

# PAUL MANAFORT REMAINS A BIGGER SCANDAL THAN HUNTER BIDEN

I haven't had the time to dig into Gary Shapley's purported whistleblower claims about the case against Hunter Biden, which several US Attorneys have already disputed.

My read, thus far, matches Andrew Prokop's: after IRS investigators tried to take steps during a pre-election prohibition period last year, someone in their vicinity leaked to Devlin Barrett, as right-wingers do every pre-election period. That led Delaware US Attorney David Weiss to (justifiably) remove the suspected leakers from the case. As other right wing officials have before, they then ran to Congress and belatedly claimed whistleblower status.

The purported whistleblowers claim that investigative steps – pertaining to allegations about conduct *after* Biden left the Obama White House – were slow-walked in 2020, during Bill Barr's tenure as Attorney General. The most serious claim made by the purported whistleblowers is that US Attorneys appointed by Joe Biden refused to file charges against Hunter in the venues where they occurred – MDCA and DC. Merrick Garland, David Weiss, and Matthew Graves have all denied that.

But even if that allegation is true, even if Weiss continues to investigate and substantiates some foreign influence peddling (at this point, limited to 2017, a time when Biden was not in office), the allegations against Hunter Biden would *still* be far less scandalous than the Paul Manafort case. That's true because the scale of Manafort's tax crimes were far worse. That's true because Manafort has confessed to his foreign influence crime. And that's true because Trump pardoned Manafort after his former

campaign manager lied to investigators about what he did with (since confirmed) Russian agent, Konstantin Kilimnik, during and after the 2016 campaign.

Here's my understanding of the comparison. The claims against Hunter, in bold, reflect the two Informations docketed as part of the plea deal. All but the pardon TBDs in his case reflect allegations from the so-called whistleblowers that remain unresolved.

	Manafort	Hunter
Millions in tax avoidance	\$15M	<b>\$3M</b> ; TBD
Weapons possession	No	<b>Yes</b>
FARA component	Yes	<b>No</b> ; TBD
Money laundering	\$6.5M	No
Bank fraud	>\$22M	No
Conspiracy with foreign spy	Yes	No
Joint Defense Agreement with President	Yes	No
Lied to protect President	Yes	No
Intervention from AG	TBD	TBD
Pardoned	Yes	TBD

Note: I have not listed "lied to protect the president" for Hunter because, as far as I am aware, the President's son has not made sworn statements to law enforcement – true or false – about matters affecting his father. Manafort did make false statements about matters implicating Trump during his breached cooperation with Robert Mueller's prosecutors.

A whole pack of DC journalists have chased the IRS allegations, like six year olds do a soccer ball, but with perhaps less consideration of what they're chasing. They're doing that even as Trump's pardons remain largely unreviewed since he announced his run. This manic response to contested IRS claims reflects a choice. Just not a justifiable journalistic one, given the contested allegations to date.

## Paul Manafort sources

Millions in tax avoidance: On August 21, 2018, an EDVA jury convicted Manafort of filing false tax returns each year from 2010 to 2014. On

September 14, 2018, Manafort pled guilty to tax crimes spanning from 2006 through 2015. Between 2010 and 2014, he failed to report over \$15M in income on FBAR.

FARA component: On September 14, 2018, Manafort pled guilty to serving as an unregistered foreign agent from 2006 through 2015.

Money laundering: On September 14, 2018, Manafort pled guilty to laundering over \$6.5M in payments, from 2006 through 2016, as part of his FARA scheme.

Bank fraud: In August 21, 2018, an EDVA jury convicted Manafort of two counts of bank fraud, totalling \$4.4M. On September 14, 2018, Manafort admitted to over \$25M more in bank fraud.

Conspiracy with foreign spy: On September 14, 2018, Manafort pled guilty to a conspiracy to witness tamper with Konstantin Kilimnik. In a 2021 sanctions filing, Treasury stated as fact that Kilimnik is a Russian Intelligence Services agent.

Joint Defense Agreement with President: Before Manafort pled guilty, Rudy Giuliani confirmed that Manafort was part of a Joint Defense Agreement with the President.

Lied to protect President: On February 13, 2019, Amy Berman Jackson ruled that Manafort had breached his plea agreement by – among other things – lying about what he did in an August 2, 2016 meeting with Konstantin Kilimnik at which he described how the campaign planned to win swing states.

Intervention from Attorney General: On May 13, 2020, Manafort was given COVID release to home confinement, even though his prison was at that point low risk and his case did not meet the criteria laid out by Bureau of Prisons. He served less than two years of an over seven year sentence in prison.

Pardoned: On December 23, 2020, Trump pardoned Manafort.

# Hunter Biden sources

Hundreds of thousands in tax avoidance: In both 2017 and 2018, Hunter failed to pay full taxes on \$1.5M in income (\$3M total).

Gun possession: For 11 days in 2018, Hunter possessed a gun in violation of a prohibition on gun ownership by an addict.

Update: Just to give a sense of scale, in his Ways and Means interview, Whistleblower X tried to explain how big the scale of Hunter Biden's graft was by noting that he and his associates, *over five years*, got \$17.3M.

But Manafort was doing more than that himself.