

Written evidence submitted by Dr Emma Briant

Further Supplementary written evidence on Cambridge Analytica, Leave.EU and Eldon Insurance for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Fake News Inquiry

by Dr Emma L Briant, Senior Lecturer at University of Essex and Post-Doctoral Scientist at George Washington University

Summary

I am submitting here what I believe is the earliest evidence so far showing the planning of the LeaveEU campaign for the UK's Referendum on the EU in 2016. The evidence draws on my academic research and includes interview quotes and a chain of 3 emails here involving among others Arron Banks, the millionaire funder of the far-right LeaveEU campaign and Cambridge Analytica directors. I am sharing these findings with the inquiry as I believe they provide greater clarity on the deeply important and disputed early stages of planning for the LeaveEU campaign and components of its first stage of work including insurance and analysis of data by Cambridge Analytica. I believe the evidence I present here is important as:

- a) it gives additional evidence indicating that the work of Cambridge Analytica, whether or not this was paid for, did constitute 'Phase 1' of the LeaveEU campaign and it describes that phase,
- b) it illustrates the centrality of insurance company plans at the earliest stages of Arron Banks' eventual strategy for LeaveEU,
- c) the emails also show Ian Warren was involved already at an earlier stage than [elsewhere reported](#), in Cambridge Analytica former Business Development Director Brittany Kaiser's testimony she stated she thought that he got involved in November.
- d) the emails also indicate a lack of separation of insurance, UKIP and referendum campaign which are discussed as different components of one project, LeaveEU co-founder Richard Tice is also included in these discussions,
- e) this shows the inclusion of Steve Bannon, former Vice President of Cambridge Analytica in those same onward planning discussions and discussion of funding - an individual who has asserted an ongoing Europe-wide project to bolster advancement of far right parties and spread white nationalist ideologies (see [The Movement](#) for example).

The emails I analyse in this, my fourth evidence submission published by the Inquiry, were received from Brittany Kaiser, former Business Development Director at Cambridge Analytica, they are for my research for academic publications and she was happy for me to submit them with my analysis to the inquiry, as she agreed that publication was clearly in the public interest. They can be cited but please attribute to this research-based evidence. Below I give an overview of my findings and what I believe they indicate, drawing on the emails contained in the appendix and my academic interviews to date.

Early Planning and Potential Funding: LeaveEU Campaign and Eldon Insurance

As we know from Brittany Kaiser and Arron Banks' [testimonies](#), Cambridge Analytica were introduced to LeaveEU by Steve Bannon, the former Vice-President of CA. In evidence provided to the ICO, [published in their recent report](#), LeaveEU stated that four meetings took

place with Cambridge Analytica. The first was on Friday 23rd October 2015, which the [ICO report states](#) was ‘a basic introductory meeting to express interest in potentially working together’. Banks has [testified](#) that, ‘I went to the meeting and I wore several different hats, because you don’t disconnect your different businesses and the things you are doing, you really don’t’ and Damian Collins MP, Chair of the Chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee rightly points out a key question would be separation, and whether this poses conflicts. As these new emails from the following day indicate, while Arron Banks makes a series of different points, he does not say that these are to be seen as separate projects.

Regarding the use of Cambridge Analytica’s AI modelling for targeting insurance, in this email Arron Banks stresses first and foremost how their techniques can also be used for his insurance company. He clearly states here, ‘I think there are insurance applications for this and I would Liz to connect with Brittany and explore how we could use the techniques to select risk averse customers!’ (See Email 1 below). Showing the centrality of this business from the very beginning in LeaveEU planning. Banks lays out the instructions to move forward in an email to Andy Wigmore delegating to him to deal with this, and looping in Steve Bannon’s personal email account, someone Banks [states he had previously met twice](#). It is important to know whether Bannon was involved further in the planning, including the insurance. None of this is discussed as if the insurance company and political campaign are separate activities, nor is a ‘scoping’ project separately for UKIP mentioned. LeaveEU co-founder Richard Tice is also included in discussions about insurance, if not relevant to LeaveEU, why?

