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Disgruntled Russian PR Exec Behind Key Steele Dossier Claims – WSJ

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The Steele dossier triggered a special counsel investigation that found evidence of Russian interference in the 2016 election but no collusion with Trump's campaign. **Kremlin.ru**

A disgruntled Russian PR executive had provided some of the key unverified allegations for a controversial report at the heart of 2016 U.S. election meddling claims known as the Steele dossier, The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

British counterintelligence specialist Christopher Steele's report that leaked in 2017 alleged, among other things, that Russian security services had recruited a Russian-born tech entrepreneur and his firm to hack into Democratic Party servers to collect damaging material on then-candidate Hillary Clinton.

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WSJ's investigation revealed that the source of these claims was Olga Galkina, the tech firm's PR executive locked in a messy dispute with her employer during the Steele

dossier's collection period. Galkina implicated the firm, Cyprus-registered Webzilla, in the hacking weeks after being fired in November 2016.

Webzilla and its owner, Russian-born Cyprus resident Aleksej Gubarev, have denied involvement in the DNC hacking. Gubarev has since sued Steele for defamation in Britain.

Galkina, 40, also reportedly claimed that then-candidate Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen secretly met with Russian intelligence officials in Prague to discuss payments for the hackers in the summer of 2016. Cohen denied traveling there.

Galkina "stood as the dossier's most important contributor," WSJ reported, citing an FBI interview with her school friend and Steele's employee, Igor Danchenko. Danchenko has threatened to sue Trump and top congressional Republicans for endangering his life by outing him as a subsource of the Steele dossier.

Russia's The Bell business news website identified Galkina as having worked as a state news agency journalist, a regional governor's spokesperson and a spokesperson for Russia's nuclear watchdog, as well as a deputy mayor.

WSJ noted that Galkina's past jobs in government and the private sector helped her build a "vast network of people" for the dossier.

The Steele dossier triggered a special counsel investigation that found evidence of Russian interference but no collusion with Trump's campaign. Russia and Trump have denied the claims.

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