

THE TWO IMPEACHMENT TREASON TRIP: UKRAINE CHARGES RUDY GIULIANI'S SOURCES

Yesterday, Ukraine's SBU charged with treason three of the people from whom Rudy Giuliani sought dirt on the Bidens to help Donald Trump get reelected. The announcement names Andrii Derkach and Kostyantyn Kulyk and describes someone that Politico reports to be Oleksandr Dubinsky.

The allegations say the threesome took \$10 million from Russia's GRU to discredit Ukraine.

"The main task of this organization was to take advantage of the tense political situation in Ukraine and discredit our state in the international arena. For this, the group was getting money from Russian military intelligence. Financing amounted to more than \$10 million," SBU said.

According to SBU, Dubinsky, guided by GRU, spread fake news about Ukraine's military and political leadership, including claims that high-ranking Ukrainian officials were interfering in U.S. presidential elections. SBU said the Ukraine group was run by GRU deputy head Vladimir Alekseyev and his deputy Oleksiy Savin.

The propaganda described in the announcement preceded but is closely linked to Rudy's December 5, 2019 trip to Kyiv to obtain dirt from Derkach. This Just Security timeline provides a good summary of how the trip to Kyiv – right in the middle of House impeachment proceedings – fit into Rudy's year-long effort to find campaign dirt.

Why wasn't Rudy ever charged?

The US Treasury Department sanctioned Derkach for election interference on September 10, 2020. Treasury added Kulyk, Dubinsky, and several other Derkach associates on January 11, 2021.

On September 26, 2022, EDNY charged Derkach with sanctions violations and money laundering. On January 23, 2023, EDNY superseded that indictment to add Derkach's wife. On December 7, 2022, EDNY moved to seize a condo it claims the couple owns in Beverly Hills.

The Intelligence Community knew of Rudy's trip to meet Derkach before he went to Kyiv and warned Trump, but Trump did not care.

The warnings to the White House, which have not previously been reported, led national security adviser Robert O'Brien to caution Trump in a private conversation that any information Giuliani brought back from Ukraine should be considered contaminated by Russia, one of the former officials said.

The message was, "Do what you want to do, but your friend Rudy has been worked by Russian assets in Ukraine," this person said. Officials wanted "to protect the president from coming out and saying something stupid," particularly since he was facing impeachment over his own efforts to strong-arm Ukraine's president into investigating the Bidens.

But O'Brien emerged from the meeting uncertain whether he had gotten through to the president. Trump had "shrugged his shoulders" at O'Brien's warning, the former official said, and dismissed concern about his lawyer's activities by saying, "That's Rudy."

[snip]

Several senior administration officials “all had a common understanding” that Giuliani was being targeted by the Russians, said the former official who recounted O’Brien’s intervention. That group included Attorney General William P. Barr, FBI Director Christopher A. Wray and White House Counsel Pat Cipollone.

Later reporting made, then retracted a claim, that the FBI had warned Rudy before he made the trip to Kyiv.

At the time Rudy made the trip to Kyiv, he was already under investigation, by SDNY, for serving as an unregistered agent of a *different* Ukrainian dealing dirt, Yuri Lutsenko, an investigation that grew out of the campaign finance prosecution of Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman. SDNY obtained warrants for Rudy’s iCloud account on November 4, 2019 and, in April 2021, seized 18 devices from the former President’s attorney. That investigation concluded with no charges in August 2022. Rudy’s lawyer, Robert Costello, subsequently revealed that a number of the devices FBI seized in April 2021 were corrupted and therefore useless to the investigation, which likely is a big part of the reason Rudy was not charged by SDNY.

But Rudy was never charged for his ties to known Russian agent Derkach, either. Indeed, the Derkach indictment was written to focus on his NABULeaks site, attacking Ukrainian efforts to combat corruption; it does not mention Rudy (though it does mention that his sanctions pertained to the 2020 election).

Not only wasn’t Rudy charged, but he was permitted to share the information he obtained while in Ukraine directly with DOJ.

How that happened remains among Bill Barr’s most corrupt and complex machinations, one that deserves far more attention given the ongoing

efforts to gin up a Ukraine-related impeachment against Joe Biden.