We can clearly see that Cambridge Analytica also understood all of these as components of the same campaign - with the insurance, and ‘party data’ (from UKIP) as a central component of the project, this can be seen from Kaiser’s response:

‘We will complete our full proposal (inclusive of all components) for your team once we have analysed the party data, as much of the timeline, requirements and budget will be based around this’.

All these components are reflected in [the LeaveEU strategy](#) Cambridge Analytica developed, which Andy Wigmore said they copied, ‘probably yes - it probably was useful because *we copied it* (Interview: Briant/Wigmore, 4th October 2017) - (see my fuller evidence on this [here](#), you can hear [audio](#) too). Wigmore told me that in order to be able to deploy Cambridge Analytica’s method for AI, they would have needed:

‘electoral roll data which you can then use [...] Because Cambridge Analytica artificial intelligence requires data - if you don’t have it, you can’t do it.’ - this implied that they couldn’t do CA’s artificial intelligence because they didn’t have enough data (Interview: Briant/Wigmore, 4th October 2017).

But Wigmore later told me:

AW: ‘So. Um, so, if you take... You talk about data. So you have a lot of data when you’re an insurer. And that data is, it’s, there’s layers and layers and layers.’ (Interview: Briant/Wigmore, 4th October 2017).

And [OpenDemocracy have now found emails](#) indicating that LeaveEU obtained ‘hundreds of Electoral Registers from across the UK’. Banks has claimed that staff working for the insurance who also working on LeaveEU’s campaign were put onto separate contracts for that work, but this is disputed by the employees themselves who didn’t know why they were being pushed to work on electoral rolls still when the Referendum was over - key emails have also been [published by OpenDemocracy](#) revealing more on data sharing.

The emails I provide below show that beyond the introduction, Steve Bannon was looped into the early strategic development and planning stages of the LeaveEU campaign including related insurance plans. In my discussion with her, Kaiser said she felt this indicated his particular involvement in this case as he was not normally included in such discussions of campaigns she worked on, she said she had emailed with him very little in the three years she was at CA. In these emails I present as evidence, Arron Banks also asks for CA to ‘come up with a strategy for fund raising in the states and engaging companies and special interest groups that might be affected by TTIP’. Later Alexander Nix and 3 new people the LeaveEU ‘team’ met at the earlier meeting on 23rd are added to the chain (Brittany Kaiser, Julian Wheatland, Josh Coe). In this first email Banks asks ‘how we could connect to people with family ties to the UK and raise money and create SM activity,’ which indicates centrality of US connections in the early strategy development. Wigmore stated [elsewhere](#) to James Patrick that this funding strategy was ‘canned’ in February 2016 as it was ‘highly illegal’, his raising this himself threw journalists off the scent and there has been much strong work looking at Russian ties. Yet, given his tendency for obfuscation, journalists and the authorities should be investigating not just the relationships with Russia but those with elites and organizations in the US. Wigmore told me in interview he

“was being sent to Washington. And I go there once a month, which I do, and I’m Arron’s business partner. We are still doing the insurance, the artificial intelligence has been very interesting, really interesting” (Interview: Briant/Wigmore, 4th October 2017).

We know also that Banks was setting up a company in Mississippi to exploit the same AI methodologies in the US insurance industry and there are serious questions relating to data sharing still being investigated there. I was witness in a recent court case in June and my [evidence on this is here](#).

Barrister Matthew Richardson is also looped in on the last email I have here dated 27th October 2015 – I would imagine this would be to check legality and it is odd that Wigmore has stated they only ‘canned’ the US donor plan in February if a lawyer was involved in such early discussions (Email 3). Yet Banks [encourages us to have faith in the presence of a QC advising them throughout](#). Ongoing scepticism is warranted - [BBC Newsnight revealed](#) this week a possible attempt to obscure and redact entries into the accounts that Banks provided to the BBC from Rock Holdings, which he produced in an effort to look transparent. This includes a company called ‘Ural Properties’.

