

HOW JOSH DAWSEY DOWNPLAYS PAUL MANAFORT'S TIES TO ALLEGED RUSSIAN SPIES

Josh Dawsey's report that Trump plans to hire convicted money launderer and former business partner of an alleged Russian spy Paul Manafort to work on his campaign – possibly to help fundraising!!! – makes all the years of shitty coverage of the Russian investigation an urgent problem again.

The job discussions have largely centered around the 2024 Republican convention in Milwaukee in July and could include Manafort playing a role in fundraising for the presumptive GOP nominee's campaign, according to these people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private deliberations.

Dawsey gets big and little things wrong in his report. For example, he claims that Manafort was sentenced to around four years in prison after which he was released under COVID protocols.

Manafort was found guilty of hiding millions he made lobbying on behalf of pro-Russian Ukrainian politicians in overseas bank accounts, then falsifying his finances to get loans when his patrons lost power. He was originally sentenced to about four years in prison but was released early to home confinement due to the coronavirus before he was pardoned by Trump.

In reality, Judge Amy Berman Jackson sentenced Manafort to 73 months (60 months concurrent with his EDVA sentence, and 13 months consecutive to that; his release to home confinement did not

adhere to the priorities for release at the time).

For the reasons stated on the record in open Court Defendant's 540 Motion for Reconsideration is DENIED. Count 1ssss: Sentenced to Sixty (60) months incarceration. The sentence is to run concurrent to Thirty (30) months of the sentence previously imposed by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia which has already accounted for the credit defendant is due for time served. Special Assessment of \$100.00 was imposed. Count 2ssss: Sentenced to Thirteen (13) months incarceration, to be served consecutively to the sentence on Count One (1).

Predictably, though, it is in downplaying the import of Manafort's ties to Russian spies where Dawsey really fails.

During the 2016 campaign, Manafort also allegedly shared Trump campaign polling data with Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian who the U.S. government said had ties to Russian intelligence. The special counsel accused Manafort of lying to the FBI about his interactions with Kilimnik, even after Manafort had said he would cooperate and provide truthful information.

Manafort also allegedly worked with Kilimnik to spread Russian disinformation that it was actually Ukraine who interfered in the 2016 U.S. election.

In a report issued in 2020, the Senate bipartisan committee that investigated Russian interference found that "Manafort's presence on the Campaign and proximity to Trump created opportunities for Russian intelligence services to exert influence over, and acquire

confidential information on, the Trump Campaign.”

First, there is absolutely no dispute that Manafort sent campaign data to Kilimnik to share with his Ukrainian backers and Oleg Deripaska. Manafort simply maintained that he only instructed Rick Gates to share public data (Kilimnik’s *other* business partner, Sam Patten, said Manafort shared internal data). But the polling data has never been the key point. The key point was, weeks before the Russians started stealing Hillary’s internal modeling, Manafort told Kilimnik how he planned to win the race in the swing states – Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and also Minnesota – where Trump ultimately did win it.

Dawsey of course is silent about the other two undisputed aspects of the August 2, 2016 meeting. Kilimnik pitched Manafort on a plan to carve up Ukraine (Manafort ultimately admitted that Kilimnik did; he just claimed he didn’t buy into the plan at that point). And Manafort talked about how to get paid by his Ukrainian backers and get his debt with Oleg Deripaska relieved.

That is, the meeting at least maps the outline of a quid pro quo: a commitment to carve up Ukraine in exchange for millions and help winning the election.

And Robert Mueller didn’t just accuse Manafort of lying during the period when he was supposed to be cooperating. Judge Amy Berman Jackson ruled that he had.

Paul Manafort lied to cover up what really happened between him and Konstantin Kilimnik, and Donald Trump pardoned Manafort to reward those lies.

Finally, it’s not that, “U.S. government said [Kilimnik] had ties to Russian intelligence.” In 2021, after Kilimnik allegedly interfered in a *second* US election, Treasury stated as fact that Kilimnik was Russian intelligence.

Konstantin Kilimnik (Kilimnik) is a Russian and Ukrainian political consultant and known Russian Intelligence Services agent implementing influence operations on their behalf. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaign, Kilimnik provided the Russian Intelligence Services with sensitive information on polling and campaign strategy. Additionally, Kilimnik sought to promote the narrative that Ukraine, not Russia, had interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. In 2018, Kilimnik was indicted on charges of obstruction of justice and conspiracy to obstruct justice regarding unregistered lobbying work. Kilimnik has also sought to assist designated former President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich. At Yanukovich's direction, Kilimnik sought to institute a plan that would return Yanukovich to power in Ukraine.

Kilimnik was designated pursuant to E.O. 13848 for having engaged in foreign interference in the U.S. 2020 presidential election. Kilimnik was also designated pursuant to E.O. 13660 for acting for or on behalf of Yanukovich. Yanukovich, who is currently hiding in exile in Russia, was designated in 2014 pursuant to E.O. 13660 for his role in violating Ukrainian sovereignty. [my emphasis]

We also know, from the Charles McGonigal sentencing materials, that by 2017, the Intelligence Community had judged Oleg Deripaska to be "associated" with a Russian intelligence agency, too.

Among other things, in May 2017, McGonigal received a then-classified email stating that Deripaska was associated with a Russian intelligence agency, and possibly involved in that agency's coup attempt in another

country. (PSR ¶ 19).

By context, the agency must be GRU and the attempted coup must be Montenegro, a country implicated in McGonigal's *other* prosecution – one where Manafort had an extensive history with Deripaska and one mentioned in Andrew Weissmann's Team M report.

Donald Trump is considering hiring the former business partner of two alleged Russian spies, admitted money launderer Paul Manafort, to help with fundraising.

Way back in 2021, Avril Haines committed to declassifying parts of the SSCI Report that remained then, and still remain, redacted. It's time to unseal those details describing why the spooks were so convinced that Kilimnik was, himself, a Russian spy.

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