



## **Inside Judicial Watch:**

# **Tom Fitton Interview: How Judicial Watch Blasted Open the Strzok- Steele-FISA Trump Targeting Scandals**

**Introduction and Moderator:**

**Jerry Dunleavy, Judicial Watch**

**Featuring:**

**Tom Fitton, President, Judicial Watch**

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JERRY DUNLEAVY: Hello and welcome to this edition of “Inside Judicial Watch.” I’m your host Jerry Dunleavy. Over the past couple of weeks, Judicial Watch has achieved some impressive victories in the battle for government transparency.

Our Freedom of Information Act lawsuits resulted in the Department of Justice being forced to release FISA applications and FISA warrants related to Carter Page. They resulted in the FBI being forced to release emails from biased FBI Agent Peter Strzok. And they also resulted in the FBI being forced to release information detailing some of its relationship with dossier author, Christopher Steele. Plus, a federal court ordered the Department of Justice to preserve any records on the personal email accounts for former FBI Director James Comey.

So a lot of big wins there, and here to discuss all of those wins is Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. Thank you very much for joining me today, Tom.

TOM FITTON: Thanks for letting me come on the program.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Absolutely. Glad to have you on. Tom, I’d like to start with a discussion about the FISA application and FISA warrants that Judicial Watch forced the Department of Justice to release. As our viewers can see, it’s hundreds of pages of pretty heavily redacted documents. But there is some information in there that was important. So if you could, please walk our viewers through why we were so concerned about the FISA issue and why getting these documents released matters so much.

MR. FITTON: We began asking for the FISA applications and warrants a year ago. And finally, we had to sue for them. Devin Nunes – who is the head of the House Intelligence Committee and could look at them because typically they’re classified and secret – said that the Clinton DNC dossier was center of these FISA warrants. So, you had this campaign-funded anti-Trump dossier being used to justify secret spying on the Trump team. And Nunes alleged that the courts weren’t told about the Clinton DNC involvement, and there were other material omissions that the courts may have wanted to consider but weren’t told about it.

So, thanks to Judicial Watch’s lawsuit, this is the first time secret FISA applications have been released to the public. And parts of them were declassified, because President Trump made the decision, earlier this year, to declassify information about the use of the Clinton DNC dossier to target the Trump team. And the documents Judicial Watch obtained are absolutely outrageous, because they confirmed that the Clinton DNC dossier was used in a central focus of the warrant. As Andrew McCabe testified to Congress -- no dossier, no warrants. And, indeed, these documents confirm that.

**The DOJ application for a FISA warrant references the dossier three or four times in disguised ways. And they tell the court that it’s different information. So, they referenced the Clinton DNC dossier, the author Christopher Steele, who was an agent of Fusion GPS and an agent of the Clinton DNC arm. Then they referenced news articles based on leaks of the Steele dossier. They then referenced congressional concerns based on leaks of the Steele dossier. And finally, they reference State Department information about**

**Carter Page, who was the target of this secret spying. And they don't mention that was tied to the Steele dossier or elements of it.**

**So, you have the warrant reference one piece of information three or four times as separate pieces of information. That's fundamentally dishonest. It's like if I tell you I've heard something, and you say, "Oh yeah, who, from who?" And I say, "Well, from me, myself, and I -- three people."**

**Another way of thinking about it it's the self-licking ice cream cone. It's a circular feedback loop that was disguised in seeking the awesome power to spy on American citizens, based on the allegation that they were foreign agents.** And they didn't have anything really to point to, other than this dossier, and they pretended to the court otherwise. And who's responsible for this? We have the people who signed it whose names are in the warrants: James Comey, Sally Yates the Obama holdover, Andrew McCabe, Dana Boente who is a Obama holdover and now the general counsel for the FBI, and Rod Rosenstein.

And Rosenstein signed off of one of these warrants in June of last year during the Mueller operation. So Mr. Mueller has to answer for these abusive warrants as well. And the President has taken notice of this. He highlighted that these records were uncovered to Judicial Watch. And now it's up to him to declassify the rest of it because what members of Congress like Nunes who have seen the documents have said is that if you think the DNC dossier was bad and the Clinton DNC was bad -- well, there's even worse stuff in this material that hasn't been released yet. So the president needs to intervene and release this information.