Phase 1 and the role of Cambridge Analytica

In these emails Arron Banks describes a ‘two stage process’ and is clearly inviting Cambridge Analytica to commence work on this (Email 1). In his testimony, Arron Banks dismisses any work completed by Cambridge Analytica as ‘some initial scoping work’ done for UKIP. He [discusses](#) UKIP in his later testimony as if they were a third party, saying ‘they wanted to do an exercise from Cambridge Analytica’ and that they did not expect an invoice: ‘they put this invoice in, which UKIP said, “No, you are meant to be doing a scoping exercise.” I think they approached me to pay it and I said, “Not on your life.” But the original emails do not seem to reflect that. In the emails Banks is instigating work asking them to come up with a strategy for and start work on a ‘two stage process’. He states ‘We are in a two stage process and would like to get CA on the team , maybe look at the first cut of the data (profile) and some thoughts.’ (Email 1). If someone said this to me I would assume I were on board. The emails also show it was Arron Banks himself who was designating the

work Cambridge Analytica did as Phase 1 of a two stage process - the work they were doing clearly was viewed by him and them as one ongoing process with two stages.

It is also important that Ian Warren is mentioned at this very early time. He was working for Labour from [October 2014](#) and may have been at this time. This is significant because of [concerns about whether Labour Party data might have been used by LeaveEU](#). He said he shared 'neighbourhood level data' and from Banks' email it appears this may have been used to target the polling at this early stage.

The ICO Report mentions only 3 other meetings between LeaveEU and Cambridge Analytica, then no additional meeting until 18th November. But the emails indicate there may have been an additional meeting and phonecall for LeaveEU involving [Josh Coe, former Cambridge Analytica Head of Data Operations](#), specifically stating the work is for the purpose of the campaign. None of this sounds like it was envisaged as unrelated general scoping work for UKIP's own purposes. In her reply on 26th October 2015 Brittany Kaiser states:

'Josh copied here looks forward to visiting your team this week in order to review some of the current political data so that we can begin to profile a typical supporter of your campaign and gain better insight into our target audiences. In regard to the presentations on the 17th and 18th of November, I agree that having some of our team co-present some of our initial analysis, results and data-driven methodology for going forward would be extremely persuasive.' (Email 2).

This appears to be discussion of the processing of the UKIP data for a campaign - the LeaveEU campaign strategy – and sounds very much like activities for Phase 1, which included 'our initial data hygiene and analysis' and the presentations. It implies the work that was done was not unrelated as is claimed.

As we know, on 18th November 2015, CA appeared at a press conference with Leave.EU. Then on 20th November 2015, CA went to Leave.EU's Bristol offices. The ICO report states that LeaveEU informed them this was 'to pitch their product'. Brittany Kaiser's testimony differs with this and describes the work as already commenced. A [documentary aired in France](#) in January which showed the call center Brittany Kaiser described visiting, which of course must have been filmed much earlier than its airing. The ICO report concludes that on 8 January 2016, representatives of Leave.EU met CA in London, and CA presented a proposal for future work together. Kaiser stated to me in my interviews that this was more involved than simply presenting a proposal:

"Because Arron came back and was like so excited after the panel. They got such good press and such good feedback with me and Gerry and everyone being there. That they're like 'yes, this is on, yeh', and I worked with them for a couple of days at Millbank Tower and then they wanted. And he was like 'let's do this for the insurance company too! Can we make this work?'" (Interview: Briant/Kaiser, 3rd April 2018).

Banks has repeatedly misrepresented events during this entire period and the emails presented here appear to raise inconsistencies with his version of this story. What I would conclude from my own research and extensive review of publicly available information, that Cambridge Analytica provided this work for the first stage and then were expecting to get paid. Brittany Kaiser told me in interview,

‘It was quite obvious that they [LeaveEU] were just trying to- the fact that they never paid- they never signed our first contract and paid the first invoice - meant that we never went on to phase two. Cause we were still negotiating getting paid for the first part of work. Then it never happened.’ She said, ‘So... we never did phase 2. So we never had any of that data, the insurance or Leave.eu datasets, we never got any of it.’ (Interview: Briant/Kaiser, 3rd April 2018).

