GEN., REVIEW OF FOUR FISA APPLICATIONS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE FBI'S CROSSFIRE HURRICANE INVESTIGATION (2019), <https://www.justice.gov/storage/120919-examination.pdf>.

² Letter from Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Dep't of Justice, to Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations, and Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Comm. on the Budget, Dec. 6, 2023.

³ Email from Adam Miles, Senior Counsel to the Inspector General, Office of Inspector General to Sens. Johnson and Grassley's office, May 23, 2023.

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The Honorable Pamela Bondi
The Honorable Kash Patel
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We have enclosed our correspondence with the DOJ OIG for your review. Please let us know if you have any questions related to this request.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Department of Justice

ENCLOSURE

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 25, 2023

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Inspector General Horowitz:

Citizens United recently obtained and released 460 pages of heavily redacted records it received in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.¹ The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ OIG) produced these records as a “partial response” to Citizens United’s FOIA request “seeking interview transcripts . . . generated as a result of investigative interviews . . . in the course of the [DOJ OIG’s] investigation entitled ‘Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane Investigation.’”² Due to massive redactions applied to the interview transcripts by a number of agencies, including the DOJ OIG, these records are impossible to review. We write to request the unredacted version of those records, which we understand include the following transcribed interviews and notes:

- Kathleen Kavalec; (Jul. 31, 2019 transcript and Jul. 31, 2019 DOJ OIG notes);
- Lisa Page (May 7, 2018 transcript and May 7, 2018 DOJ OIG notes);
- Loretta Lynch (Feb. 26, 2019 transcript and Feb. 26, 2019 DOJ OIG notes); and
- Nellie Ohr (Nov. 1, 2018 transcript and Nov. 1, 2018 DOJ OIG notes).

For years we have examined the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane investigation as well as the DOJ OIG’s report on the matter. As Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Senator Johnson held a hearing on December 18, 2019—shortly after the DOJ OIG released its FISA report—to discuss your office’s findings.³ On the same day, Senator Johnson released a 12-page timeline providing important context to many of the DOJ OIG’s report’s key facts based on our ongoing investigation into the FBI’s conduct.⁴ Notably, the DOJ OIG report contained FBI official Bill Priestap’s statement that the FBI “didn’t have any

¹ Letter from Jacqueline Lightle, Government Information Specialist, Dep’t of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, to Jeremiah Morgan, Citizens United, Feb. 3, 2023, <http://www.citizensunited.org/latest-updates.aspx?article=13190>.

² *Id.*

³ S. Comm. On Homeland Sec. and Governmental Aff., DOJ OIG FISA Report: Methodology, Scope, and Findings, Dec. 18, 2019, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/doj-oig-fisa-report-methodology-scope-and-findings/>.

⁴ Abbreviated Timeline of Key Events Related to Crossfire Hurricane Investigation, S. Comm. On Homeland Sec. and Governmental Aff., Dec. 18, 2019, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/abbreviated%20timeline%20horowitz.pdf>.

indication whatsoever” of Russian influence of the anti-Trump report known as the Steele dossier.⁵ Our investigation uncovered redacted footnotes contained in the DOJ OIG’s FISA report that completely contradicted that statement.⁶ On December 3, 2020, Senator Johnson held another hearing examining abuse of executive branch power and used the Crossfire Hurricane investigation as a case study.⁷ Concurrently, we released a 31-page timeline on Crossfire Hurricane incorporating even more facts that we uncovered throughout our oversight.⁸

The records contained in the DOJ OIG’s February 3, 2023, FOIA production to Citizens United directly relate to our ongoing efforts to expose corruption within the FBI. It is also our job to oversee OIGs to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Therefore, we respectfully request that you produce the unredacted version of those records and provide the following information by no later than May 9, 2023:

1. We understand that the DOJ OIG “conducted over 170 interviews involving more than 100 witnesses” related to DOJ OIG’s report on Crossfire Hurricane.⁹
 - a. How many of those 170 interviews were transcribed?
 - b. Were interviews conducted that were not transcribed? If so, please explain why and provide a list of those interviews.
2. In preparation for its response to the FOIA request mentioned above, please list the agencies or entities that DOJ OIG shared the records with in connection to the FOIA request.
3. Has Special Counsel John Durham requested records or transcripts from the DOJ OIG? If so, has the DOJ OIG complied with Mr. Durham’s requests? Please explain in detail.

⁵ U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GEN., REVIEW OF FOUR FISA APPLICATIONS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE FBI’S CROSSFIRE HURRICANE INVESTIGATION 194 (2019), <https://www.justice.gov/storage/120919-examination.pdf> [hereinafter IG Report].

⁶ Press Release, FBI Ignored Early Warnings That Debunked Anti-Trump Dossier Was Russian Disinformation, Sen. Ron Johnson, Chairman, S. Comm. On Homeland Sec. and Governmental Aff., and Sen. Charles Grassley, Chairman, S. Comm. on Fin., Apr. 10, 2020, <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/fbi-ignored-early-warnings-debunked-anti-trump-dossier-was-russian-disinformation>.

⁷ S. Comm. On Homeland Sec. and Governmental Aff., Congressional Oversight in the Face of Executive Branch and Media Suppression: The Case Study of Crossfire Hurricane, Dec. 3, 2020, <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/congressional-oversight-in-the-face-of-executive-branch-and-media-suppression-the-case-study-of-crossfire-hurricane/>.

⁸ Timeline of Key Events Related to Crossfire Hurricane Investigation, Sen. Ron Johnson, Chairman, S. Comm. On Homeland Sec. and Governmental Aff., and Sen. Charles Grassley, Chairman, S. Comm. on Fin., Dec. 3, 2020, [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/CFH%20Timeline%20w%20Updates%2020201203%20\(FINAL\).pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/CFH%20Timeline%20w%20Updates%2020201203%20(FINAL).pdf).

⁹ IG Report at 11.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Chairman
Committee on the Budget



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE | OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

December 6, 2023

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate

Dear Senators Johnson and Grassley:

I am writing in further response to your letter to the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) dated April 25, 2023, in which you made several requests, including for unredacted transcripts and internal OIG notes of certain interviews conducted by the OIG in our *Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation*. After receiving this request from you, my office contacted your staffs to discuss the request for unredacted transcripts and internal OIG notes, and to provide information in response to the questions in your letter. On May 23, 2023, we provided written answers to the questions in your letter. It is our understanding that our May 23 communication was fully responsive to those questions.

With respect to the transcripts and our internal OIG notes, our ability to conduct detailed and thorough investigations and reviews, such as the *Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation*, depends on the cooperation and candor of witnesses. I have genuine concerns about the chilling effect on whistleblowing and witness cooperation and candor that could result if whistleblowers or witnesses believe that any testimony they provide to the OIG, or notes taken by the OIG of their interviews, will be subject to public disclosure or disclosure to Congress. For this reason, since I have been Inspector General, I have been very protective of our investigative materials, including witness transcripts. In Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) litigation, we have advocated to limit disclosure of such materials only to information contained in our public reports.

As your letter indicates, the redacted transcripts you reference were released through FOIA, and as we informed your staffs, they are the subject of ongoing FOIA litigation. Further, many of the redactions in those transcripts were made by the Justice Department, the Department of State, or other United States government agencies. Thus, in addition to the OIG concerns described above, the OIG does not have the authority to release information that those agencies have indicated is exempt from disclosure.

I thank you for your continued support for the OIG and for considering my perspective about releasing transcripts. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me, or Adam Miles, Senior Counselor to the Inspector General, at (202) 514-3435.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal, Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate