

ROGER STONE DEMANDED LISTS FROM RICK GATES AT LEAST NINE TIMES DURING THE 2016 ELECTION

For a whole slew of reasons, I want to point out a detail in an exhibit released in Roger Stone's trial: He asked for "lists" – once explicitly described as donor lists, but described as voter registration lists by Stone's attorney, Bruce Rogow, at trial – from Rick Gates at least nine times:

4/30/16, 2:37:22 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Obtain the donor list- I Need it soon to
effect [sic] California!!

5/11/16, 7:16:14 AM [Stone to Gates]:
Get the list. I don't care about
anything else.

5/11/16, 1:08:05 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Get the list !!!!!!!

5/13/16, 1:52:51 AM [Stone to Gates]:
Tried – corey trying desperately to tie
me to New PAC and Trump seems to be
unaware that this PA

5/13/16, 1:15:31 AM [Gates to Stone]:
New updates.

5/13/16, 1:32:00 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Can make sure Manafort makes sure Trump
knows about Sovereignty PAC-???

5/15/16, 2:36:32 PM [Gates to Stone]:
Did you see the positive press o. AS
PAC? Hope it holds.

5/17/16, 3:54:53 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Get the list.

5/17/16, 7:19:20 PM [Stone to Gates]: Get
the list – "u need to reconcile against

FEC report" crucial

6/21/16, 3:54:40 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Lists Friday ??? please

7/2/16, 5:59:17 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Lists? You said last weds

9/21/16, 10:30:25 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Please get me lists – please.

9/26/16, 8:30:22 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Lists????

9/28/16, 1:43:14 AM [Stone to Gates]:
Are u going to send me the lists in time
for me to use? do me no good after the
election

10/19/16, 5:00:14 PM [Stone to Gates]:
Lists....pls

It's not entirely clear why they were included at trial. The government had talked about introducing 404b information showing Stone illegally coordinating with the campaign, but there was more focus, on that point, on Stone's discussions with Steve Bannon about obtaining funding from Rebekah Mercer while the latter was campaign manager.

Perhaps the defense wanted to include these exchanges as proof that Stone's conversations with Gates focused more often on lists than on WikiLeaks. In his cross examination of Gates, Rogow got Trump's former Deputy Campaign Manager to confirm that Stone, "continually asked questions about voter registration lists."

Q. Mr. Stone's role in the campaign dealt with voter registration lists, primarily, didn't it?

A. I didn't know what Mr. Stone was responsible for prior to when I arrived. When I arrived, Mr. Stone had already left the campaign.

Q. Did Mr. Stone continually ask questions about voter registration

lists?

A. He did.

To be clear: I'm completely agnostic what Stone's requests were about. But there are a slew of possibilities.

One reason I raise it – given a Campaign Legal Center complaint to the FEC, alleging that Trump laundered \$170 million in campaign funding through Brad Parscale's firms and news today of Parscale's attempt at self-harm yesterday – pertains to some comments that Paul Manafort made in a September 27, 2016 interview:

Stone had a PAC that was not well funded and he wanted Manafort to designate it as the favored PAC for the campaign, but Manafort did not want to. Lewandowski also had a PAC and wanted the same thing, and Manafort did not want to deal with internal politics related to their PACs. He thought it was a good idea to have a designated PAC, he just did not want it to be either Stone's or Lewandowski's.

[snip]

Manafort was not sure how Stone made his money. Manafort knew Stone wrote books and gave speeches and did some consulting. Manafort knew Stone was working on a book about the Trump campaign and consulted with different candidates and on various referenda. Manafort did not know Stone's client base. Manafort was not familiar with the company Citroen.

Manafort's comments are positively hilarious. He presents this as a battle between Stone and Corey Lewandowski over who could make the most profit off of illegally coordinating with the campaign. That battle was real, and cut throat.

But at the time Stone and Lewandowski were

fighting that out, Manafort's allies had their own PAC that prosecutors at least suspected that Manafort used as a kick back system to get paid. Manafort didn't want anyone else to be the official illegally coordinating campaign, presumably, because he wanted his PAC to have that role. And at the time Manafort made this comment in September 2018, he was pretty aggressively trying to hide how his own PAC worked.

The investigation into Manafort's PAC has been closed, whether because Bill Barr shut it down or prosecutors gave up trying to untangle it.

But the CLC complaint into Trump's current campaign alleges that one of Parscale's firms, American Made Media Holding Corporation, serves as a pass through for campaign vendor services that are therefore improperly shielded from campaign finance reporting.

Approximately one month after AMMC's formation, the Trump campaign began reporting sizable payments to AMMC, and AMMC soon became the Trump campaign's largest vendor. Since 2019, the Trump campaign has reported paying \$106 million to AMMC for an array of general purposes, including placed media, consulting, online advertising, SMS advertising, and more; the Trump Make America Great Again Committee has reported over \$61 million in payments to AMMC, largely for online advertising.

