

THE DECLINE AND RECENT FALL OF MANAFORT'S HAPSBURG EMPIRE

It turns out the government was telling the truth (not that I doubted it) when they told Judge Amy Berman Jackson they've only just put together the evidence that Paul Manafort violated bail by trying to suborn perjury from Alan Friedman and Eckart Sager, the two flacks who set up the Hapsburg Group for Manafort back in 2012. That's made clear by comparing the materials submitted back on May 25 asking for leave to object to Manafort's then just finalized bail proposal and the materials – particularly the declaration from FBI Agent Brock Domin – released in conjunction with Mueller's motion to revoke or revise bail.

For example, whereas the later Domin declaration notes that Friedman and Sager (identified as Person D1 and D2) "provided the content of the text messages described below in May 2018," Domin's earlier declaration provides the specific dates.

Person D1 provided the text messages described below on May 12, 2018, and Person D2 provided the content of the text messages described below on May 21, 2018.

And while the earlier declaration relies on statements from Friedman,

Documents produced by Persons D1 and D2, statements made by Person D1 to the government, and documents recovered pursuant to a court-authorized search of Manafort's iCloud account evidence that Manafort,

The later declaration refers to statements from Sager, too.

Documents produced by Persons D1 and D2, statements made by Persons D1 and D2 to the government, telephone records obtained by the government, and documents recovered pursuant to a court-authorized search of Manafort's iCloud account evidence that Manafort,

So Sager must have been interviewed between May 25 and June 4.

A filing submitted last night, providing even more detail describing why Manafort should have his bail revoked includes this great quote from Sager, though it's unclear when he gave it.

Manafort's references to the Hapsburg member's "role" and the "EP" refer to that Hapsburg member's position as a representative of the European Parliament and the parallel actions of the European Parliament and the United States Senate regarding Tymoshenko's imprisonment in 2012. That characterization is consistent with Person D2's description, during a meeting with the government, of that Hapsburg member's role as Manafort's "spy and mouthpiece."

And, as reflected both in the passage cited above and by comparing the two communication logs, the government did not reference toll records from Manafort in the May 25 filing but did in the June 4 one, suggesting that along with a Sager interview, they obtained the toll records after May 25.

Which raises two interesting questions for me: first, had the government interviewed Friedman and Sager before Manafort tried to suborn their perjury? If Mueller's team hadn't, it makes his effort all the more interesting, as if he somehow knew that. And also, did the government

obtain proof of these communications (likely, via monitoring Manafort's iCloud account) before reaching out to Friedman and Sager, whether anew or for the first time?

Interestingly, the earlier Domin declaration makes it clear Friedman took screen caps of the WhatsApp comms he had with Manafort contemporaneously, so even if he weren't backing up his super secret obstruction of justice to Apple's cloud, he'd have been fucked.

Person D1 has provided the government screen shots that Person D1 took contemporaneously of these messages.

That suggests it's possible that Friedman contacted (possibly recontacted) the government to let them know this. But that doesn't explain the two and a half month delay between the time Manafort tried to suborn perjury and the time the government actually chased this detail down.