

NO, CHARLES MCGONIGAL LIKELY ISN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT PART OF THE RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION YOU HATE

Everyone – whether from a left, right, or frothy perspective – has seized on the arrest of former FBI Special Agent in Charge Charles McGonigal to assume he was responsible for something they don't like about the Russian investigation: the leaks (attributed to but not exclusively from SDNY) about the Clinton Foundation investigation; the problems on the Carter Page applications and vetting of the Steele dossier; the tanking of the Alfa Bank allegations; some later sabotage of the Mueller investigation.

There's no reason to believe he was primarily responsible for most of that, and good reason to believe he was not. But he was in a place where he could have tampered in other really serious cases. So I want to lay out what his timeline is, with some comment on how it intersects with key investigations.

Here's an excerpt from the bio sent out with the October 4, 2016 announcement of his promotion to SAC in NY Field Office.

FBI Director James B. Comey has named Charles McGonigal as the special agent in charge of the Counterintelligence Division for the New York Field Office. Mr. McGonigal most recently served as the section chief of the Cyber-Counterintelligence Coordination Section at FBI Headquarters.

[snip]

In 2014, Mr. McGonigal was promoted to assistant special agent in charge of the Baltimore Field Office's cyber, counterintelligence, counterespionage, and counterproliferation programs.

[snip]

McGonigal will assume this new role at the end of October.

This 2016 promotion would have put him in New York too late to be a key 2016 leaker; the damage to Hillary had already been done by the time he would have arrived in New York.

He *should* have had a role in the Alfa Bank investigation, which included both a cyber and a counterintelligence component, though the latter was in Chicago. But his name did not show up (in unredacted form, anyway) in the Michael Sussmann files. Plus, we know what bolloxed that investigation: two cyber agents, Nate Batty and Scott Hellman, who decided the anomaly was nothing even before they had looked at all the data, then kept telling the counterintelligence investigators that too.

McGonigal was in the loop on the Crossfire Hurricane investigation. He had a hand in forwarding the tip from the Australians to DC headquarters. And he was in the vicinity of the Carter Page investigation after it got moved back to New York in January 2017 (in which context he shows up in communications with Jennifer Boone). But at least per the Horowitz Report, he wasn't a key player.

Because McGonigal was tangential to the above matters – including the successful effort, aided by Sussmann and Rodney Joffe – to kill the early NYT story on the Alfa Bank allegations, he's *probably* not the most important player in the October 2016 NYT story every Democrat hates (though his expertise could have made him a source for several of the journalists involved).

He likely was involved in coordination in the

early parts of the investigation into the DNC hack (which was investigated in Pittsburgh and San Francisco), including a decision *not* to open an investigation on Roger Stone, and there were steps not taken in those early days that probably should have been. Perhaps McGonigal is to blame for the fact that, when Jeannie Rhee asked for a briefing on the investigation into the hack-and-leak in 2017, nothing had been done. Ultimately, it *did* get done though. He was no longer in a position to interfere with the investigation during the key part of it in 2018 (though he likely knew important details about it).

One thing that's absolutely certain, though: He was in a position to sabotage investigations into Oleg Deripaska, and with him, Paul Manafort. And he would have greatly facilitated Deripaska's campaign to undermine the Russian investigation with disinformation, which continued beyond 2018. Just as one measure of timing, Deripaska's column in the Daily Caller was at the beginning of the time when Shestkov was reaching out to McGonigal.

The materials on the SDNY indictment pertaining to Deripaska make it clear that he had accessed sanctions packages pertaining to Deripaska before he left the FBI in 2018.

As SAC, McGonigal supervised and participated in investigations of Russian oligarchs, including Deripaska. Among other things, in 2018, McGONIGAL, while acting as SAC, received and reviewed a then-classified list of Russian oligarchs with close ties to the Kremlin who would be considered for sanctions to be imposed as a result of Russia's 2014 conflict with Ukraine.

He appears to have leaked that information with the daughter of Agent 1 (believed to be Yevgenyi Fokin).

An NYPD Sergeant assigned to brief

Agent-1's daughter subsequently reported the event to the NYPD and FBI, because, among other reasons, Agent-1's daughter claimed to have an unusually close relationship to "an FBI agent" who had given her access to confidential FBI files, and it was unusual for a college student to receive such special treatment from the NYPD and FBI.

It seems likely, then, Manafort got visibility onto what the FBI knew about him. And he got it around the same time Konstantin Kilimnik was included in a conspiracy indictment with Paul Manafort in June 2018. He almost certainly got it before the Mueller investigation was over, which hypothetically could have influenced or facilitated Manafort's effort to thwart DOJ's investigation.

I have reason to suspect that people associated with McGonigal, if not he himself, have seeded disinformation about Deripaska-related investigations.

McGonigal's tie to Deripaska and the trajectory of his career would have put him in a position to tamper in other investigations. As noted above, he moved from Baltimore (overseeing matters involving the NSA during years when the materials that would be leaked as part of the Shadow Brokers operation were stolen), to a cyber/CI role in DC, to NYC. The overt acts described in his two indictments (SDNY, DC) only start in 2017, which would suggest he may not have sold out until then.

Except there's a problem with that: The first overt act in the DC indictment is him asking for money. So it's not clear when he got started.

August 2017: McGonigal first asks Albanian for money.

September 7, 2017: McGonigal travels to Albania.

October 5, 2017: McGonigal receives \$80,000 in a parked car from the Albanian.

November 18, 2017: McGonigal conducts an interview in Vienna with the Albanian acting as translator; the FBI has no record of the interview. Then McGonigal flies to Albania and discusses business with the same witness.

November 25, 2017: McGonigal predicates an investigation into the lobbyist for a rival Albanian politician.

February 28, 2018: McGonigal formally opens investigation into rival Albanian relying on witnesses whose expenses were paid by his source.

March 4, 2018: McGonigal dines with Prime Minister of Albania.

April 27, 2018: McGonigal pitched by two people in Germany to get involved in Bosnian affairs, facilitates an introduction to US Ambassador to UN.

June to August 2018: McGonigal sets up arrangement whereby Bosnian-tied pharma company would pay Albanian \$500K to broker UN ties.

Spring-Summer 2018: At Sergey Shestakov's request, McGonigal sets up Deripaska's agent's daughter with an NYPD internship.

September 2018: McGonigal retires from the FBI.

There are a number of key investigations, including some in which Deripaska had tangential interest, on which McGonigal would have had complete visibility. Their compromise would present a grave threat to the country.

They're not the ones left, right, and frothers are most concerned about though.

Given how DOJ has charged these two indictments (and given the charges they have yet to file), I suspect they will try to get McGonigal to plead to one side and cooperate in the other – in part to unpack everything he did before and after he left the FBI. But even if they do, they're not going to tell *us* what he was up to.