MR. DUNLEAVY: And you referenced that the Nunes memo being released helped with allowing this information to be released. And now that this information is out –

MR. FITTON: **Right, right. The president declassified the Nunes memo that referenced this. So, they really couldn't withhold all of this from us anymore. So eventually, as a result of our lawsuit, we were able to get these FISA warrant applications – an incredible accomplishment.**

MR. DUNLEAVY: And it's your hope now that the president goes ahead and releases more?

MR. FITTON: Yes, and there are all sorts of other things he could be declassifying, too. But this is a good example of why the president needs to intervene. Because Rod Rosenstein doesn't want to look bad, he's not going to authorize the declassification if he can help it. The general counsel of the FBI, who also signed off on this, he's conflicted out. The president's the only one who can really do it in my view, or ought to be able to do it. Because I don't really trust the FBI and the DOJ to expose their own corruption.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Now related to this, Judicial Watch ended up filing another legal action – actually a motion with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court itself, asking for any hearing transcripts related to the FISA process related to Carter Page. Can you walk us through a little bit of what we're trying to get at there?

MR. FITTON: Well, this is interesting as well because Devin Nunes asked the head of the FISA Court at the time, “Can you release the transcripts, because we have these warrants, these shady warrants? What was the discussion about? What was in them? Are there transcripts of any discussions with the court? And the court said, “Well, look, we told the Justice Department we don’t object to them releasing any transcripts.”

**So, Judicial Watch asked for the [FISA court] transcripts from the Justice Department. The Justice Department came back to us and said, well, look, we can’t tell you if there are transcripts about General Flynn. We had asked about that as well, because we suspect there were FISA warrants on General Flynn, a top adviser to the president-elect, at the campaign and obviously the president later. But they said that the president did declassify material about Carter Page, and we can’t tell you whether or not that exists, and we don’t have the transcripts.**

**So, we go back to the court and say that the Justice Department doesn’t have the transcripts, if you have them, please release them. Now, it’s going to be interesting to see what the answer is. Are they not going to answer us at all, or are they going to give us the transcripts? Or are they going to tell us again there are no transcripts. And if there are no transcripts, it really undermines the way this whole process is working, because to have confidence that this process is working well and right. And you want the courts to be asking questions. This is not an insignificant issue. And if there are no transcripts, that means there were really no hearings and substantive discussions. And it was a rubber stamp.**

MR. DUNLEAVY: And the thing that you’re trying to point out here and that we’re trying to get at is that there’s no – at these FISA hearings, there’s no one there for the defense. It’s called ex parte. It’s non-adversarial. So this information is being presented to the court and the hope is that the court is at least asking some questions probing some of this. And if no hearing transcripts exist, that means maybe that didn’t happen.

MR. FITTON: My understanding is transcripts are only taken about half the time these warrants are sought. So, four different courts approved – one court approved the initial application, and then they renew the application three more times, and three different courts approved those renewals. If there’s not one transcript among any of them or from any of these warrant applications, then something’s not working with the FISA process. That’s for sure.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Let’s move forward to a little bit of a different topic. Judicial Watch, through a few of our different lawsuits, also got the Department of Justice to release some information about Peter Strzok that we didn’t know before. Peter Strzok, of course, is the biased FBI agent. Talk to us a little bit about what we were able to find out because this information is coming out and little drips and drabs. Talk with us about what we were able to learn about Peter Strzok and his relationship with the Mueller investigation.

MR. FITTON: Well, we have several lawsuits about Peter Strzok. And he’s the infamous FBI official who hated Donald Trump, loved Hillary Clinton, and ran the Hillary Clinton investigation – which, surprise, surprise, worked out well for Hillary -- and was running the anti-

Trump Russia investigation. And we all know how that worked out. It resulted in a special counsel, and as we pointed out earlier, the illicit spying and targeting of the Trump team.

Mueller was appointed, and he brought in Strzok, who as the number two counterintelligence official led FBI agent on these cases. He was a senior guy. He was not just a junior FBI agent, moved over to work for Mueller. And eventually the text messages where Strzok talked about wanting to stop Donald Trump and wanting to have an insurance policy in case he won, were uncovered by the Inspector General of the Justice Department. And so Strzok was removed by Mueller. Mueller didn't tell anyone about that until four months later. We found out through Congress, after the Justice Department finally admitted really what was up.

