

IMAGINE IF DOJ USED THE HUNTER BIDEN INQUIRY TO GET TESTIMONY AGAINST RUDY GIULIANI...

I'm going to return to my argument that The Laptop is functionally equivalent to the Steele dossier. But until I do, I want to return to the parallels between the Ukrainian influence peddling investigation of Hunter Biden and that of Rudy Giuliani.

First, take a look at this passage from the Ken Vogel-bylined NYT story that inflated new life in The Laptop story.

People familiar with the investigation said prosecutors had examined emails between Mr. Biden, Mr. Archer and others about Burisma and other foreign business activity. Those emails were obtained by The New York Times from a cache of files that appears to have come from a laptop abandoned by Mr. Biden in a Delaware repair shop. The email and others in the cache were authenticated by people familiar with them and with the investigation.

Elsewhere, the NYT story reports that the investigation into Hunter Biden turned to his influence peddling in 2018, well before the laptops in question were purportedly dropped off at a blind computer repairman's shop.

The investigation, which began as a tax inquiry under the Obama administration, widened in 2018 to include possible criminal violations of tax laws, as well as foreign lobbying and money laundering rules, according to the people familiar with the inquiry.

The contents on The Laptop were iCloud content, which the FBI could have and would have preferred to obtain with a warrant. We know the emails in question weren't deleted by all parties because sources for stories describe still having them.

In other words, it's unlikely that The Laptop played a critical role in the FBI investigation into the President's son, because the FBI had other, better ways to obtain the same content and because the FBI had already turned to these matters well before the laptop got shared with the FBI on December 9, 2019.

So let's go back to the way that Vogel-bylined NYT article reflatd The Laptop story. The passage I quoted says three things:

1. Prosecutors have looked at emails in question.
2. NYT had obtained emails from what it credulously calls The Laptop.
3. The "Laptop" emails were authenticated by "people familiar with them and with the investigation."

The source for the first claim is likely someone who was a witness in the DE investigation (and we know that witnesses who have offered up their testimony have been part of the recent Murdoch-driven campaign to reflate it). The second claim is simply NYT's ham-handed effort to make it clear the emails they received were part of the same campaign as the original NY Post story.

The third claim, however, is interesting. Written as it is, it suggests there are people who are familiar with *both* the investigation and the email cache. That would *seem* to suggest that some of the very limited universe of people involved with The Laptop – Rudy Giuliani, Steve Bannon, Robert Costello, and Mac Isaac – believe they know something about the Hunter Biden

investigation.

Let's focus on Robert Costello for the moment: He loves to be a cut-out. And when Billy Barr set up a special back channel to ingest Ukrainian-provided Russian dirt on Hunter Biden, Costello was that back channel. In other words, the lawyer that Rudy and Steve Bannon share is one possible source for that third claim, but if he were, it would suggest investigators in Delaware had spoken with him as a witness because he knew of the process by which he came to be in possession of a sketchy laptop.

Whatever testimony the source of that third claim offered could be shared with SDNY, which is investigating Rudy's own influence-peddling scandal with Ukraine.

With all that mind, take a look at this passage of Philip Bump's excellent summary of all the ways that laptop story *is* sketchy.

Giuliani was central to that effort. In **late 2018**, he began exploring the idea that Biden, as vice president several years before, had improperly tried to influence Ukraine to block an investigation of Burisma, a company for which Hunter Biden served as a board member. This story, promoted by an investigator targeted for termination by the U.S. government, was later debunked, but it seemed a promising line of attack. On **April 1, 2019**, a writer linked to Giuliani named John Solomon wrote the first of several stories about the allegations.

On **April 12**, the laptops were dropped off at Mac Isaac's repair shop. Mac Isaac is legally blind and was not able to identify Hunter Biden by sight. One of the laptops, though, bore a sticker for the Beau Biden Foundation, an organization dedicated to Hunter's late brother.

At some point **in the middle of this**

month, Hunter Biden left Burisma's board. Presumably he was by that point aware that questions were being asked about his role. If not, it became very clear on **May 1**, when the Times elevated the Burisma question in its coverage.

In the meantime, Volodymyr Zelensky had been elected president of Ukraine, and efforts to pressure him to announce an investigation into Biden began. In **early May 2019**, Giuliani planned a trip to Ukraine to dig up information that might damage Biden – a plan that was covered in the press. After broad outcry, he scrapped the trip. But the signal was sent: Giuliani was seeking information deleterious to Biden.

Later that month, someone in Kyiv was approached about buying Hunter Biden's emails. This was not reported until Oct. 21, 2020, a week after the Post's story about the laptop.

This time period – December 2018 until May 2019 – is precisely the time period that prosecutors asked Special Master Barbara Jones to prioritize for her privilege review of the last set of Rudy's phones (as well as the one phone from Victoria Toensing).

Content	Phones	Warrant date	Known Warrant Scope	Privilege Review Scope	Status	Special Master Results
Rudy's iCloud		11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	Filter completed -5/21	
Rudy's email		11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	Filter completed -5/21	
Toensing's iCloud		11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	Filter completed -5/21	
Toensing's email		12/13/19	5/1/18 to 12/13/19	5/1/18 to 11/4/19	Filter completed -5/21	
Rudy's historical and prospective cell site		4/13/21	unknown			
Toensing's historical and prospective cell site		4/13/21	unknown			
Devices of Rudy and Giuliani partners	7 devices	4/21/21	8/1/18 to 12/31/19	1/1/18 through seizure	Completed 11/2/21	2,223 items provided to govt 3 items deemed privileged
	Device 1B05	4/21/21	8/1/18 to 12/31/19	1/1/18 through seizure	Initial release 11/15/21 Balance released 1/19/22	25,533 items provided with no privilege claim 40 items deemed privileged 56 privilege claims withdrawn, provided to govt
	8 devices	4/21/21	8/1/18 to 12/31/19	Initial review 12/1/18 through 5/31/19	Completed 1/19/22	3,204 items provided to govt
Toensing's phone	Fintash hits	4/22/21	8/1/18 to 12/31/19	1/1/18 through seizure	4,229 initial items to Fintash 12/21/21 2 addition items	Pending
	Initial review	4/22/21	8/1/18 to 12/31/19	Initial review 12/1/18 through 5/31/19	Ongoing	2,756 items provided to govt 1/20/22 2 items to Fintash 98 items pending privilege claim

In the initial incarnation of this investigation – the one charged in 2019, before Lev Parnas started running his mouth – the focus of this investigation was exclusively on how Rudy got Marie Yovanovitch fired. But in September 2020,

that part of the investigation was put on hold to await Rudy.

Yovanovitch's name doesn't appear in Bump's summary at all. Yet it happened in the same month – May 2019, the culmination of this effort – when Rudy was going to go to Kyiv to dig up dirt on Hunter Biden, and when someone was wandering around Kyiv offering to sell what looks like what ended up packaged as The Laptop.

Whether or not Rudy's effort to solicit what ended up being dirt that looked just like The Laptop was originally the focus of the investigation, DOJ has now obtained a privilege review of Rudy's comms from that time period when he was soliciting it.