

ALEXANDER SMIRNOV SHARED AN ALREADY- DEBUNKED FOX NEWS HOAX WITH HIS FBI HANDLER

There's a mistake that many people covering the Alexander Smirnov case make. This is one example, but similar examples appear everywhere (including in claims made by Democrats in Congress yesterday).

Parnas noted the recent indictment of former FBI informant Alexander Smirnov, who is accused of providing false intelligence about the president and his son during the 2020 presidential campaign. Prosecutors said the information Smirnov shared about the Bidens came from "officials associated with Russian intelligence" and that he was peddling "new lies that impact U.S. elections after meeting with Russian intelligence officials in November."

The error is in claiming that prosecutors have said that the false claims *Smirnov made in 2020* came from Russian intelligence.

Prosecutors have said that Smirnov attributed claims made last September in his FBI interview to Russian spies. That's the claim that the Russians recorded calls that Hunter Biden made from a hotel in Kyiv.

51. The Defendant also shared a new story with investigators. He wanted them to look into whether Businessperson 1 was recorded in a hotel in Kiev called the Premier Palace. The Defendant told investigators that the entire Premier Palace Hotel is "wired" and under the control of the Russians. The Defendant

claimed that Businessperson 1 went to the hotel many times and that he had seen video footage of Businessperson 1 entering the Premier Palace Hotel.

52. The Defendant suggested that investigators check to see if Businessperson 1 made telephone calls from the Premier Palace Hotel since those calls would have been recorded by the Russians. The Defendant claimed to have obtained this information a month earlier by calling a high-level official in a foreign country. **The Defendant also claimed to have learned this information from four different Russian officials.** [my emphasis]

The reference in the detention memo to Russian spooks, relied on by NBC to substantiate the claim, appears to be a reference to this story, one Smirnov told in 2023. David Weiss appears to be sure that Russian spooks really did tell Smirnov this; he used it to justify detention.

Thus, Smirnov's efforts to spread misinformation about a candidate of one of the two major parties in the United States continues. The Court should consider this conduct as well when evaluating his personal history and characteristics. What this shows is that the misinformation he is spreading is not confined to 2020. He is actively peddling new lies that could impact U.S. elections after meeting with Russian intelligence officials in November.

I'm not entirely convinced Smirnov's Russian spook buddies *did* tell him this.

After all, prosecutors laid out why it cannot be true that Russia really got recordings of Hunter

in the hotel. Hunter has never been to Kyiv, much less this hotel.

If Russian spies actually told Smirnov this, it would either be false, intended to deceive Smirnov, or based on a deep fake.

But I also think it's possible that, during the September interview, Smirnov started to realize that the FBI had caught him lying, and so invented the story – based on what I understand to be a widely-understood assumption about the Premier Palace – to appear to be useful to the FBI. When you're a snitch, you're generally safe doing whatever so long as you remain useful. So Smirnov may have just tried to protect himself by inventing something useful.

As I tried to show here, there's actually some reason to believe he subsequently created a reporting trail retroactively on this, as if he hadn't ever made this claim to his handler before his FBI interview and so had to report it prospectively to the handler to cover the claim he made to the FBI. The timeline shows that Smirnov attributed something to four Russian spies in September 2023, but then told his handler he learned it as if it were new in December 2023.

I don't believe any court filings have yet attributed Smirnov's false claim in 2020 to Russian spooks.

Indeed, he didn't have the ties to Russian spies in 2020 he claims to have now. While Smirnov appears to have had ties to Russian Official 5 in 2020 – the guy he flipped for a different, probably Israeli, intelligence service in 2002 but didn't tell his handler about until 2019 – and through him, Russian Official 6, many of his more senior ties to Russian spooks appear to post-date 2020.

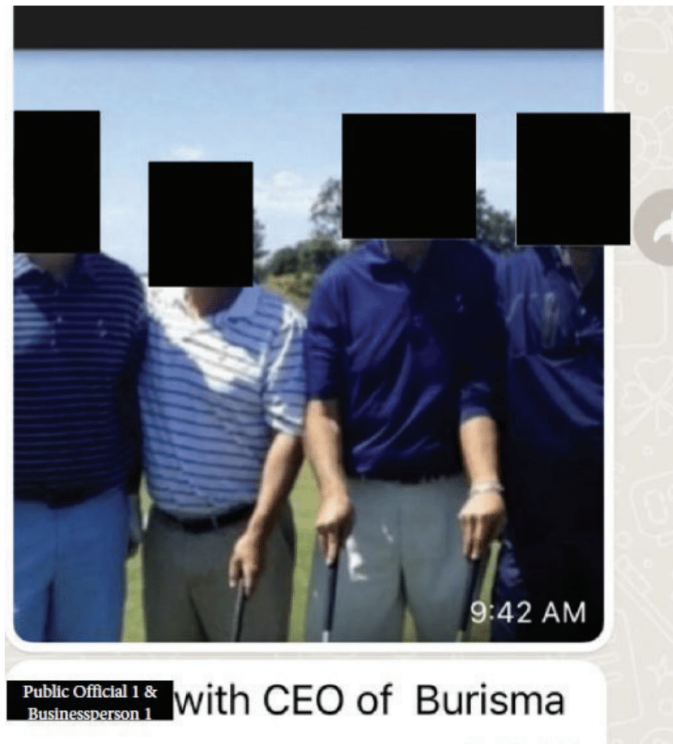
A far more relevant tie in 2020 is his professed tie to Viktor Shokin, going back to 2016.