On January 3, 2020 – less than a month after Rudy met Derkach and while Trump’s first impeachment remained pending – Barr tasked Pittsburgh US Attorney Scott Brady with the “discreet” assignment of ingesting dirt from the public, primarily meaning Rudy, to “vet.”

Brady’s recent deposition before the House Judiciary Committee revealed he did little real vetting. What he did do, though, was to query prosecutors in SDNY about the ongoing investigation into Rudy and obtain “interrogatories” from prosecutors in Delaware about the ongoing investigation into Hunter Biden. He also spoke with prosecutors investigating Dmitry Firtash and Ihor Kolomoyskyi, two of three Ukrainian oligarchs from whom Rudy had also solicited dirt.

Brady also spoke with DC investigators who – according to Chuck Grassley – had *just one month earlier*, right in the middle of the impeachment effort directly tied to Burisma, shut down an investigation into Burisma owner Mykola Zlochevsky, the third Ukrainian oligarch from whom Rudy solicited dirt. From the DC investigators, Brady learned of a passing reference to Hunter Biden in a 2017 informant report, which led Brady to reinterview the same informant. The informant revealed that in a late 2019 phone conversation, one that almost certainly took place during impeachment, Zlochevsky claimed to have bribed Joe Biden in such a way that it would take ten years of searching to find the payoff.

In his HJC deposition, Brady admitted that Rudy did not tell him – and his team did not seek out any information – about the President’s lawyer’s efforts to solicit dirt from Zlochevsky.

Q Okay. But you never asked, for example, the House Permanent Select Committee investigators or anyone associated with that investigation to do

a similar inquiry for evidence relating to Zlochevsky?

A No, I don't believe we did.

Q Okay. And, like you said, you were not aware that this interview had taken place in 2019. Is that fair to say?

A I don't believe I was, no.

Q Okay. And anyone on your team, as far as you know, was not aware that Mr. Zlochevsky had been interviewed at the direction of Giuliani before your assessment began?

A I don't believe so.

In September 2020, Brady provided Richard Donoghue with a report on the results of his "vetting." On October 23, 2020, Brady's investigators briefed David Weiss' investigators on the FD-1023 describing the late 2019 Zlochevsky claim of bribery. Weiss claims that aspect of his investigation remains ongoing, and Republicans have made the FD-1023 part of their impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden.

But Barr did more than provide a way for Rudy to share information obtained from a known Russian agent such that it might be used in the investigation into Joe Biden's son and, now, an impeachment stunt targeting Joe Biden himself. He also ensured that SDNY would not be able to expand their investigation to cover Rudy's dalliances with Derkach.

On January 17, 2020, Jeffrey Rosen issued a memo making the US Attorney in EDNY – then Richard Donoghue, but Donoghue would swap places in July 2020 with Seth DuCharme, who was at the time overseeing the Brady tasking – a gatekeeper over all Ukraine-related investigations.

Any and all new matters relating to Ukraine shall be directed exclusively to EDNY for investigation and appropriate handling. Unless otherwise

directed, existing matters covered by this memorandum shall remain in the Offices and components where they currently are being handled, subject to ongoing consultation with EDNY. Any widening or expansion of existing matters shall require prior consultation with and approval by my office and EDNY.

This memo had the known effect of prohibiting SDNY from following the evidence where their existing investigation into Rudy Giuliani would naturally lead – to Rudy’s relationship with known Russian agent Andrii Derkach.

Geoffrey Berman’s book revealed that Barr also prohibited the New York FBI Field Office – which supports investigations in both SDNY and EDNY – from obtaining the 302s from Brady’s January interviews with Rudy.

There were FBI reports of those meetings, called 302s, which we wanted to review. So did Sweeney. Sweeney’s team asked the agents in Pittsburgh for a copy and was refused. Sweeney called me up, livid.

“Geoff, in all my years with the FBI I have never been refused a 302,” he said. “This is a total violation of protocol.”

This would have prevented SDNY from holding Rudy accountable for any lies he told Brady and prevented EDNY from obtaining Rudy’s first-hand account about where he obtained his dirt and what he had to trade to get it. That may explain why Rudy doesn’t show up in Derkach’s indictment.

