

Cambridge Analytica fights back on data scandal

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Cambridge Analytica spokesperson Clarence Mitchell speaks during a press conference in London, Tuesday, April 24, 2018. The press conference was held Tuesday afternoon to follow Cambridge University academic Aleksandr Kogan speaking at a hearing held by Britain's Parliament media committee. Kogan's company, Global Science Research, developed a Facebook app that vacuumed up information from users as well as additional data from their Facebook friends. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

Cambridge Analytica unleashed its counterattack against claims that it

misused data from millions of Facebook accounts, saying Tuesday it is the victim of misunderstandings and inaccurate reporting that portrays the company as the evil villain in a James Bond movie.

Clarence Mitchell, a high-profile publicist recently hired to represent the [company](#), held Cambridge Analytica's first news conference since allegations surfaced that the Facebook data helped Donald Trump win the 2016 presidential election. Christopher Wylie, a former employee of Cambridge Analytica's parent, also claims that the company has links to the successful campaign to take Britain out of the European Union.

"The company has been portrayed in some quarters as almost some Bond villain," Mitchell said. "Cambridge Analytica is no Bond villain."

Cambridge Analytica didn't use any of the Facebook data in the work it did for Trump's campaign and it never did any work on the Brexit campaign, Mitchell said. Furthermore, he said, the data was collected by another company that was contractually obligated to follow data protection rules and the information was deleted as soon as Facebook raised concerns.

Mitchell insists the company has not broken any laws, but acknowledged it had commissioned an independent investigation is being conducted. He insisted that the company had been victimized by "wild speculation based on misinformation, misunderstanding, or in some cases, frankly, an overtly political position."



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The comments come weeks after the scandal engulfed both the consultancy and Facebook, which has been embroiled in scandal since revelations that Cambridge Analytica misused personal information from as many as 87 million Facebook accounts. Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the U.S. congressional committees and at one point the company lost some \$50 billion in value for its shareholders.

Details on the scandal continued to trickle out. On Tuesday, a

Cambridge University academic said the suspended CEO of Cambridge Analytica lied to British lawmakers investigating fake news.

Academic Aleksandr Kogan's company, Global Science Research, developed a Facebook app that vacuumed up data from people who signed up to use the app as well as information from their Facebook friends, even if those friends hadn't agreed to share their data.

Cambridge Analytica allegedly used the data to profile U.S. voters and target them with ads during the 2016 election to help elect Donald Trump. It denies the charge.

Kogan appeared before the House of Commons' media committee Tuesday and was asked whether Cambridge Analytica's suspended CEO, Alexander Nix, told the truth when he testified that none of the company's data came from Global Science Research.



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"That's a fabrication," Kogan told committee Chairman Damian Collins. Nix could not immediately be reached for comment.

Kogan also cast doubt on many of Wylie's allegations, which have triggered a global debate about internet privacy protections. Wylie repeated his claims in a series of media interviews as well as an appearance before the committee.

Wylie worked for SCL Group Ltd. in 2013 and 2014.

"Mr. Wylie has invented many things," Kogan said, calling him "duplicitous."

No matter what, though, Kogan insisted in his testimony that the data would not be that useful to election consultants. The idea was seized upon by Mitchell, who also denied that the company had worked on the effort to have Britain leave the EU.

Mitchell said that the idea that political consultancies can use data alone to sway votes is "frankly insulting to the electorates. Data science in modern campaigning helps those campaigns, but it is still and always will be the candidates who win the races."

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