50. The Defendant told investigators that he had asked the then-Ukrainian

President to arrange a meeting between himself and the then-Ukrainian Prosecutor General to talk about Burisma. The Defendant told investigators that this meeting occurred before the then-Ukrainian Prosecutor General resigned, which was early 2016. The Defendant also told investigators this meeting occurred before his meeting with Burisma Official 1 in the coffee shop in a German speaking country. The Defendant told investigators that after he met with the then-Ukrainian Prosecutor General, he met with the then-Ukrainian President. The Defendant did not provide any of this information to the Handler in 2020.

Still, one way or another, I don't believe any court filing tells us who got Smirnov to lie in 2020. It's one reason I keep insisting that learning how Scott Brady came to look for him may be the most important investigative question, not least because David Weiss has an enormous disincentive to chase that down.

All the more so given the backstory to this photo, which appears in the indictment. After Smirnov promised his handler that he would prove Joe Biden had received a bribe, Smirnov told his handler this picture showed Joe and Hunter Biden with Mykola Zlochevsky.



Nancy Mace used the same photo in yesterday's hearing in an attempt to corroborate serial fraudster Jason Galanis' story.



It's actually not, at all, clear where the picture came from – I'm not even aware that it came from "the laptop."

But it was first published by Tucker Carlson, then adopted by Fox News, as part of Rudy's propaganda campaign in 2019, as impeachment began to roll out.

JOE BIDEN

Joe, Hunter Biden seen golfing with Ukraine gas company exec back in 2014, photo shows

By Gregg Re - Fox News

Published September 30, 2019 8:26pm EDT | Updated October 1, 2019 11:22am EDT



Tucker Carlson Tonight obtains photo of Joe Biden golfing with his son and Ukrainian business partner

Government Accountability Institute president Peter Schweizer on Hunter Biden's business deals in Ukraine and China.

EXCLUSIVE: A photo obtained by Fox News' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" shows former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter golfing in the Hamptons with Devon Archer, who served on the board of the Ukrainian natural gas company Burisma Holdings with Hunter.

Don Jr posted it.



Donald Trump Jr. 
@DonaldJTrumpJr

Yea, #QuidProJoe had no idea what was going on and never discussed business with his son! 😞

Joe, Hunter Biden seen golfing with Ukraine gas company exec back in 2014, photo shows | Fox News



Joe, Hunter Biden seen golfing with Ukraine gas company exec back in 2014, ph...
A photo obtained by Fox News' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" shows former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden golfing in the Hamptons with Dev...
foxnews.com

Then Trump referenced it on Xitter.



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

...

The Biden family was PAID OFF, pure and simple! The fake news must stop making excuses for something that is totally inexcusable. Sleepy Joe said he never spoke to the Ukrainian company, and then the picture came out where he was playing golf with the company boss and Hunter.....

5:42 pm · 6 Oct 2019

The claim was debunked repeatedly: by PolitiFact on October 8, by CNN, and then by USAT after it went even more viral after the release of “the laptop” in 2020 (and therefore after Smirnov’s claims).

And yet, even though this photo had gone viral in 2019, in conjunction with Trump’s impeachment rebuttal, Smirnov *made the same claim again* in May 2020.

And his handler either didn’t realize or didn’t care that Smirnov was recycling a widely debunked lie, nor is there any evidence the handler pointed out to Scott Brady that it discredited Smirnov’s other claims.

Sedition Hunters will tell you that the FBI is nowhere near as good at using facial recognition as they are (which may not be a bad thing). But the notion that an informant would share such a widely disseminated photo and *no one at the FBI* would figure out it had been used by Trump and his backers as part of a false propaganda campaign the year before?!?!

Really???

I’ll repeat again: the investigation into this attempt to frame Joe Biden needs to be removed from David Weiss’ purview and put in the hands of someone who’ll review how the FBI let itself get fooled by a widely disseminated piece of propaganda, and why the Attorney General ensured that such embarrassing propaganda got funneled to an ongoing investigation into Joe Biden’s kid.

Because this is just embarrassing.

Alexander Smirnov may have gotten the false

claim he made in 2020 from Russian spies. He may have gotten it from Viktor Shokin.

Or maybe he just got it by watching Fox News.

Update: Noted that the USAT rebuttal came after Smirnov's claims; the others came before.