

Exhibit 15

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President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter over the weekend that Comey “will go down as the WORST FBI Director in history, by far!” | Alex Wong/Getty Images

Trump claims he didn't fire Comey over Russia investigation

By **LOUIS NELSON** | 04/18/2018 08:58 AM EDT | Updated 04/18/2018 11:45 AM EDT

President Donald Trump claimed Wednesday that his firing of former FBI Director James Comey was not related to the bureau’s investigation into Russian interference of the 2016 election, contradicting the explanation he offered in the days after Comey’s firing was first announced.

“Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!” the president wrote on Twitter.

Trump fired Comey last May, a step the White House initially said he took based on the recommendation of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who had written a memo suggesting the FBI director's dismissal over his unusually public handling of the bureau's investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server during her tenure as secretary of state.

But Trump upended that messaging days later when he told NBC News's Lester Holt that he was planning to fire Comey regardless of Rosenstein's recommendation and that the bureau's Russia probe was on his mind as he made the decision.

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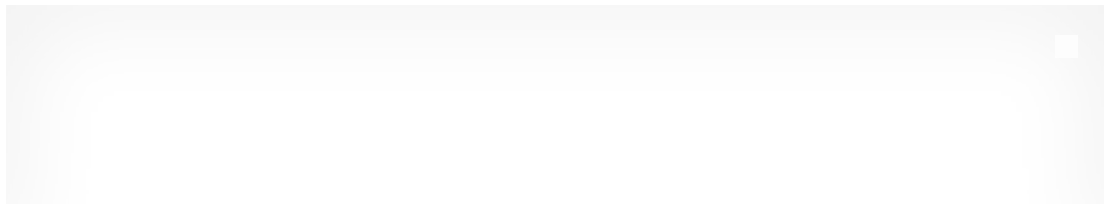
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"When I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story," Trump told Holt of his decision to fire Comey. "It's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won."

Comey said during an interview on ABC's "The View" Wednesday that he took Trump "at his word" when the president told Holt the Russia probe crossed his mind when he decided to dismiss the FBI director.

Comey added that he didn't know "what to make of" the president's tweet, but that the contradictory statements demonstrated that "the president is not committed to the truth as a central American value."

ADVERTISING



The former FBI director has retaken center stage this week amid a publicity tour to promote his new book. In both the book itself and in interviews promoting it, Comey has characterized the president as a liar who has undermined American values and is morally unfit to hold his office.

The White House has responded in kind, labeling Comey a leaker and a liar whose congressional testimony had to be corrected almost as soon as it was given. Trump wrote on Twitter over the weekend that Comey “will go down as the WORST FBI Director in history, by far!”

Cristiano Lima contributed to this report.

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