But Barr wasn’t done with his efforts to protect Rudy from any consequences for his dalliance with a known Russian agent. In June 2020, Barr fired Geoffrey Berman in an attempt to shut down the ongoing “tentacles” of the investigation into Rudy.

The reason Rudy Giuliani was not charged for soliciting election disinformation from a known Russian agent is that the Attorney General of the United States set up a system that separated the investigation of that Russian agent from the investigation of Rudy, all while channeling whatever disinformation Rudy obtained from Derkach (or Zlochevsky) into the investigation of Joe Biden's son.

It's that simple. Bill Barr set up a system that protected Russian disinformation and made sure it could be laundered into the Hunter Biden investigation and also protected the President's personal lawyer from any consequences for soliciting that Russian disinformation from a known Russian agent.

That's why Rudy Giuliani wasn't charged.

How does this relate to the "Hunter Biden" laptop?

The system that Barr set up absolutely has to do with the FD-1023 that remains part of both the Biden impeachment effort and the Hunter Biden criminal investigation.

There's far less evidence that Rudy's effort has anything to do with the "Hunter Biden" laptop.

To be sure, Lev Parnas has described that in May 2019 – the month after the laptop ultimately shared with the FBI was dropped off in Wilmington – he first learned that people were shopping a laptop with dirt on Hunter Biden, though he understood it to be one stolen in 2014, not 2019.

At the same time, the BLT Team was exploring many different angles to get information on the Bidens. In June, Giuliani asked me to accompany him to a lunch in New York with Vitaly Pruss, a Russian businessman who claimed to have deep connections to Burisma, including with Hunter Biden's business partner Devon Archer, and had recommended

powerful people to Zlochevsky that he should put on the company's board. During this meeting, Pruss shared a story with us: He said earlier that year, while doing business related to Burisma, he had taken Hunter Biden to meet Kazakhstan's minister of foreign affairs, and that Biden had gotten substantially intoxicated with drugs and alcohol on this trip. While he was incapacitated, his laptop was compromised and copied by a representative of FSB (Russia's secret police) and members of Zlochevsky's team.

It's important to note that certain aspects of Pruss's story are verifiably true. This trip with Hunter Biden did happen, and his computer hard drives were taken and duplicated. But Pruss specified that while the contents of the laptop were personally embarrassing to Hunter Biden – pictures of him doing drugs and surrounded by girls – there was no evidence of financial crimes or any data on his laptop that suggested illegal activities of any other kind, which is the sort of proof that Giuliani desperately needed. Pruss never mentioned anything about the hard drives containing criminal information, only the embarrassing images. It was not until Giuliani began disseminating the story of Hunter Biden's laptop that the idea of proof of financial and political crimes was introduced.

Parnas also described that he expected to obtain a hard drive from Hunter's laptop on the trip to Vienna that got preempted by his arrest.

In the early part of October 2019, I got a call telling me to go to Vienna with Giuliani, where the former Chief Financial Officer of Burisma, Alexander Gorbunenko, would meet Giuliani and give

us Hunter Biden's hard drive and answer any questions we had.

The timing of the known laptop parallels Rudy's efforts in chilling fashion.

The laptop ultimately shared with the FBI was first linked to Hunter Biden's Apple account in October 2018, at the beginning of Rudy's efforts to solicit dirt on Biden.

On a November 14, 2018 check, Hunter linked his Fox News pundit shrink to a Russian or Ukrainian-linked escort service he was frequenting at the time – likely the same escort service on which the investigation, now entering its sixth year, was first predicated. But that reference on a check memo line could as easily be explained by addiction or his efforts to cover up or write off such expenses.

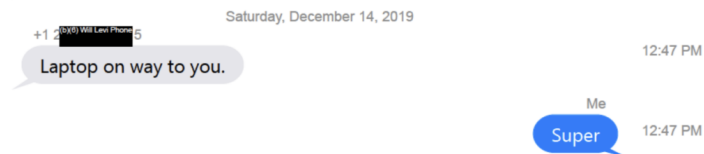
Most of the materials on the laptop got packaged up in January and February 2019 while Hunter was again receiving treatment from his Fox News pundit shrink. At the time, Hunter may have had limited access to the Internet, much less the ability to package all that up. The laptop ultimately shared with the FBI was packaged up at a time when Hunter also had a *different*, older laptop in his possession that was ultimately left at the guest house of the Fox News pundit shrink.