**So, we had asked questions about Strzok's appointment to and removal from the Mueller operation. And in response to that, we got these emails from Mr. Strzok in which Mr. Strzok was very much concerned about his ability to retain his high-level security clearances. And I think it's fair to say he had better than average security clearances, and that would have made sense given his position as the number two counterintelligence official in the FBI. And one of the things we knew was very concerning and problematic was his ability to declassify information. .**

**Just think about this. He had these special authorities because he was the number two intelligence official. Yet, since he no longer was, he could not just take those authorities willy-nilly as he was running an investigation for Mr. Mueller. He needed to have a special dispensation. They needed to create a whole new position for him, a special floating directorship of some type. And so, he asked for it and he got it. Now, why is it he thought it was so necessary for him to keep declassification authority? I'm not talking about classification authority, I'm talking about *declassification* authority. And you have to wonder what was his motivation?**

**Now, keep in mind that Mr. Strzok has a demonstrated record of misconduct. The affair, the illicit text messages, his removal from Mueller's team. He was walked out of the FBI after more text messages came out showing he hated Trump. So, should we give him the benefit of the doubt? I don't think so. So, I think it's a fair question to ask if one way or another he wanted the declassification authority, so he could share dirt from the Trump Russia investigation with outsiders without running afoul of classification and dissemination prohibitions.**

So, these are the sorts of questions that need to be asked. What was he doing for Mueller? Why did he need these special authorities? Why were they granted to him? And I think Mueller needs to be asked these questions. Strzok needs to be asked more questions and so should the FBI and DOJ. And again, it's remarkable that it is Judicial Watch that's uncovering all of this. It's not Congress, it's not the media. And we got the warrants. We got these Strzok emails showing this unusual effort to give him special authorities in terms of security clearance and declassification. And this is all just coming rat-a-tat-tat at Judicial Watch over the last two weeks. It's incredible.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Related to the Mueller investigation, Judicial Watch also was able to uncover information detailing some of the FBI's relationship with Christopher Steele, the author of the dossier. I took some time trying to read through the 70 or so pages, and there – and again these are heavily redacted –

MR. FITTON: Heavily isn't the word.

MR. DUNLEAVY: – it's like – it's blank. It's blank, it's redacted –

MR. FITTON: Well, there are 70 pages – and two of the pages have substantive material.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Exactly.

MR. FITTON: The rest, you have to read between the lines, so –

MR. DUNLEAVY: So, what were we able to learn there about Christopher Steele and what do we still want to know?

MR. FITTON: Well, let's place Christopher Steele in this greater scheme of things.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Okay.

MR. FITTON: So Fusion GPS was hired by the law firm of the Clinton campaign and Democratic National Committee. Fusion GPS hired Christopher Steele, who's a retired foreign spy, who worked for the United Kingdom. And Steele used sources from Russian intelligence sources to create this shady dossier on then-candidate Trump. And this dossier, as we pointed out earlier, was used to justify spying on the Trump team, and who knows what else. And we just know about the FISA warrants against Carter Page. We knew there were the Spycgate issues, where they were sending informants into the Trump campaign. And maybe they were on unmaskings done due to this dossier as well.

So, Christopher Steele was a central figure here. And as we pointed out, he was the number one source in the FISA warrant applications used to justify extraordinary spying on the Trump team. So, these documents show what the FBI was doing in part with Christopher Steele.

**There are a few key points. Number one, the FBI had a relationship with him throughout the campaign of 2016. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, they admonished him. Now, we don't know why, that's blacked out. Defenders of the FBI say, "Well, admonishment may have a technical meaning that's not easily discernible to the layman." An admonishment is, "Hey, these are the rules, follow them."**

**I don't know if that fits in into the context, but there's that alternative way of looking at it. But either way, he was admonished, and it says what it says. They also show that on November first of 2016, he was deemed not suitable to be used as a confidential human source anymore. Wow. Nevertheless, he was used repeatedly later to justify at least**

**three more renewals of the FISA warrants against Page. And the FBI didn't mention he was not deemed to be used as a confidential human source. They said, "Well, we have problems with him, but it doesn't necessarily mean his information's bad."**

**Well, I would think the court might want to know if they concluded they can't use him anymore as a source.** And why did they conclude that? Because he leaked his relationship with the FBI to the media. And the documents also show that they met with him at least 13 times, over the course of the presidential campaign. It's not clear about what. And they paid him 11 of those times. Steele was admonished, yet paid for by the FBI, then fired by the FBI. And since these are records that Judicial Watch obtained. Congress didn't have them. If they have them, they haven't released them. The media didn't get them. Judicial Watch got them just last week.

