

Robert Mueller's closing argument in the case of the United States of America v. Donald Trump, et. al:

Beginning in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Donald Trump and the Trump organization began a deliberate plan to finance Donald Trump's businesses using money from Russian sources. This money included payments for Trump properties by Russian businessmen, loans from Deutsche Bank that ultimately came from Russian sources, and cash investments in Donald Trump's money losing golf courses. Donald Trump benefited from the investments. The investors benefitted by laundering money from illegal activities in Russia through a seemingly legitimate American business. You will hear that the investors overpaid for the properties and that Donald Trump made money from the overpayments.

Without these investments, Donald Trump might have been wiped out in the crash of 2008. He was drowning. The Russians threw him a lifeline. And Donald Trump was smart enough to know that none of these oligarchs would have helped him without the approval of Vladimir Putin. But Donald Trump wanted more. He wanted a personal relationship with Vladimir Putin. He wanted to build a Trump Tower in Moscow. He wanted Vladimir Putin to become his "new best friend."

Donald Trump went to Moscow in 2013 hoping to meet Putin. He did not. But afterwards, Putin sent him a present in a lacquered black box.

We do know from the evidence of Curt Schiller that Donald Trump was offered the services of Russian prostitutes. Schiller claimed that Donald Trump refused. Donald Trump has said in public that he refused. But whether he refused or not does not matter.

The fact that the offer was made, by persons close to Putin and participants in the later conspiracy, tends to prove that Putin, an experienced KGB agent, was interested in gaining a hold over Donald Trump. We will never know why he wanted a hold. The most likely explanation is that he wanted Trump to continue as the oligarch's most useful money launderer. It is also significant that Donald Trump has made many contradictory statements about this incident, including the false claim that he did not stay overnight in Moscow.

You heard this evidence. You heard this evidence not because we want to tell you Donald Trump is a bad businessman, or a bad person. You heard this evidence because it goes to motive and to the relationship between the parties to this conspiracy.

Donald Trump's motive for entering this conspiracy to promote spying by a foreign power on his political rival was two-fold.

First, he wanted to win the Presidency. He wanted Hilary Clinton to lose. And throughout most of the campaign he was so far behind that he knew he needed to destroy Hillary Clinton, personally and politically if he was to have chance of winning.

But second, he wanted to maintain his relationship with the Russian oligarchs who had helped keep his leaky business empire afloat. And win or lose the election, he knew that Putin and his cronies would appreciate his effort to damage Hilary Clinton and to remold the Republican party as an apologist for Russia's expansionist ambitions.

Since no one, including Donald Trump, believed that he would win, the second motive was the more important. And that is why Donald Trump's business with the Russians is critical. The evidence will show that the other half of this diabolical conspiracy was Putin and his henchmen. After the invasion of Crimea and the incursion into the Ukraine, Putin knew that Hillary Clinton was his enemy and would oppose him once in office, perhaps more vigorously than Barack Obama.

Putin also thought Clinton would win. But he wanted to weaken or damage her as much as possible. And Donald Trump was his chosen instrument.

Putin acted cautiously. He first attempted to approach the campaign through low level staffers like George Papadopoulos.

Why did he do that? It was classic KGB tradecraft. Putin had to know whether Donald Trump and his campaign would reject the offer and report him to the FBI or whether they would go along. Putin soon had the answer. Papadopoulos has testified that he reported the contacts to Sam Clovis and other campaign officials and even to Trump himself at a meeting.

No one called the FBI. Putin had his answer.

Putin got the same answer when he sent an SVR "informant" to peddle "dirt" on Hilary Clinton. The only response was disappointment that the "dirt" was not good enough. And another one of the conspirators, Donald Trump Jr. suggested that the "dirt" should be provided later. This was an overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy. It strains credulity to believe that Donald Trump Jr. would not tell Sr. about a meeting designed to get "dirt" on Hillary Clinton. Sr's obsession with Hillary and her emails was manifest throughout the campaign. And Sr., now our President, has admitted that the adoption memo was a lie. He defended the lie on the ground that it was not a lie to a "high tribunal," but only to the New York Times. But if he knew nothing about the meeting, why would he lie about it?

Putin's second "in" to the campaign was Paul Manafort. We know that Manafort joined the campaign in an effort to pay his own debts to oligarchs by swaying policy in favor of emaRussia. And he did so. We will never know the extent to which Paul Manafort knew of and encouraged the Russians to spy on the Democrats. But Manafort was at that meeting and had access to Trump.

But the strongest evidence of the conspiracy is that Trump encouraged the Russians to hack Hilary's emails, and the same day they tried to do so.

This sequence of events shows two things. One, Trump knew, from George Papadopoulos and Donald Trump, Jr. that the Russians were willing to spy on Hillary Clinton and to release the results of their spying to the world. Therefore, when he made the Russia are you listening remark, he knew that the Russians might respond.

The second thing it shows is that one half of the conspiracy, the Russians, were not willing to begin serious hacking until they knew that the other half of the conspiracy, Donald Trump, would cooperate and would not report them to the FBI and denounce their efforts. They also knew from their first contacts that Donald Trump was not going to give them concessions unless they provided serious "dirt."

What happened? The Russians hacked. They did not get Hillary's emails, but they got something.

Nothing prevented the Russians from starting hacking before. They hated Hillary before. They wanted to damage Hillary before. But until Donald Trump said he wanted the emails, they did not know that their efforts would be welcomed by the nominee of a major American political party. At that point, the conspiracy was complete. An overt act was committed by one of the conspirators in furtherance of the conspiracy.

This is the "Art of the Deal." And the deal was a conspiracy to steal an election from the voters. It was a conspiracy against the United States. We do not need to prove anything more.

But there is strong circumstantial evidence that the release of the information was coordinated with the Trump campaign, through a cut-out, Roger Stone. The release of the most damaging emails after the access Hollywood tape is strong evidence that the release was designed to help the Trump campaign.

Folks, no one wants to convict a President. But no criminal can escape justice by election to the Presidency. Donald Trump is a criminal. Convict him.

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