The laptop ultimately shared with the FBI was delivered to the Delaware repair shop – by someone who had access to Hunter Biden's phone and credit card – in April 2019.

Depending on whether you believe John Paul Mac Isaac or the FBI, JPMI's father first reached out to the FBI about the laptop hours before or seven days after Parnas was arrested, either October 9 or October 16, 2019. The FBI ultimately obtained the laptop on December 9, 2019, days before the House voted to impeach Donald Trump, and the same month when (per Chuck Grassley) Barr's DOJ shut down an investigation into Zlochevsky, the guy whose former CFO had

been offering Rudy such a hard drive two months earlier. If you can believe JPMI (and you probably can't), the FBI tried to boot up the laptop before obtaining any known warrant for it.

The day after the IRS obtained a warrant for the laptop on December 13, 2019, one of Barr's aides texted him on his private phone to let him know they were sending him a laptop.



And then months after Barr jerry-rigged a system to ingest dirt from Russian spies into the investigation of Hunter Biden while protecting Rudy, in August 2020, JPMI shared a hard drive of the materials from that very same laptop with Rudy Giuliani, the same guy who had solicited dirt from Burisma in October 2019 and from a Russian agent back in December 2019.

After the NYPost first revealed the laptop, Rudy dismissed concerns that it may have come from Russian spies and even called obtaining it an "extension" of his earlier efforts to obtain such dirt, including (if you can believe Parnas) a laptop from Zlochevsky's former CFO.

But that's some Deep State talk, he added. "The chance that Derkach is a Russian spy is no better than 50/50."

[snip]

Asked, for instance, whether he was concerned if the materials he obtained might in some way be linked to the hacking of Burisma late last year—an act attributed to Russian intelligence—Giuliani said: "Wouldn't matter. What's the difference?"

[snip]

Giuliani said he viewed his latest leak

to the New York Post as an extension of his years-long efforts to work with Ukrainians to dig up dirt on the Bidens.

According to Scott Brady, Rudy never told him he had obtained the laptop, even though Rudy got it before Brady submitted his report to Donoghue in September 2020.

There are a great deal of remarkable coincidences in the parallel timelines of Barr's complex system to obtain dirt on Hunter Biden while protecting Rudy and the timeline of the laptop first shared with the FBI and then shared with Rudy. But thus far that's all they are: coincidences.

There's not even proof – at least not publicly – that anyone besides Hunter Biden packaged up the laptop that ultimately got shared with the FBI. To the extent someone did, there's more evidence implicating *American* rat-fuckers than Russian ones.

There are a great deal of questions about how the laptop got packaged up and the legality of JPMI's sharing of it with anyone but the FBI. But for now, those are different questions than the questions about Rudy's efforts to solicit dirt from a Russian agent.

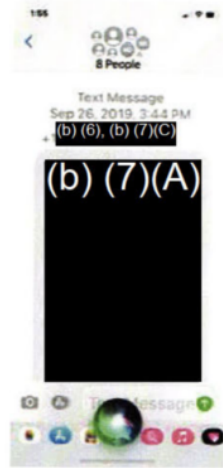
Did John Durham meet these same Russian agents on behalf of Barr?

There's one more question these charges in Ukraine raise, however: Whether John Durham met with one or several of these men Ukraine now accuses of working for Russian spies.

On the day that Treasury sanctioned Kulyk and Dubinsky, January 11, 2021, Durham sent an aide some group chats he had participated in with Barr's top aides in September 2019, just as the impeachment panic started.