**It's come out that Ohr, Bruce Ohr, who was a Justice Department official in the Obama Justice Department, and his wife worked for Fusion GPS -- again, Christopher Steele's paymaster. Ohr met with Steele a dozen plus more times, after the FBI chased Steele him off. And they passed Steele's information through Ohr into the FBI. So the FBI says to Steele, "We're not going to use you as a source anymore because we don't deem you trustworthy -- but go ahead meet with the Justice Department. We'll take your information from them instead."** And Bruce Ohr's family, of course, was getting paid by the people working with Steele. Same people paying for Steele were paying Bruce Ohr's wife. Incredible stuff, incredible.

MR. DUNLEAVY: And there's also a lot of information indicate that not only was Steele going through Bruce Ohr to get information in, but that he was perhaps also doing it through, perhaps, the State Department, and, perhaps, through the Central Intelligence Agency, as well. Please outline a little bit about what Judicial Watch has found and is trying to do there.

MR. FITTON: **Well, we know that [former CIA director] John Brennan leaked dossier information to Senator Harry Reid, then the leading Democrat in the Senate, with the hopes that Reid would leak it, just before the campaign. Which of course Reid dutifully did. Then, the State Department was another vehicle for the Clinton gang to launder the information from the Russia dossier into the FBI and DOJ. It's like saying, "Well, we got intelligence here" -- the self-licking ice cream cone again. They're hearing it from me, myself, and I. "Oh, look, we've got three different ways of hearing about this dossier, so it must be true." Even though it's the same information being laundered different ways. So, we have lawsuits on that as well.**

MR. DUNLEAVY: And then, the final sort of victory I would say that Judicial Watch had, over the past week or so, is regarding James Comey. Obviously, he was a pretty central figure in a lot of this as well. He signed off on at least one of the FISA applications.

MR. FITTON: Oh, James Comey signed off on everything. He's responsible for everything the FBI was doing.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Absolutely.

**MR. FITTON: Look, this whole Russian investigation, to take a step back, this was run out of D.C. FBI headquarters. This is a James Comey, Peter Strzok, Andrew McCabe special. That's not the way these things are typically handled. The FBI director and top officials at the FBI monitor and supervise investigations done by field offices. Now, they may provide support and expertise out of Washington -- but they don't normally run it from the top directorship and top echelons of the FBI -- unless it's so important because well, heck, you're trying to target Donald Trump.**

**And the same thing with Hillary Clinton. The top FBI leadership was running the Hillary investigation. They were targeting Trump and protecting Hillary. And the only way they could do that was by keeping the Comey gang in charge. Strzok, McCabe, Lisa Page, and Comey --that was the gang.**

MR. DUNLEAVY: And those were the people that were making the decisions on both the Clinton investigation and the early stages of the Trump investigation as well.

MR. FITTON: That is correct.

MR. DUNLEAVY: So, talk with me a little bit about what we were able to accomplish here with trying to unravel more about Comey's involvement. We've been trying to get the federal court to get the FBI to do some stuff for us. You talked with us about that.

**MR. FITTON: I think we have over 30 Freedom of Information Act lawsuits about this deep state attack on Donald Trump, as well as hundreds of FOIA requests. And obviously Comey is a central focus of this. And we've sued along with our friends at the Daily Caller News Foundation for records about Comey's communications. Did he write memos about other meetings he had? We know he wrote memos allegedly about meetings with President Trump. But did he write memos about meetings with Barrack Obama or Bill Clinton or anyone like that? So, we are asking questions about that.**

And then this IG report comes out recently from the Justice Department, and the IG report notes that Mr. Comey was conducting some government business on his personal email accounts. So we obviously said, "Well, hold on. We've got FOIA requests, FOIA lawsuits here. Are you searching all those personal email accounts? Are you making sure there are no government records there? Are you making sure they're not being deleted? And in response to our request, the FBI sent Comey a letter. And we said, "Well, can you give us the letter?" And we were told, "No."

So not trusting what was going on, we filed a motion for a protective order, with the court in this case, and the Justice Department and the FBI objected, as they always do it seems, to our efforts to ensure transparency and accountability and to make sure the documents aren't destroyed. And the court granted our protective order. The court said, "Look, I'm not saying that there's anything wrong going on here or documents are being destroyed, but just to be safe you should take all reasonably necessary steps to preserve these records."