Available evidence indicates that AMMC is not directly providing those services to the Trump campaign, but instead is acting as a "clearinghouse"¹⁰ that disburses Trump campaign funds to other vendors, "effectively shielding the identities of the underlying contractors being paid for Trump campaign work."¹¹ In several instances, Trump campaign officials and public reports have described other firms as major contractors providing services to the

Trump campaign, yet those contractors' names do not appear on the Trump campaign's reports filed with the Commission; instead, it appears that the Trump campaign reports payments to AMMC, which then passes on the funds to the intended payees.

For example, Trump campaign officials have spoken publicly about directing and managing the development of a mobile app produced by the software company Phunware, yet the Trump campaign has not reported direct payments to the company. Other public records suggest that the Trump campaign is contracting with Realtime Media and Opn Sesame—firms headed by the Trump campaign's digital director, Gary Coby¹²—yet neither firm has appeared on the campaign's reports filed with the FEC. Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") records show that the Trump campaign's ads are placed by the firm Harris Sikes Media, but the campaign has not reported payments to that firm during the 2019-20 election cycle. Available evidence indicates that the Trump campaign is selecting, directing, and controlling these vendors and their work, yet is failing to report payments to the firms and is instead using AMMC as a conduit for its payments to the firms. Other possible vendors that the campaign may be paying through AMMC, such as those providing services for direct mail, software, subscriptions, or video production—all services for which the campaign has also described paying AMMC this cycle—are not ascertainable through public records.

In addition, CLC reviews some of the reporting that Parscale pays a number of people — notably Don Jr's girlfriend and Eric Trump's wife — for their work on the campaign.

Additionally, the Trump campaign is currently paying Parscale Strategy, the consulting firm of former Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale, approximately \$48,000 a month for “strategy consulting,” and, according to multiple media reports, using Parscale Strategy as a conduit for salary payments to particular campaign staff.¹³

[snip]

Similarly, in a July 15, 2020 article reporting on Parscale’s change of position within the campaign, the Washington Post reported that Parscale’s “firm, Parscale Strategy, bills for the campaign salaries of Lara Trump and Kimberly Guilfoyle, the wife and girlfriend respectively of Trump’s two oldest sons, Eric and Donald Jr.”⁹³

In the 2020 cycle, the Trump campaign has not directly reported making any salary payments to campaign manager Brad Parscale, nor has it reported any salary payments to Kimberly Guilfoyle or Lara Trump.⁹⁴

This is the kind of scheme that the NYT described in its blockbuster report on Trump’s tax returns, though in that case the “consultant” was Ivanka.

Examining the Trump Organization’s tax records, a curious pattern emerges: Between 2010 and 2018, Mr. Trump wrote off some \$26 million in unexplained “consulting fees” as a business expense across nearly all of his projects.

In most cases the fees were roughly one-fifth of his income: In Azerbaijan, Mr. Trump collected \$5 million on a hotel deal and reported \$1.1 million in consulting fees, while in Dubai it was \$3 million with a \$630,000 fee, and so on.

Mysterious big payments in business deals can raise red flags, particularly in places where bribes or kickbacks to middlemen are routine. But there is no evidence that Mr. Trump, who mostly licenses his name to other people's projects and is not involved in securing government approvals, has engaged in such practices.

Rather, there appears to be a closer-to-home explanation for at least some of the fees: Mr. Trump reduced his taxable income by treating a family member as a consultant, and then deducting the fee as a cost of doing business.

The "consultants" are not identified in the tax records. But evidence of this arrangement was gleaned by comparing the confidential tax records to the financial disclosures Ivanka Trump filed when she joined the White House staff in 2017. Ms. Trump reported receiving payments from a consulting company she co-owned, totaling \$747,622, that exactly matched consulting fees claimed as tax deductions by the Trump Organization for hotel projects in Vancouver and Hawaii.

When CLC filed an FEC complaint against the gift of Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman in 2018, they shared the complaint with SDNY, which is what led to the prosecution of Rudy's grifters. Here, the appropriate venue would likely be FL or TX (so less likely to pursue a vigorous investigation), but given CLC's past practice, one should assume it's likely the information was shared.

In 2016, Trump engaged in all sorts of dodgy campaign financing. But possibly because his key advisors were in such a cutthroat competition with each other, only the now-closed Manafort investigation and the inauguration funding got much scrutiny.

But now, with everything centralized in Parscale's sports cars, it may be easier to see the grift.

Then there's what Cambridge Analytica did, some independently and some with the campaign. Channel 4 in the UK has a story today on how aggressively Trump suppressed the black vote.

Finally, I think it's also important to note that Trump's Deputy Campaign Manager was being asked (there's only one indication, May 13, 2016, that Gates delivered, and even that's not definite) to provide Trump's rat-fucker with voting lists in a parallel time table as he was providing Russian intelligence officer Konstantin Kilimnik polling data. In September, Russian hackers would spend much of the month making copies of Hillary's analytics on AWS.

In any case, Trump continues to be surrounded by people who are clearly grifting off their work with him, without much clarity on how they're doing so and what the implications of all that are.