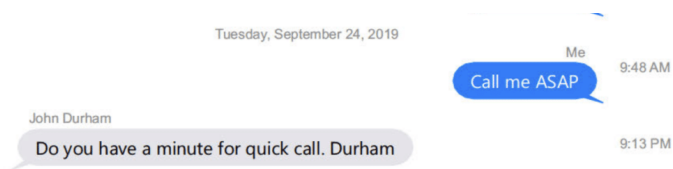
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (USACT)

From: Durham, John (USACT)
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 1:57 PM
To: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (USACT)



Those group chats, which Durham referred back to on the day Derkach's associates were sanctioned, seem to have arisen out of a panic Barr had on the morning of September 24, 2019, the day the White House would release the Volodymyr Zelenskyy transcript showing that Trump asked the Ukrainian President to deal dirt on the Bidens to *both* his Attorney General and personal lawyer.

"Call me ASAP," the Attorney General texted Durham that morning, followed almost twelve hours later by Durham asking to speak, possibly for a second time.

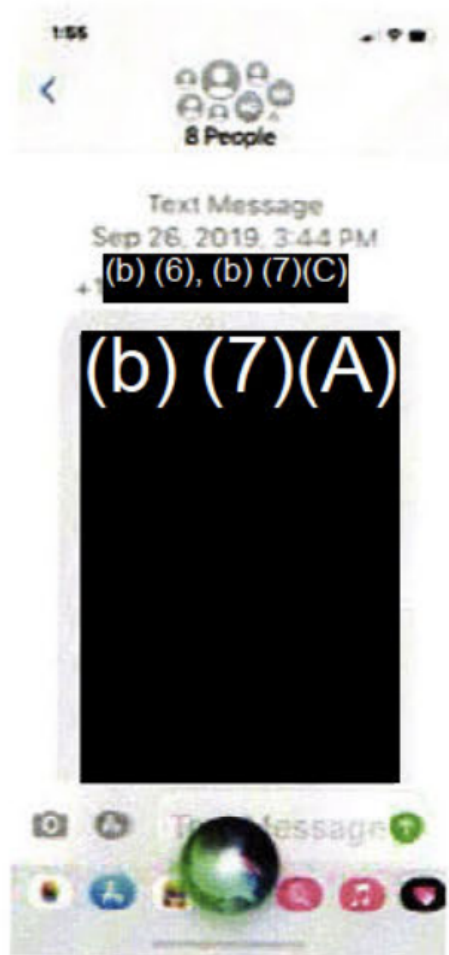


The next day, September 25, DOJ issued a statement revealing that Durham had received information from several Ukrainians who weren't part of government.

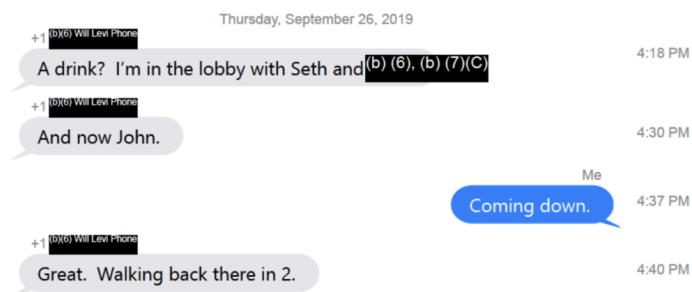
A Department of Justice team led by U.S. Attorney John Durham is separately exploring the extent to which a number of countries, including Ukraine, played a role in the counterintelligence investigation directed at the Trump campaign during the 2016 election," DOJ spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said Wednesday. "While the Attorney General has yet to contact Ukraine in connection with this investigation, certain Ukrainians who are not members of the government have volunteered information to Mr. Durham, which he is evaluating."

That's what led up to the group chats Durham would share months later.