So that was a nice little victory. And it was over the objections of the FBI and DOJ. And the question is, what next? Now, the Justice Department and the FBI can tell you they don't want to do anything else. They think the letter was sufficient. Now, I want you to put yourself in the shoes of an everyday American, who would be subject to a protective order issued by a federal court, and then the FBI was on the other side. What do you think they would do? Do you think they'd just send you a letter reminding you there's a protective order out there? Or not even send you a letter telling you there's a protective order? No, they pull a Manafort on you. They'd probably show up at your home with guns drawn and take your records. Now, I'm not saying they need to raid Comey's home, but they need to do something more substantial than what they proposed to do in response to this federal court order, which is nothing.

MR. DUNLEAVY: So we have revelations about FISA applications and FISA warrants, revelations about Peter Strzok's special requests about all of the power and authority he wanted to retain when he joined the Mueller investigation, new details sort of confirming Steele's relationship with the FBI, and tying that into his relationship with Bruce Ohr, with Fusion GPS with state, CIA potentially all this, and then uncovering things about James Comey, and slowly but surely forcing the DOJ and FBI to get serious about helping us get to the bottom of this. Can you tie all of this together, as we wrap up here, and sort of paint a picture of what we know now thanks to Judicial Watch, versus what we didn't know just a short period of time ago, and then where we're going to go from here?

MR. FITTON: Well, thanks to the Judicial Watch, we've got these warrants, the secret-spy warrants on the Trump team, new questions being raised about what the anti-Trump Strzok was doing for Mueller, a federal court order about the documents of the disgraced former FBI director James Comey, and these extraordinary new materials documenting this unbelievable cash-based corrupt relationship with the Clinton DNC dossier guy, Christopher Seale. And it isn't Congress that's getting these records, it's Judicial Watch.

And so it tells you that Judicial Watch is really in the center of the storm when it comes to holding this government to account, holding the Mueller operation to account, and the DOJ and the FBI to account. There are members on the Hill who are doing good things, like Devin Nunes, and Mark Meadows, and even Chuck Grassley is putting some additional pressure on the Justice Department from the Senate side. But in terms of an independent watchdog, there's no one doing more than Judicial Watch. And no one's doing more successfully than Judicial Watch to get this core information out. This would never have seen the light of day, these various documents we're talking about, but for our pressure. And even when we don't get them and Congress gets them, you can bet it was our pressure that forced them to give them to Congress.

MR. DUNLEAVY: Exactly.

MR. FITTON: So, it's a testament to the supporters of Judicial Watch – because we wouldn't be able to do it without them. And the most important thing we do in addition to the investigations and the litigation, is we tell the American people what is going on. Because the worst thing in the world the deep state fears is being called out, and they fear transparency. And so by educating people about what we're doing, we're really doing the Lord's work.

MR. DUNLEAVY: And that's why I so appreciate you coming on today as the president of our organization, coming on, explaining all this to our viewers, so that they know what we're up to because it is really important work.

MR. FITTON: I tell you, it's exciting stuff -- because there's no one doing what Judicial Watch is doing. We're happy to do the work, but isn't it outrageous that Judicial Watch is the only game in town?

MR. DUNLEAVY: It is and it is, and every time that these new documents come in and we open them up and it's fascinating that we're the ones that are having to force FISA applications and FISA warrants out. It's just we're doing really interesting and unique work

**MR. FITTON: Well, there's a conspiracy, an illicit one, to take out the president of the United States. It includes abuses of our federal law enforcement agencies, our intelligence agencies, and who knows what else? And we're going to expose it. That's for sure.**

MR. DUNLEAVY: So, thank you very much, Tom, for being on today, for helping to explain all of that to our viewers. We really do appreciate your insights and your expertise in laying out all of this important information.

And if you want to continue to understand what's going on, be sure to follow what Judicial Watch is doing. Follow us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter. Follow us on Instagram. Subscribe to our YouTube channel, so that you know what we're up to and what we're uncovering. And also be sure to follow Tom on Twitter. He has a great Twitter account, and he's a good person to follow if you want to know what's going on in Washington, D.C.

So thank you very much for tuning in today. Until next time, I'm Jerry Dunleavy for "Inside Judicial Watch." Thanks for joining us.

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