We now know the work they did do for the UKIP data component was invoiced and they went to Arron Banks for the money for Cambridge Analytica. Why would they do this if it was their general scoping work and not related to his project? See this [invoice](#) obtained by The Guardian. Arron Banks has [claimed](#) that ‘Cambridge Analytica did not complete phase 1 or 2’. But this does not seem to be correct as Phase 1 is described in the emails as: “our initial data hygiene and analysis part of the proposal (Phase 1) to develop some strategies to support the presentations on November 17, 18” and this appears to be exactly what Cambridge Analytica did do before those presentations, including the eventual [presentation](#) in which Kaiser appears herself with them on 18th November 2015.

By January, Cambridge Analytica had not been paid, and LeaveEU didn’t get the designation, so CA only did this first part of the work but they had already provided Arron Banks with their work for Phase 1 and a full strategy for his ‘two stage’ campaign. Their strategy [was later copied and deployed by LeaveEU](#) according to Andy Wigmore, though I do not believe this was used with CA’s knowledge and blessing. Banks uses very careful language to claim that Phase 1 [was not ‘completed’](#) by Cambridge Analytica – does this mean work was done and used but just that CA wasn’t paid? Or that they did not fully complete all planned tasks but partially completed it? This would still be significant if so. If work for ‘Phase 1’ that was done by Cambridge Analytica was scrapped by Banks and a new Phase 1 designed by LeaveEU’s repurposed insurance staff, can Arron Banks evidence that design and deployment of Phase 1 of his ‘two stage process’ within the designation period for Brexit? If so he must evidence this, and nothing has been provided that shows this. Were they *in reality* building Phase 2 on the Phase 1 foundational work involving Cambridge Analytica we can see in these emails? In interview for my upcoming academic publications which will be published soon, Andy Wigmore, Communication Director for LeaveEU told me they copied the strategy Cambridge Analytica presented to them. I submitted these comments in my earlier evidence [here](#) and won’t repeat this evidence here but I would encourage readers to consider the emails in this context.

These early planning emails are significant because they reveal the early strategy as laid out by central figures in the LeaveEU campaign, and help us to understand the planning – which aids interpretation of the important revelations coming out in a somewhat piecemeal way through many excellent academic, journalistic and official investigations. I believe there are now 2 investigations by National Crime Agency (which investigates serious & organised crime), 3 by the Met police, multiple by ICO, the [Financial Conduct Authority & UK Serious Fraud Office](#). These are important. But what they do not do is assess *in a holistic way* whether the EU referendum was subverted. This should explore the role of American as well as Russian individuals potentially involved in planning and funding, it [must consider possible failures of government oversight in relation to SCL](#), as well as the activities of Cambridge Analytica. Understanding the big picture, taking into account all actors, is vital to our national security and for restoring public trust in democracy. For this we would need a Mueller-style inquiry like the one going on in the States and it is deeply concerning that the government have been so far resisting this for what seem to be political reasons.

November 2018

Appendix

Below is a chain of emails – labelled by date for clarity:

Email 1: Wigmore/Banks to Kaiser, copying in early LeaveEU planners, 24th October 2015 - Provided by Dr Emma L Briant from upcoming academic publications on the EU Referendum

Andy Wigmore wrote:

Hi Brittany

See message below can you pass this around please.

Thanks

Andy

Andy Wigmore

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Arron Banks"

Date: 24 Oct 2015 22:40

Subject: events

To: "Andy Wigmore"

Cc: "Liz Bilney"

"Richard Tice"

"Steve Bannon"

"c lowe"

"James Pryor"

Andy

Can you pass this on to the three people from CA we saw on Friday , I have mislaid the cards;

1. I think there are insurance applications for this and I would Liz to connect with Brittany and explore how we could use the techniques to select risk averse customers!

