



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on June 15, 2019

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## Ilhan Omar's Team Colluded With Newspaper to Shut Down Bad Press

Politicians have long understood the perks of maintaining a close relationship with the press.

Documents related to campaign finance violations by Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.; shown) reveal her team's admission of attempting to kill unfavorable news coverage of the representative by leveraging personal relationships with journalists.



In an email acquired and made public by the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, Ben Goldfarb, Omar's crisis manager, asked members of the Omar team if they had a "relationship" with a journalist, Blois Olson, in order to shut down a story — as they admittedly had done with the prominent *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*.

"Does anyone have a personal relationship with Blois?" Goldfarb asked in the email. "Someone should probably reach out to talk off the record and shut it down with him AS WE DO WITH THE STRIB [emphasis added]."



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**Nick Solheim**  
@NickSSolheim

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My God. Props to [@bloisolson](#) for sharing.

From [@IlhanMN](#)'s crisis manager Ben Goldfarb:

“Does anyone in the team have a relationship with Blois? Someone should probably reach out to talk off the record and shut it down with him AS WE DO WITH THE STRIB” [emphasis added]

## THREAD

**Carla Kjellberg**


**From:** Ben Goldfarb [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2016 7:56 AM  
**To:** Jean Heyer  
**Cc:** Carla Kjellberg; Shayna Berkowitz; Phyllis Wiener; Ilhan Omar  
**Subject:** Re: Draft of email we could send to 75 core supporters Monday night or Tuesday morning  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

He did link to the story and called them trustworthy. Copy is pasted below.

Does anyone on the team have a relationship with Blois? Someone should probably reach out to talk off the record and shut it down with him as we do with the Strib. I don't know him, but can do it if nobody has a relationship. And we can tighten up the statement today in case it does spread and we feel like we need to broadcast something later today.

Thanks,  
BG

Fw: morning take 8.15.16 - Special Session Staredown  
B


 Ben Goldfarb  
to me  
0 minutes ago  
Details  
This message has been modified to fit your screen. Tap here to show original.

Sent using OWA for iPhone

**From:** Blois Olson, Fluence Media [REDACTED] on behalf of Blois Olson, Fluence Media  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2016 6:51:59 AM  
**To:** Ben Goldfarb  
**Subject:** morning take 8.15.16 - Special Session Staredown

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

morning take  
a daily Minnesota tip  
sheet



9:13 AM - 13 Jun 2019 from [Washington, DC](#)

Goldfarb's e-mail came after Olson's *Morning Take* shared a link to a Powerline Blog story about Representative Omar. *Morning Take* [notes](#) that, ultimately, “no one ever reached out” and “we weren't



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‘shut down.’”

But Goldfarb’s own words remain on record claiming to shut down stories at the *Star-Tribune*. The newspaper has not yet issued a statement on the shocking revelation.

The Goldfarb e-mail was one of [several documents](#) made public as part of the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board’s findings during its probe of campaign finance violations by the Neighbors for Ilhan Committee.

The probe began due to a complaint submitted last year by Representative Steve Drazkowski, a Republican member of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

The Board declared that the Omar Committee improperly paid for several of Omar’s personal expenses and ordered the congresswoman to pay back nearly \$4,000, as well as a \$500 civil fine (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

Among the expenses Omar was ordered to personally reimburse include \$1,500 paid to public accountants Frederick & Rosen for tax services.

The Board’s most troubling [discovery](#), and the one that may result in serious legal ramifications for Omar, was the finding that the lawmaker filed joint tax returns in 2014 and 2015 with Ahmed Abdisalan Hirsi — a man with whom she was living but to whom she was not legally married at the time.

Under Minnesota law, it is illegal to file jointly unless filers are legally married to one another. The couple did not marry legally until 2018. They were joined by a faith-based (but not civil) marriage for several years before separating in 2008.

The next year, Omar married British citizen Ahmed Nur Said Elmi, to whom she was still legally married at the time she filed jointly with Hirsi. The congresswoman ultimately divorced Elmi in 2017 and reconciled with Hirsi, marrying him in 2018.

[Research into Elmi’s social media](#) has led some observers to believe that he is Omar’s brother or another close family member and that their marriage was entered into for a legal benefit or dishonest purpose.

The news that Omar filed taxes jointly with someone other than her legal spouse and that her team has admittedly suppressed coverage it deems unfavorable are far from the first scandals in which the progressive Democrat has found herself — and are unlikely to be the last.

*Photo of Rep. Ilhan Omar: AP Images*



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