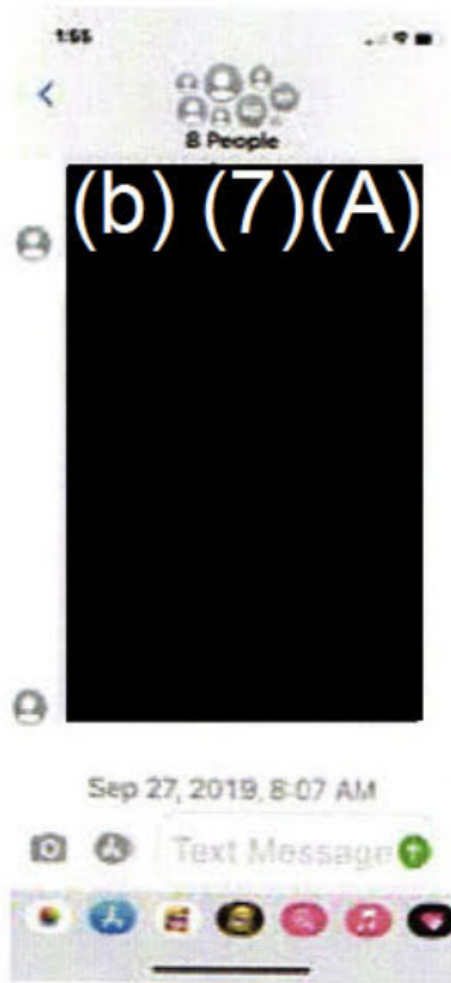
At 3:44 PM on September 26, the day the White House released the whistleblower complaint, someone from Durham's team – probably Durham himself – participated in a chat with 8 people.



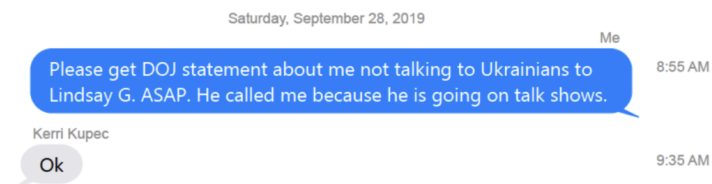
Less than an hour later, a bunch of people – including Will Levi, Seth DuCharme (who would be in charge of Scott Brady’s “vetting” project and then take over any investigation in EDNY), and “John” – convened in a lobby bar together, waiting for Barr to arrive.



The following day, when Kurt Volker resigned, there was another group chat, the second one Durham would share months later.



Barr was still focused on CYA regarding his own involvement. In advance of Lindsey Graham going on the Sunday shows that weekend, Barr made sure to get Lindsey his statement claiming not to have spoken to the Ukrainians personally.



Later on October 2, Kerri Kupec apologized to Barr that "Sadie" hadn't gotten editors to change a particular story, probably a reference to this WSJ story, which discusses Barr's request that Trump give introductions to some foreign leaders.

Kerri Kupec

I called Sadie and she said yesterday she asked the editors several times to change it and doesn't know why they didn't. And they kept it in print. She is raising it again. They are usually good about making changes - especially ones that are factually inaccurate as is the case here - so I don't know what's going on.

8:33 PM

On October 30, the day after the Democrats released the impeachment resolution, Kupec sent Barr the statement he had made about Ukraine back in September.

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Kerri Kupec

"Well, some of the countries that John Durham thought might have some information that would be helpful to the investigation wanted preliminarily to talk to me about the scope of the investigation, the nature of the investigation, and how I intended to handle confidential information, and so forth. So I initially discussed these matters with those countries and introduced them to John Durham and established a channel by which Mr. Durham can obtain assistance from those countries."

2:03 PM

Kerri Kupec

That is all you said

2:04 PM

A minute later Barr sent that statement to Will Levi, with no further comment.

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Me

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2:05 PM

There's far more about Barr's panic as impeachment unrolled in 2019, as I laid out here.

The panic likely includes Eric Herschmann, who was then in private practice but who would join Trump's impeachment defense and then ultimately serve as a babysitter for Trump in the White House. *While at the White House*, Hershmann pitched the "laptop" to the WSJ before Rudy discredited it.

But one thing is clear: In the wake of the disclosure that Trump asked Zelenskyy to work with Barr in addition to Rudy, Barr attempted to pawn off any contacts with Ukraine onto Durham – an effort that appears to have been discussed in both group chats and a face-to-face meeting in a

hotel bar.

And then, over three months later, on the day that Rudy's sources were sanctioned, two of whom were just charged with treason along with Derkach, Durham revisited those group chats.

That may explain why Barr worked so hard to ensure that Rudy never faced consequences for soliciting disinformation from a known Russian agent.

Update: Fixed timing of Parnas arrest per zscore.