2. We are in a two stage process and would like to get CA on the team , maybe look at the first cut of the data (profile) and some thoughts.

It's clear major donors are sitting on the fence but we aim to do something about that. Our first and only priority is to win the nomination and be ahead

on every point. Gerry Gunster is doing three presentations 17th November, 18th November in London on how we win the referendum. It might make

for CA to join the presentation along with Ian Warren. We have done a major polling exercise we will be revealing details of;

We aim to do one for journalists in Westminster 17th November (house of Lords) and politicians, other groups, and the other on the 18th at Hertford Street , one at lunch time and one in the evening for Donor and city types.

We are just fixing up the first venue but I think it would be a good opportunity to take the intellectual high ground.

3. We would like CA to come up with a strategy for fund raising in the states and engaging companies and special interest groups that might be affected

by TTIP. Also how we could connect to people with family ties to the UK and raise money and create SM activity.

Arron

Arron Banks

Ambassador - [LeaveEU](#)

Email 2: Kaiser to Banks, Wigmore, copying in Cambridge Analytica, 26th October 2015 - Provided by Dr Emma L Briant from upcoming academic publications on the EU Referendum

On 26 Oct 2015, at 10:32, Brittany Kaiser

wrote:

Dear Andy and Arron,

Thank you for the prompt follow up. Firstly, it was such a pleasure to meet your team on Friday and explore how we can support the exciting work you are doing. I copy here my other colleagues whom you met on Friday, as well as our CEO so that he is in the loop.

I respond in line to Arron's queries below:

1) By copy of this email I ask Liz if she is available to have a call with our data team early this week? There are many applications of our methodology for customer acquisition in the insurance field, and there are a variety of results we could produce here depending on the richness of your house file data.

2) Josh copied here looks forward to visiting your team this week in order to review some of the current political data so that we can begin to profile a typical supporter of your campaign and gain better insight into our target audiences. In regard to the presentations on the 17th and 18th of November, I agree that having some of our team co-present some of our initial analysis, results and data-driven methodology for going forward would be extremely persuasive. Please advise on any further thoughts and we will reserve the dates in our diary accordingly.

3) We are completing a proposal for your team by COP tomorrow which will include our discussed targeted campaigns, inclusive of our voter registration pilot, Target Audience Analysis, digital outreach, targeting businesses for support and US-based fundraising strategies.

Looking forward to connecting with Liz, as well as receiving your feedback on the document we will circulate tomorrow for review. Do not hesitate to get in touch in the meantime if your team has any questions we can assist with.

With kindest regards,

Brittany

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Brittany Kaiser, PhD Candidate, MPhil, LL.M, MA Hons
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Email 3: Kaiser to Wigmore and 'All' LeaveEU team, 27th October 2015 - Provided by Dr Emma L Briant from upcoming academic publications on the EU Referendum:



Begin forwarded message:

From: Brittany Kaiser

Subject: Re: events

Date: October 27, 2015 at 11:40:18 PDT

To: Andy Wigmore

Cc: Arron Banks

, Alexander Nix, Julian Wheatland

Jordanna Zetter

, Josh Coe

<MRichardson

, "Steve Bannon"

Dear all,

As a brief update on our meeting with Matt this afternoon, I respond in line with my previous action points:

1. I have briefed our data team on the insurance project, so we are ready to take a conference call with Liz, or a face to face meeting, to discuss this proposal at her convenience.
2. Matt is looking into arranging for the head of data from the party to come see us at our offices this week for us to review the granularity and state of the available data. This will inform our initial data hygiene and analysis part of the proposal (Phase 1) to develop some strategies to support the presentations on November 17, 18.
3. We will complete our full proposal (inclusive of all components) for your team once we have analysed the party data, as much of the timeline, requirements and budget will be based around this. We hope to have this accurately completed by the end of this week.

In the meantime, please direct any questions you have to me and I will make sure we take care of any items that may be outstanding.

With my best wishes,

Brittany

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